

- 9. Dąbrowski and Piechowski.

Originally presented by Bill Tillier at the  
19th Annual Society for the Advancement of Gifted  
Education (SAGE) Conference  
November 7th & 8th, 2008  
Revised 2018  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta

# Dąbrowski and Piechowski

## Dąbrowski 201 All References

Available at: <http://www.positivedisintegration.com/ref.pdf>

## Dąbrowski 201 Appendices

Available at: <http://www.positivedisintegration.com/app.pdf>

# Dąbrowski and Piechowski – Contents – 1.

- Mission statement..... Slide: 5
- Piechowski Meets Dąbrowski..... Slide: 6
- Piechowski and Dąbrowski ..... Slide: 7
- Issue 1: Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes..... Slide: 10
- Issue 2: Levels I & II:
  - Overview
    - Dąbrowski’s Views. .... Slide: 14
    - Kawczak’s Views ..... Slide: 17
    - Piechowski’s Views..... Slide: 21
    - Confusion in the Literature. .... Slide: 24
  - Level I: Piechowski’s Early Views. .... Slide: 29
  - Level I: Piechowski’s Revised Views. .... Slide: 32
  - Level II: Piechowski’s Early Views. .... Slide: 46
  - Level II: Piechowski’s Revised Views. .... Slide: 48
  - Level II: Dąbrowski’s Views – Summary. .... Slide: 55
  - Level II: Summary. .... Slide: 56
  - Issue 2: Conclusion. .... Slide: 57
  - Issue 2: Piechowski's interpretation is unique. .... Slide: 58
- Issue 3: Development & DP ..... Slide: 59
- Issue 4: A Strong Focus on Overexcitability. .... Slide: 64
- Issue 5: Piechowski Questions Multilevelness. .... Slide: 67
- Dąbrowski’s View of Multilevelness ..... Slide: 68

# Dąbrowski and Piechowski – Contents – 2.

- Issue 6: The Role of Self-actualization. .... Slide: 69
  - Self-actualization and Level IV. .... Slide: 70
- Piechowski’s Rationale of Dąbrowski. .... Slide: 74
- “Dąbrowski Just Didn’t Understand.” ..... Slide: 75
- They Never Understood. .... Slide: 76
- A Pathway Forward? ..... Slide: 77
- Summary..... Slide: 78
- Misattributions to Piechowski..... Slide: 82

## Mission statement.

- Mission statement: In this section, my intention is not to make a case for, or against, Dr. Piechowski's views of development or of TPD. Dr. Piechowski's views have evolved over time and continue to evolve. My purpose is to simply delineate these differences in detail and trace their history as they emerged.
- Dr. Piechowski and I have had an exchange of emails (2018) facilitated by Christine Wells. He has reviewed this section and I have acknowledged his comments by making the revisions he requested.
- Dr. Piechowski says he has “not presented a theory of his own” and will not put forth his own theory. He is “simply updating” TPD and “correcting errors.”

## 6 Dr. Piechowski meets Dr. Dąbrowski.

- Dr. Piechowski was with the Dept. of Microbiology (UofA). He “started working with Dąbrowski in the winter of 1967,” becoming a “colleague.” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 41; Piechowski, Ramsahoye, Evans, & Czartoryski, 1970).
- In January 1970, Dr. Piechowski left Edmonton and went to Wisconsin to pursue a doctorate in counseling.
- He met Nick Colangelo and Kay Ogburn as fellow graduate students. Colangelo and Ron Zaffrann edited a book on counseling the gifted in 1979 (Colangelo & Zaffrann, 1979). It contained a chapter by Dr. Piechowski (1979a; see Piechowski, 2008, pp. 75-76).
- Dr. Piechowski became active in disseminating TPD and the construct of overexcitability in the gifted field via workshops and publications (e.g. Piechowski, 1986).

## 7 Dr. Piechowski and Dr. Dąbrowski – 1.

- I knew both Dr. Dąbrowski and Dr. Piechowski and heard their comments pertaining to these issues.
- Dr. Piechowski has at times presented his own unique and different views on some issues.
- Example:
  - “The significance and the originality of the theory of positive disintegration does not lie, as it is often believed in introducing the idea of disintegration as a positive developmental process. Understandably, this aspect of the theory is most important for clinical psychology, psychiatry, and education. Nevertheless, the significance and originality of Dąbrowski’s theory lie in its concepts of developmental structures, developmental potential, and the characteristics by which they can be detected and measured” (Piechowski, 1975b, p. 266). [Dąbrowski “endorsed” this paper by providing a preface.]

## Dr. Piechowski and Dr. Dąbrowski – 2.

- Other examples: “Although Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid [genetic] personality structure, it makes more sense to see it as the outcome of socialization” (Piechowski, 2003, p. 289).
- Strong, positive developmental potential may not be required for growth: “under optimal conditions, even children with limited developmental potential can grow up to be good citizens with a strong sense of fairness” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 54).
- “Dąbrowski’s theory would lose none of its value were [levels I & II] not included, since the theory is mainly about multilevel development” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 71).

## 9 Dr. Piechowski and Dąbrowski – 3.

- Dr. Piechowski's views involve basic tenets of TPD:
- Level I: Drop primary integration, keep Level I, with new name: “adaptation,” and new focus – individuals exhibiting socially caused “moral disengagement – authoritarian behavior – not a genetically-based personality type – not an integration.”
- Level II: New name: “unilevel growth process.” Average person, second factor. “Disintegration may occur. There is still no development in Dąbrowski's sense but there is movement that may go in the direction of Level III.”
- Developmental potential is not genetic. DP, as described in TPD, may not be needed for “multilevel emotional growth.”
- It is “possible to imagine a harmonious society without a multilevel majority.”
- Self-actualization fits into Level IV.
  - I will focus here on six major theoretical issues.

# <sup>10</sup> Issue 1: Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes – 1.

- After leaving Edmonton, Dr. Piechowski continued to work with Dąbrowski: “our close collaboration continued until 1975” (Piechowski, 2008, pp. 45-46).
- Culminating their collaborative work on a book, while Dąbrowski was in Poland, “it fell to” Dr. Piechowski to prepare the book for publication. Dr. Piechowski submitted different titles to the publisher and made changes in authorship attributions. In the process of “editing and updating” the text, substantive changes were also made (some 50 pages were added). (Dąbrowski, 1977 [vol. 1]; Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977 [vol. 2]).
- To see all of these alterations, follow this link:  
<http://positivedisintegration.com/1977info.pdf>

[Dr. Piechowski has reviewed this PDF and confirmed its accuracy.]

# 11 Issue 1: Re-titling of the 1977 Volumes – 2.

- Dr. Dąbrowski's original manuscript titles:
  - ***Multilevelness of emotional and instinctive functions Part 1: Theory and description of levels of behavior.***
  - ***Multilevelness of emotional and instinctive functions Part 2: Types and Levels of Development.***
- Dr. Piechowski's revised titles as published in 1977:
  - ***Theory of levels of emotional development Volume 1 - Multilevelness and positive disintegration.***
  - ***Theory of levels of emotional development Volume 2 - From primary integration to self-actualization.***
- Dr. Dąbrowski rejected the books and insisted the original manuscripts be republished (done in 1996).
- These changes led to what Dr. Piechowski describes as a final “personal split” with Dr. Dąbrowski.

# Issue 1: Re-titling Created Confusion – 3.

- Re-titling has *apparently* led to ongoing confusion:
- “Dąbrowski’s theory of emotional development” which he called ‘positive disintegration’” (Silverman, 1983, p. 10).
- Piirto: “Dąbrowski Theory of Positive Disintegration (as it is called in Canada, or of Emotional Development as it is called in the United States)” (<http://personal.ashland.edu/jpiirto/twelve.htm>)
- “Since Dąbrowski’s death in 1980, his ‘Theory of Positive Disintegration’ often has been referred to as ‘Dąbrowski’s Theory of Emotional Development,’ as he placed greater emphasis on the role of emotions than most other theorists” (Silverman, 1993b, p. 639).
- “Dąbrowski’s . . . Theory of Positive Disintegration, also known as the Theory of Emotional Development” (Sisk, 2008, p. 26).
- In a 2008 lecture, Dr. Piechowski referred to “Dąbrowski’s theory of emotional development through positive disintegration.”

## Issue 1: Toward Clarity? – 4.

- Dr. Dąbrowski called his work **the theory of positive disintegration** to highlight the disintegrative process he felt was necessary for personality development.
- Dr. Piechowski says historically he used a “generic name” and portrayed **“Dąbrowski’s theory of emotional development”** as a theory describing and measuring emotional development (see Piechowski, 2014a).
- Dr. Piechowski now acknowledges the “proper name” of the theory is the *theory of positive disintegration* [The convention all researchers should use when referring to the theory] (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 12).
- In 2017, Dr. Piechowski used: “Dąbrowski’s theory of positive disintegration, a theory of emotional development” (Piechowski, 2017, p. 87).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Dąbrowski's Views.

- “a fairly high degree of primary integration is found in the average person; a very high degree in the psychopath.” (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 121)
- “two main qualitatively different stages and types of life: the heteronomous, which is biologically [1st factor] and socially determined [2nd factor], and the autonomous, which is determined by the multilevel dynamisms of the inner psychic milieu [3rd factor]” (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 5).
- As I understood this from Dr. Dąbrowski, level I is heteronomous, aka unilevel. Level III and above, autonomous (multilevel). Level II is transitional, a brief intense time of unilevel crisis – a test of character from which one normally will either regress or advance.

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Dąbrowski's Views.

- “The first stage, called primary integration, is characterized by mental structures and functions of a low level which are automatic and impulsive, determined by primitive, innate drives. At this stage, intelligence neither controls nor transforms basic drives. It is used in a purely instrumental way, so as to supply the means towards the ends determined by primitive drives. There is no inner conflict” (Dąbrowski, 1970, August 26-30, p. 4).
- (This paper was presented at the Laval conference and reflects the 1970 manuscript on *Multilevelness of instinctive and emotional functions*).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Dąbrowski's Views.

- “Unilevel disintegration consists of disintegrative processes on a single structural and emotional level. Unilevel disintegration begins with a loosening of the rigid structure of primary integration. Among its first symptoms are increased sensitivity to internal stimuli, vague feelings of disquietude, ambivalences and ambidendencies, various forms of disharmony, and, gradually, the nuclei of hierarchization of both the external stimuli and one's own mental structure. At the beginning this hierarchization is very weak. There is a continuous vacillation between ‘pros’ and ‘cons,’ no clear direction ‘up’ or ‘down’” (Dąbrowski, 1970, August 26-30, p. 5).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Kawczak's Views.

- “1. The primitively integrated type has a coherent structure of mental functions, subordinated to primitive drives. He uses intelligence exclusively as an instrument in the service of instinctive, impulsive desires. He does not show the capacity to transform stimuli, emotions and drives. There is in him no distinct conscious self. He is entirely determined and controlled by hereditary and environmental factors.

Depending on the genetic endowment, innate inclinations and environmental influences, primitively integrated individuals may represent a variety of socially positive or negative types, from good-natured, mild, even ‘motherly’ characters to aggressive, ruthless and calculating psychopaths” (Kawczak, 1970, p. 1).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Kawczak's Views.

- “2. The horizontally disintegrated individual is characterized by inconsistency and disorganization of mental functions through inner conflicts between drives of a similar developmental level. He shows ambivalences and ambitemperencies, feelings of disquietude and discontent with oneself, however without self-consciousness and the capacity to understand himself. Horizontally disintegrated individuals are confused, unable to take care of their own problems. They are the ones who more than any other group complain about their own helplessness and request psychotherapeutic assistance” (Kawczak, 1970, p. 1).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Kawczak's Views.

- “Although the statistical data about the distribution of psychological types distinguished in the theory of positive disintegration are not available it seems that a clear majority of people never reach beyond primary integration or after a short period of partial horizontal disintegration reintegrate at the former level. There seems to be 15-20 per cent of people who, at least temporarily, display symptoms of unilevel disintegration. Individuals at the third, fourth and fifth stage of mental development do not seem to constitute a large group. Cases of secondary integration are particularly rare, probably much below 1 per cent of the total population” (Kawczak, 1970, pp. 3-4).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Kawczak's Views.

- “To sum it up, there is a biological and environmental determinism at the lowest level of mental development. There is a weakening of the deterministic chain in unilevel disintegration and the emergence of what has traditionally been called ‘free will’ in multilevel disintegration” (Kawczak, 1970, p. 5).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Piechowski's Views.

- Dr. Piechowski: “Individual development may follow the maturational stages of the life cycle without any profound psychological transformation (i.e., without change in the emotional-cognitive structure). In such case there is no development in the sense of reorganization, and this developmental structure has been called primary, or primitive, integration. In such a life history an individual follows the path of environmental adaptation. He learns, works, and fits in, but he does not suffer mental breakdown or experience ecstasy. In contrast, when in a life history mental breakdown or true ecstasy does take place we have a disintegration” (1975b, pp. 247-248). [Dąbrowski “endorsed” this paper by providing a preface.]

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Piechowski's Views.

- “One can think of integration and disintegration as opposite poles of a continuum between maximum of structure and total lack of structure. This gets us only as far as unilevel disintegration, which, in fact, may be temporary and may revert back to primary integration” (Piechowski, 1975b, p. 265). [Dąbrowski “endorsed” this paper by providing a preface.]
- In Fort Lauderdale, in 2002, Dr. Piechowski said that because Level I and II are not associated with development *per se*, these levels are “totally irrelevant” to the theory. (See Piechowski, 2009, 2014a, 2017; Mendaglio & Tillier, 2015; Tillier, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

## Levels I &amp; II: Overview – Dr. Piechowski's Views.

- “Little significant inner life exists at Levels I (primary integration) and II (unilevel disintegration). . . . For Dąbrowski, inner life begins with multilevel processes of introspection, self-examination, and self-evaluation [Level III]” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 43; see also Piechowski, 2014a).
- “In regard to Levels I and II what I said was that Dąbrowski's theory would lose none of its value were these levels not included, since the theory is mainly about multilevel development” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 71).
- “The paradox of Dąbrowski's theory is that as a theory of development it includes two levels in which there is little or no development” (Piechowski, 2017, p. 88).

## Levels I & II: Overview – Confusion in the Literature.

- There has been subsequent confusion on the part of other authors:
- In a study of gifted students, Bailey (2011, p. 217) appears to utilize Dr. Dąbrowski's traditional approach— Level I as socialization, Level II as disintegration. However, it is also confusing because she found 70% of her sample fell into Level II:
  - “A number of our respondents are still within the Primary Integration (Level I) stage, which Dr. Piechowski (2003) describes as being marked by primary mental organizations aimed at gratifying biological needs and conforming to social norms.”

## Levels I & II: Overview – Confusion in the Literature.

- Bailey (2011, p. 217) continued:
  - “Level II, the current level for the majority of our sample, is a critical transition phase in Dąbrowski’s theory as it is during this phase that the process of positive disintegration begins. Positive disintegration is the process during which the previously held personality structure must come apart to be replaced by higher level personality structures.” . . . “That 70% of our sample population fell within this critical transition period highlights a critical need for appropriate educational and counseling interventions to support these students through this difficult process.”

## Levels I & II: Overview – Confusion in the Literature.

- Courtney Ackerman (2017) presented the following based on Bailey (2010) that appears to follow Dr. Piechowski's revised views of the levels:
  - “Level One – Primary Integration. Primary Integration is the most basic, primitive level of development. This level is driven by the first factor, with the satisfaction of basic needs and desires as the individual's only concerns. Those at this level (generally young children) have no need for deep or meaningful relationships with others, and disregard empathy, sympathy, or any acknowledgement of the needs and concerns of others (Bailey, 2010).”

## Levels I & II: Overview – Confusion in the Literature.

- Courtney Ackerman (2017) continued:
  - “Level Two – Unilevel Disintegration. Level two is governed by the second factor and focused on conformity and social comparison. In this level, the individual is concerned with ‘fitting in’ and is easily influenced by their social group. Some individuals at this level will begin to question the values and beliefs imposed upon them by their social group, and will begin the process of discovering their own personal values and beliefs.”

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- “The undeveloped or developing ‘self’ is integrated. It follows the dictates of drives; it follows social rules as long as it can use them for egocentric purposes. Its ‘ego’ and ‘superego’ may appear very strong. The fragmented self is a disintegrated self whose psychological functioning is unstable” (Piechowski, 1975a, pp. 43-44).
- “the integrated self represents the statistically predominant, strong and successful ideal of the world we live in. The unstable balance or fragmentation of Dąbrowski's level II does tend to produce longing for the firm security of primary integration” (Piechowski, 1975a, p. 46).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- “At least two forms of primary integration can be distinguished, an extreme one and a less extreme one. . . .The successful psychopath, the model for the extreme form of the level I person, gets ahead in life through ruthless competition, intent on winning and advancing himself at any cost. . . . The milder form of primary integration applies to ‘normals’ rather than successful psychopaths or near-psychopaths. . . Such ‘normals’ follow a stereotyped path of development with regard to social advancement. The course of their lives is generally predictable” (Piechowski, 1977, pp. 20-22).

See <http://positivedisintegration.com/197718.pdf> for the original pages.

## Issue 2: – Slide 17.

### Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- “It is true that the time of stress and transition may occasion some reflection, but there is none of the reevaluation of oneself and one’s life in a larger context of human existence that is characteristic of higher levels. The transition period is, then, a period of temporary disintegration followed by return to some form of primary integration. The hold of primary structure is strong and transitions from level I to II are rare and difficult, possible only if there are present some nuclei of instability, some cognitive complexity and some emotional responsiveness . . .

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- “. . . The milder form of the level I person appears similar to Loevinger's Conformist (1-3) because he goes by stereotypes and is still insensitive to individual differences. . . . Kohlberg's good boy-good girl and law-and-order orientations (stages 3 and 4) also represent milder forms of primary integration, for in both theories these individuals follow externally established rules” (Piechowski, 1977, p. 22).
- Dr. Piechowski continued: “The characteristics of authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford, 1950) seem to correspond closely to primary integration as well as to the lower stages in Kohlberg's and Loevinger's approach (Schmidt, 1977)” (Piechowski, 1977, p. 23).

## Issue 2: – Slide 19.

### Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “**Level I:** Absence of emotional dynamisms, absence of reflection, absence of self-observation and self-evaluation; absence of inner conflict; orientation toward external standards; self-interest as primary motivation; lack or little feeling for others and lack of insight into others” (Piechowski, 1979b, p. 138).
- Here is a typical example of his revised idea of level I:
  - “**Level I: Primary Integration** Egocentrism prevails. A person at this level lacks the capacity for empathy and self-examination. When things go wrong, someone else is always to blame; self-responsibility is not encountered here. With nothing within to inhibit personal ambition, individuals at Level I often attain power in society by ruthless means. *Dog-eat-dog mentality*” (Piechowski, 1997, p. 374).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “To my mind, one of the five levels is highly problematic. It is Level I or primary integration. Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid personality structure. The closest to this idea is the concept of authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950). It began as a study of personality traits found in prejudiced, or ethnocentric individuals. They are non-reflective, egocentric and they identify only with their own group, they lack empathy, insight and self-criticism. Their thinking is stereotyped, they hold black and white conceptions of good and bad, and have a tendency toward physical aggression. They view others as objects and are manipulative and exploitative. They value status, power, and wealth (Schmidt, 1977).” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 178). (on Schmidt, see Appendix 1).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- As Dr. Piechowski continues, he also rejects any genetic basis of personality:
  - “But the study found that prejudice and ethnocentrism are not built into people but are the result of child rearing that emphasizes obedience to authority, respect for power, and which sanctions aggression against all those who are perceived as a threat. This means that such individuals are made, not born. They are the outcome of particular socialization which fosters antagonism toward anything that is different, unfamiliar and contrary to one's tradition” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 178).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- Dr. Piechowski continued: “A world which stresses competitiveness and justifies any means of gain, creates a climate in which another’s gain is one’s loss. It operates on fears of falling behind and going under. People’s lives are constricted by a climate of uncertainty of one’s survival. *If people are operating at Level I it is because this is the condition of the world, not because their psyche is constituted that way.* As we know the environment has the power to support or to limit the expression of a person’s developmental potential. (italics in original) (Piechowski, 2002, p. 178).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “Although Dąbrowski viewed primary integration as a rigid [genetic] personality structure, it makes more sense to see it as the outcome of socialization. *If people are operating at Level I it is because this is the condition of the world, not because their psyche is constituted that way*” (italics in original) (Piechowski, 2003, p. 289).
- “Level I is not a personality structure, but instead is the result of limited developmental potential of people trying to survive in a ruthlessly competitive and economically uncertain world” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 55).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- The whole construct of primary integration should be reconsidered – “as it is neither primary nor a personality structure but the outcome of the way society is” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 76).
- “Another example of Dąbrowski's untested yet often repeated view was that about 70% of the population is confined to Level I. . . . Dąbrowski's Level I, and the other ones as well, are broad categories with ample room for further distinctions” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 12).
- Primary integration ranges “from *psychopathic* to *normal* (by which he meant *not multilevel*)” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 15).
  - [Mika (2015) presented such distinctions for Level I.]

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “By definition, primary integration has a developmental potential so limited that inner transformation, the essence of multilevel development, is out of reach. Consequently, the theory makes it clear that primary integration is not where development can start under any conditions” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 14).
- The behavior Dr. Dąbrowski described at Level I “is not a personality structure but the consequence of a culture that increasingly puts distance between people” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 15).
- “Primary integration (level I) is not a starting point for development. Its breakdown may lead to unilevel disintegration but no further” (Piechowski, 2014b, p. 37).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “The concept of primary integration – originally called primitive integration by Dąbrowski – was not examined until Margaret Schmidt showed in her [masters] thesis that it largely corresponds to the concept of authoritarian personality (Schmidt, 1977). Authoritarian personality results from strict parenting and social pressures that enforce conformity and respect for authority; that is, those who hold power. Therefore, it is not an integration either inherited genetically or arrived at by the individual himself” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 13).
- Is this what Schmidt (1977) really said? Not **quite**.  
See appendix 1.

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- [See Appendix 2 on authoritarian personality.]
- [Schmidt's masters thesis is not available on the Internet.]
- “Whatever later looks like primary integration, is a *secondary* development distorting the emotional development we are designed for through biological evolution. This emotional design is built into the brain to be activated in infancy” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 179).
- “Authoritarian personality results from strict parenting and social pressures that enforce conformity and respect for authority; that is, those who hold power. Therefore, it is not an integration either inherited genetically or arrived at by the individual himself” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 13).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- Discussing Milgram's famous obedience experiment:
  - “The high proportion of people who obeyed the authority figure to the end demonstrates that the concept of primary integration does not fit reality. It is the response to the situation, and the person's assigned role in it, that for a period of time leads to harming others. Does this make people part-time psychopaths, as Dąbrowski would have it?” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 16).
    - See Perry (2012/2013) and Doliński (2017).
    - “review of the relevant research on the Milgram paradigm reveals that the evidence on situational determinants of obedience is less clear than is generally recognized; contrary to the commonly held view, personality measures can predict obedience” (Blass, 1991, p. 398).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “When character is deficient, love and caring are almost always lacking in the formative years of early childhood. What we also know today is that physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children is commonplace . . . . Dąbrowski could not consider any of this because he was developing his theory in the 1950s before the most significant findings about abuse appeared in the literature and before the advances in research on early childhood . . . . We are social from the day we are born, and we fully expect to be cared for and loved. In light of our knowledge of early child development, Dąbrowski's concept of primary integration has no empirical basis” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 13).
- “Abolishing the concept of primary integration does not mean that the concept of Level I should be abolished” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 14).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- [See Appendix 3 describing moral disengagement.]
- Dr. Piechowski said “moral disengagement” is the role model of Level I and presented Bandura’s eight mechanisms (Piechowski, 2014a, pp. 14-15). (see Bandura, 2016).
- “The [above] mechanisms are the ways in which normal, decent, law-abiding persons may find themselves in situations that **temporarily** make them do what Dąbrowski saw as psychopathic behavior. Such behavior is deprived of consideration for others. The behavior is not a personality structure but the consequence of a culture that increasingly puts distance between people” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 15, italics added).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- Looking at research by Ruf on highly gifted adults, Dr. Piechowski reviewed 5 subjects found to be “self-serving, egocentric people who have little consideration for others.” He said: “Thus, on the one hand, Ruf’s placement of these five cases at Dąbrowski’s Level I appears supported but, on the other hand, the cases show little to meet the criteria of primary integration: desire for material gains, goals of attaining power or fame, ruthlessly competing with others, provoking conflicts with others, and showing evidence of a rigid psychological structure. There is only some evidence of egocentrism, lack of self-reflection, and perhaps lack of expressions of empathy. Consequently, if these cases represent Level I, and they do, they do not fit Dąbrowski’s criteria of primary integration. These cases help us to see that it makes sense to separate the concept of Level I from primary integration, a descriptive but ill-defined term” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 16).

## Level I: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “Dąbrowski’s characterization of primary integration as self-serving, manipulative, and lacking in consideration for others is more negative. The type of behavior that involves harm to others is most often transitory and adopted under conditions of obedience to authority and other mechanisms that bypass one’s conscience. This fits precisely with Dąbrowski’s concept of Level I. Therefore, the concept of primary integration should be abandoned and replaced with Level I” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 17).

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- “Unilevel disintegration denotes a radical departure from the cohesive undifferentiated structure of primary integration. Externality is still very strong but there are deviations from it; rigidity is replaced by hesitation, doubt, wavering attitudes, and changing likes and dislikes. Emotional relationships with others exist but may have emotional components to excess (e.g., overdependence on others, jealousy). Patterns of thought are often circular, although they may appear sophisticated. Internal conflicts appear but are often more readily resolved by chance or superficial considerations than by internal struggle. When internal conflicts are severe, they lack the crucial possibility of developmental resolution. Behavior is essentially disoriented and conforming to external standards. It follows changing fads, ideologies, and leaders with little evaluation. When behavior is nonconforming, even rebellious, it is still without direction here—it is not based on autonomously developed principles. Because of the general looseness and lack of hierarchical structure at this level of development, it can result in the most severe mental disorders: psychosis, schizophrenia, phobias, psychosomatic disorders, alcoholism, or drug addiction” (Piechowski, 1975b, p. 260). [again, to be fair, Dąbrowski “endorsed” this paper by providing a preface.]

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Early Views.

- Level II: “There are two ways in which Dąbrowski (1967) applies the term unilevel disintegration. . . . 1). a temporary departure from primary integration, a short-term breakdown of its rigid, tight cohesion; in this sense, unilevel disintegration is equivalent to a period of disequilibrium, often followed by reintegration, the reestablishment of the original primary structure. . . . 2). a formation of personality with built-in imbalances of physiological and psychological systems, autonomic liabilities, polarizations, a structure made up a varied, uneven parts that do not match, do not fit together, and do not work together. Consequently the structure is somewhat loose, comes apart under the impact of stress and emotional tension, and is not equipped with resources for retooling and reconstruction of a more coordinated whole. The schizothymic and the cyclic types are among representative examples of such unevenly constituted forms. . . . It encompasses total mental fragmentation as in psychosis and drug-induced states, a middle range of more stereotyped forms of behavior – inferiority toward others, dependency, need to conform, seeking approval and admiration – and at the other extreme *partially integrated* forms that convey certain degree of stability” (Piechowski, 1977, pp. 23-26).

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- ***As far as I can tell***, this is the first introduction of Dr. Piechowski's revised emphasis of Level II: de-emphasizing disintegration, fragmentation, and normalizing the level by focusing on social conformity:
  - **“Level II:** Fluctuations between opposite feelings and extremes of mood; changeable and contradictory courses of action; *dependence on social opinion (“what will others say”)* coupled with feelings of inferiority, sometimes alternating with feelings of superiority. Plenty of feeling but going in all directions, often confused” (Piechowski, 1979b, p. 138 italics added).
- [It bears emphasizing that the reader should consult the original materials for a full and fair representation of both Dr. Piechowski and Dr. Dąbrowski]

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- In de-emphasizing disintegration, Piechowski (2008, p. 75) said: “I feel that Dąbrowski extolled the virtues of inner conflict perhaps too much, as he believed in the ennobling value of suffering but failed to mention that the ennobling is possible only if one accepts the suffering as something to grow through. Acceptance is essential. It is one of the lessons from the lives of Peace Pilgrim, Etty Hillesum, and Ashley. Rather than condemning, accepting one's inner ‘what is’ as the starting point is a vital step in emotional growth toward realizing “what ought to be” (Piechowski, 2003).”

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- Piechowski (1997, p. 374) is a good illustration of his revised vision of level II:
  - “**Level II: Unilevel Disintegration** Individuals are influenced primarily by their social group and by mainstream values, or they are moral relativists for whom ‘anything goes’ morally speaking. They often exhibit ambivalent feelings and indecisive flip-flop behavior because they have no clear-cut set of self-determined internal values. Inner conflicts are horizontal, a contest between equal, competing values. *A reed shaken in the wind—Matthew, XI, 7*”

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- Dr. Piechowski is passionate in his views of level II:
  - “Like Level I, unilevel growth also tends to be looked down upon with multilevel condescension. And it is equally unjustified and offensive. . . .Unilevel development characterizes those in whom a sense of self is undeveloped. Such individuals depend on external authority for a sense of who they are, derived from their function, domestic or other” (Piechowski, 2002, p. 180).
  - “Over the years I have come to the understanding that many developmental paths are possible and that emotional growth can take place in Level II even though it lacks multilevel character” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 71).
  - “Partial disintegrations and partial integrations [in Level II] are surely more common than the pathologies” (Piechowski, 2009, pp. 71-71).

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- “I feel very strongly that emotional growth within the unilevel universe of Level II should not be underestimated but respected and explored further. This raises the question as to whether it is possible to facilitate a transition to multilevel emotional growth if a person's developmental potential is limited. And is it possible to imagine a harmonious society without a multilevel majority? I feel it is possible—to imagine” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- “Level II is not always characterized by disintegration, because it carries the possibility of partial integration, or adaptive integration, that follows the conventions and dictates of society and one's immediate environment” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 69).

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- In reference to Level II: “I find it misleading to call something a disintegration when it also contains an integration” (Piechowski, 2014a, p. 13).
- “Unilevel disintegration (level II) cannot become multilevel unless the multilevel ‘own forces’\* are present. A flatland does not become a mountain unless there is a force to push it upward. Only with the emergence of an inner psychic milieu and the transformative dynamisms of level III (such as dissatisfaction with oneself, inferiority toward oneself, dis-identification from what is felt to be lower in oneself), the process may continue to the next level (IV) when persons become more in charge . . .

## Level II: Dr. Piechowski's Revised Views.

- . . . of their inner growth as an *organized multilevel disintegration*. Finally, full selfhood is achieved in *secondary integration (level V)*” (Piechowski, 2014b, p. 37).
- “Dąbrowski named the ‘own forces’ of the psyche the ‘third factor,’ next to the social milieu (second factor), and one’s constitution (first factor), as the shapers of personality development” (Piechowski, 2014b, p. 32).
- Dr. Piechowski now says the average person is at Level II, a level he now calls “unilevel growth process” (email, March 21, 2018).
- “Level II represents unilevel development in which disintegration may occur. There is still no development in Dąbrowski’s sense, but there is movement that may go in the direction of Level III” (email, March 27, 2018).

## Level II: Dr. Dąbrowski's Views – Summary.

- Dr. Dąbrowski named Level II to reflect its basic feature: unilevel disintegration, characterized by brief, often intense crises between equivalent alternatives.
- Dr. Dąbrowski stressed the intense, transitional nature of Level II: “Prolongation of unilevel disintegration often leads to reintegration on a lower level, to suicidal tendencies, or to psychosis” (Dąbrowski, 1964, p. 7).
- Unless one falls back to Level I or progresses on to Level III, one chronically at Level II risks finding oneself in “a trap of a rapidly growing mental tension” – a drama “without exit” (Dąbrowski, 1970, p. 135).
- Level II: “perhaps they present twenty percent of all people” (quoted in Rankel, 2008).

## Issue 2: – Slide 43.

### Level II: Summary.

- **Summary:** There are now two different constructs describing Level II:
  - **1).** Dr. Dąbrowski: Level II is a transitional level, typified by the intense crises of unilevel disintegration.
  - **2).** Dr. Piechowski: Level II should be called “unilevel growth process” and include the average person being influenced by 2<sup>nd</sup> factor. “Disintegration may occur. There is still no development in Dąbrowski’s sense but there is movement that may go in the direction of Level III.”

## Issue 2: – Slide 44.

### Issue 2: Conclusion.

- The removal of primary integration (but retaining Level I as “moral disengagement”) and to view Level II as dominated by second factor and only partly involving disintegration, and changing the names of the levels, represent major theoretical departures from Dr. Dąbrowski’s theory – it is no longer appropriate to refer to it as “Dąbrowski’s theory” with these changes.
- The lower levels are critical because Dr. Dąbrowski explicitly described lower and higher levels in order to account for both the lowest and highest behaviors seen in humans. He proposed mechanisms by which development can occur (PD and ML), to move from the lowest levels to the higher. Finally, he proposed prerequisites for this growth – development potential.

## Issue 2: Piechowski's interpretation is unique.

- Piechowski's interpretation of level I and II is unique.
- In contemporary Polish literature we see the levels as Dąbrowski formulated them: “According to Dąbrowski (1986), average people and psychopaths find themselves on the lowest possible level of psychological development and personality structure. This is termed 'primary integration,' and those at this stage are described as unconscious, lacking a hierarchy of values, and influenced primarily by biological and environmental forces. As a hierarchy of values is absent on this level, these people rarely experience inner conflicts over their values or their actions” (Stupak & Dyga, 2018, p. 790).

## Issue 3: Development & DP – 1.

- Dr. Dąbrowski defined developmental potential as “The constitutional endowment which determines the character and the extent of mental growth possible for a given individual” (Dąbrowski, 1972, p. 293).
- Dr. Dąbrowski included: The three factors of development; Dynamisms; Psychoneuroses; Positive disintegration; Developmental instinct; Creative instinct; Instinct for self-perfection; Overexcitability; Special talents and abilities.
- Dr. Piechowski presented a narrowed view of DP: “The main part of the paper is a description of five forms of psychic overexcitability – the principal components of the developmental potential” (Piechowski, 1979a, p. 27).
  - Here he said: “The defining characteristics of DP are five forms of overexcitability and special talents and abilities” (Piechowski, 1979a, p. 28).

## Issue 3: Development & DP – 2.

- Here he gives a different emphasis: “The defining characteristics of DP are forms of overexcitability and developmental dynamisms” (Piechowski, 1975b, p. 250).
- “Under optimal conditions, even children with limited developmental potential can grow up to be good citizens with a strong sense of fairness” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 54).
- “Speculating about . . . developmental potential, we came up with two terms: conserving and transforming. Potential for conserving growth would allow it to continue through Level II close to Level III, but not any further. Transforming growth, however, would continue” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 74).

## Issue 3: Development & DP – 3.

- Dr. Piechowski now appears to outline two approaches to development and to developmental potential:
  - 1). Following Dąbrowski's approach: "Personal growth is much like scaling a mountain rather than a sequential unfolding of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Imagining personal growth as ascent of a mountain, with all of the peril, tests of courage, and perseverance, suggests that not everyone has the strength, endurance, and determination to go far; few manage to reach the summit. Also, not everyone is interested in climbing and may prefer to remain in the valley. Some may not even be aware of the mountain. The endowment for how far in scaling the figurative mountain an individual can go constitutes developmental potential. An endowment for multilevel development signifies that a person starts already a significant distance up the slope. A person with limited potential starts in the valley and does not reach far" (Piechowski, 2008, p. 64).

## Issue 3: Development & DP – 4.

- 2). Dr. Piechowski reviewed cases of “unilevel development” at Level II, concluding these cases represent significant growth:
  - “This raises the question as to whether it is possible to facilitate a transition to multilevel emotional growth if a person’s developmental potential is limited” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
  - “The above examples show that not all material has to be generated from the framework of Dąbrowski’s theory. Research literature can be explored to flesh out some of his concepts in living color.” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).

## Issue 3: Development & DP – 5.

- “Recall the example of Ralph, that showed how optimal families raise children who are responsible, who have a strong sense of fairness and justice, and who care for others even when their DP is short on the critical overexcitabilities, emotional and intellectual. Child development research has indeed established that the optimal conditions for growing up are like those that Ralph’s parents created (Bowlby, 1969; Sroufe, 1995)” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- **Summary:** Dr. Piechowski appears to outline two growth processes; one reflecting TPD, governed by DP (ascent of a mountain), and another path (unilevel development) “not generated from” Dąbrowski’s TPD, and apparently much less dependent on DP.

## 64 Issue 4: A Strong Focus on Overexcitability.

- Dr. Piechowski's emphasis was **mostly** on overexcitability: this **contributed** to a different and narrower view of TPD in the gifted field. For example, he did not discuss positive disintegration, psychoneuroses or the major constructs of TPD in his 1979 chapter (Piechowski, 1979a).
- Example: Some authors have referred to "Dąbrowski's Theory of Overexcitabilities" (Ngara, 2017).
- In his definition of developmental potential, he left out the third factor: "The defining characteristics of DP are five forms of overexcitability and special talents and abilities" (Piechowski, 1979a, p. 28).
- Dr. Piechowski **seldom** mentions the third factor when he discusses developmental potential.

## 65 Issue 4: A Strong Focus on Overexcitability.

- Dr. Piechowski later offered a rationale for not discussing psychoneuroses or positive disintegration:
  - “Therapy was seen as something for sick people, it carried a stigma. But gifted children were living under the dark cloud of old myths that they are odd, abnormal, weak or sickly. To try to explain psychoneuroses in that climate would have been disastrous” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 71).
- Research on OE has often been conducted without reference to TPD, or to the other components of DP (e.g. third factor, instincts, dynamisms, etc.).
- [Please do not get the impression that I think the abysmal state of affairs in TPD research is Dr. Piechowski’s fault – it clearly is not].

## 66 Issue 4: A Strong Focus on Overexcitability.

- Ironically, research on OE in the gifted field has now been criticized for the “atheoretical use of OEs that seems to be rampant in the field” (Vuyk, Kerr, & Krieschok, 2016, p. 60) “without connecting them to Dąbrowski’s larger TPD (Vuyk, Krieschok, & Kerr, 2016, p. 193).
- A study of depersonalization disorder (DPD) used “the overexcitability theoretical model” and the OEQ-II, finding “participants with clinical levels of depersonalization manifested increased emotional overexcitability to internal and external stimuli” (Thomson & Jaque, 2018, p. 155).
- This article did not mention, or refer to, Dr. Dąbrowski or to the theory of positive disintegration.

## 67 Issue 5: Dr. Piechowski and Multilevelness.

- Initially: “The concept of multilevelness is thus the starting point for the analysis of all forms of behavior and their development. It represents a ‘new system of thought,’ suited to represent developmental approach on the official map of psychology” (Piechowski, 1975b, p.246).
- Subsequently: “And is it possible to imagine a harmonious society without a multilevel majority? I feel it is possible – to imagine” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 72).
- Questions: What is Dr. Piechowski’s overall approach to development? To multilevelness? So, if you can *imagine* a harmonious society without multilevelness, then what would a harmonious society be based on? What is the ideal goal of individual development, if not multilevelness?
- In my opinion, while Dr. Piechowski *could imagine this*, Dr. Dąbrowski would not endorse the idea.

## 68 Issue 5: Dąbrowski's View of Multilevelness.

- Ideal individual growth is achieving multilevelness, and seeking autonomy and one's personality ideal.
- Multilevel exemplars (see Zagzebski, 2011, 2013, 2017):
  - – herald the next step in human evolution.
  - – serve as role models of what is possible.
  - – challenge one to take active control of one's development and strive for ideals and growth.
- Today, society is based upon primary integration, with self-centered, self-serving unilevel values.
- An ideal society would be based upon a majority of multilevel individuals and on multilevel principles, values and ideals, reflecting other-centered motives.

## Issue 6: The Role of Self-actualization.

- From material Piechowski added to the 1977 books:
  - “We shall try to demonstrate that Maslow’s concept of SA fits the structure of Level IV and that, consequently, the traits of SA logically follow from that structure” (Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977, pp. 158-159).
  - “Self-actualization, as a psychological norm suggested by Maslow, now finds support in the framework of the theory of positive disintegration as an attribute of the Level IV structure” (Dąbrowski & Piechowski, 1977, pp. 218-219).
- “The correspondence between Saint Exupéry’s material and SA and between the terms of SA and the terms of positive disintegration shows that the structure of Level IV underlies all of the characteristics of SA” (Piechowski, 1978, p. 229).

## Issue 6: Self-actualization and Level IV.

- “In Level IV, we have an explicit and detailed developmental structure which accounts for the pervasiveness and the cohesion of the traits of SA” (Piechowski, 1978, p. 230).
- “Maslow’s self-actualizing person fits Level IV; the self-actualized person—the enlightened one—fits Level V.” “The early stages of self-actualization” . . . “correspond to Level III growth processes” (Piechowski, 1978, p. 20).
- “The morally gifted do not need to fully represent the level of self-actualization demanded by Dąbrowski’s theory, but the strength of their emotional overexcitability and of the developmental dynamisms that move them *in the direction* of self-actualization, is the guarantee of their higher moral discernment” (Piechowski, 1979a, p. 51, italics in original).

## Issue 6: Self-actualization and Level IV.

- “Objections to equating self-actualization with Level IV came not only from Dąbrowski but also from people who read Saint-Exupéry’s biography and found that his relationship with his wife was less than ideal and that he had a mistress. This violated Dąbrowski’s saying that people at a high level of development have deep and loyal relationships” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 57).
- “Perhaps the question to decide is this: Do all self-actualizing people meet the criteria of Dąbrowski’s Level IV? The reverse, all people who meet the criteria of Level IV are self-actualizing, can be safely assumed to be true” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 60).

## Issue 6: Self-actualization and Level IV.

- “Piechowski (1978) showed the close correspondence between these two theoretical frameworks – Maslow’s and Dąbrowski’s” (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991, p. 58).
- “This study was carried out on the assumption that Maslow’s self-actualization and Dąbrowski’s Level 4 are different constructs of the same underlying phenomenon” (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991, p. 58).
- “The demonstration that Maslow’s construct of self-actualization and Level 4 in Dąbrowski’s theory have an exact correspondence (Piechowski, 1978) is of particular significance” (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991, p. 61).
- “There has not been, until now, a method of identifying self-actualizing people. Maslow left no case studies, no instruments have been developed from individual cases of bona fide self-actualizers nor tested out on them” (Brennan & Piechowski, 1991, p. 60) [see Shostrom, 1964].

## Issue 6: Self-actualization and Level IV.

- “Self-actualization fits into Level IV (p. 283) . . . At Level IV, we encounter true self-actualizing people (p. 292) . . . The theory has one more level beyond self-actualization because Dąbrowski looked at these extraordinary people first and did not concern himself whether they existed in statistically significant numbers” (Piechowski, 2003, p. 314).
- “The fit between Level IV as the structural skeleton and self-actualization as the flesh of rich description with which to cover the bones is too good not to be true” (Piechowski, 2008, p. 58).

## Issue 6: Dr. Piechowski's Explanation.

- “As Saint-Exupéry was Dąbrowski's choice, [of an example of a Level IV person] I submitted [a] paper under my name and his. I sent a copy to Dąbrowski but got no response. It took almost two years before I got the galleys. They came without Dąbrowski's name on them. As it turned out, he wrote to the editor of *Genetic Psychology Monographs* asking that his name be dropped from the paper. To his credit, he did not block the publication, but it was odd that he did not inform me of his decision. So I asked him, and he explained that every paper on his theory should have his name as the first author. However, there was also another reason. He felt strongly that Maslow's belief that satisfaction of lower needs would more or . . .

## 75 Issue 6: “Dąbrowski Just Didn’t Understand.”

. . . less automatically move people toward self-actualization was fundamentally wrong. He didn’t know that Maslow had changed his position and realized that self-actualization does not necessarily follow satisfaction of all of the needs below (Maslow, 1971). I believe he must not have read Maslow’s description of self-actualizing people nor gotten through my paper (it is rather dense). His conclusion was that his theory and Maslow’s could not be commensurate. He never understood that by providing a theoretical structure for Maslow’s concept of self-actualization, his theory was showing its power. Here were two independently developed conceptions that had a perfect correspondence. How often does this happen?” (Piechowski, 2008, pp. 56-57).

## Issue 6: They Never Understood.

- “It is a pity that Dąbrowski never understood that placing self-actualizing people within the structure of his theory, rather than diminish it, showed its power” (Piechowski, 2009, p. 73).
- “Dąbrowski never understood, nor do Mendaglio and Tillier, that Maslow’s work was a confirmation of his construct of Level IV and that this gave evidence of the power of his theory as a framework enabling us to see other findings in relation to each other” (Piechowski, 2015, p. 232).
- Dąbrowski related several issues he had with Maslow to me.\* One related to Maslow not qualitatively differentiating animals and humans. As well, he felt that Maslow’s approach to self-actualization was unilevel.

\*See the section on Maslow.

## A Pathway Forward?

- Mendaglio and Tillier (2015, p. 220) suggested two possible resolutions:
  - “(a) Piechowski might differentiate his work from that of the originator of the theory as Jung did [from Freud] and propose his own theory under his own name or, alternatively,
  - (b) he could take the approach that Robbie Case did in developing a neo-Piagetian theory and integrate his views in a neo-Dąbrowskian, conceptualization, amending TPD to reflect a Piechowskian perspective” [put forth under his own name].
- Dr. Piechowski replied (2015).

## Summary – 1.

- Dr. Piechowski has made a number of observations of TPD that have influenced the literature.
- Initially, confusion arose as his ideas were not clearly differentiated from Dąbrowski's.
- Awareness of these issues is critical for those who want to fully understand and apply Dąbrowski's TPD.
- Dr. Piechowski (2014a) advocated “rethinking Dąbrowski's theory” and Mendaglio and Tillier (2015) replied. He subsequently replied: Piechowski (2015).
- His second “rethinking” article was Piechowski (2017).

## Summary – 2.

- Dr. Piechowski rejected Dr. Dąbrowski's view of Level II as transitional and dominated by unilevel disintegration:
  - “The concept of unilevel disintegration, however, cannot be applied wholly to Level II because the majority of lives identified within this level are more or less stable. Even Dąbrowski's concept of partial integration seems to have limited application because it implies that there is some ‘disintegration’ going on or that the person is chronically on the brink of one. *This makes little sense.* Instead, we should conclude that the lives of most people follow the stages of lifespan development and that some may be so unreflective that they match Level I and others are somewhat more reflective and match Level II” (Piechowski, 2017, p. 93, italics added).

## Summary – 3.

- I have included this quote in the summary because it succinctly captures the dilemma: Dr. Piechowski says that some of Dr. Dąbrowski's constructs "make little sense" and he favors different conclusions.
- The quote also illustrates another dilemma: Dr. Piechowski's occasional contradictions.
  - Example: He concluded "the lives of most people follow the stages of lifespan development" (Piechowski, 2017, p. 93). Yet in the opening paragraphs of this same paper, Dr. Piechowski rejected a stage approach: "The challenge in understanding the theory lies in the fact that the levels are not successive stages but represent different types of development" (Piechowski, 2017, p. 87).

## Summary – 4.

- In summary, in my opinion, rather than “rethinking Dąbrowski’s theory,” both Dr. Piechowski and the gifted community would be better served if he developed his own constructs and promoted his own theory that could then be compared to Dr. Dąbrowski’s original.
- It is critical that future scholars have available Dr. Dąbrowski’s original constructs as he wrote them, to compare with Dr. Piechowski’s (and others), to design future research to address some of these critical questions – for example, the nature of levels I and II.
- In my opinion, theory building and research based upon the interpretations of others will not advance our understanding of the theory of positive disintegration.

## Misattributions to Dr. Piechowski – 1.

- For some reason there has been a lot of confusion when authors refer to the relative contributions of Dr. Dąbrowski and Dr. Piechowski.
- I attribute this confusion to inadequate research rigor on the part of subsequent authors.
- Examples: “Based on the work of Polish psychologist, Dąbrowski, Piechowski (1979, 1986) theorizes that extreme sensitivity or overexcitability indicates potential for high levels of development, particularly for self-actualization and moral vigor. . . . In Piechowski’s theory, there are five levels of personality development from lowest to highest: Level (1) self-centered; Level (2) inner fragmentation and conforming to expectations of others; Level (3) vulnerable autonomy; Level (4) self-actualization, and Level (5) universal compassion and self-sacrifice” (Cohen & Ambrose, 1993, p. 344).

## Misattributions to Dr. Piechowski – 2.

- “The past experiences provided Dąbrowski food for serious thought and certainly enriched fodder for developing his theory which, later, his colleague, Piechowski (2003), adapted to create the continuum of five developmental levels in personality structure: primary integration, unilevel disintegration, multilevel disintegration, directed multilevel disintegration, and secondary integration” (Chia, 2017, p. 651).
- “Michael Piechowski named these heightened levels of experiencing the world 'overexcitabilities' (or OEs), and he categorized them into five dimensions” (Galbraith & Delisle, 2015).
- “Later, Piechowski (1979, 2006), who was a student of Dąbrowski, described five areas of heightened sensitivity or OEs that represented developmental potential and could lead to this advanced development” (Vuyk, 2015, p. 15).
- [Dąbrowski used the term overexcitability in 1929].