How should we understand the self, as well as personal, relational and systemic growth? This cross-disciplinary book proposes a radical new way of answering these questions. It rests on a non-representational theory of knowledge on how to approach and understand the self and action more broadly. This work aims to rehabilitate the Aristotelian unity between action and knowledge according to a certain ideal representation of the good life. Although it has never been lost, the Aristotelian emphasis on excellence in moral character and on practical reason as preconditions for achieving happiness has gradually been degraded. This book suggests that this division has happened thanks to a split between knowledge and action that can be traced back to the origins of modernity. Modern academic disciplines in general, and psychology in particular, are based on the idealization of theoretical, hypothetical and abstract reason as a morally neutral ideal, suggesting this idealisation must guide human action. Modern psychology emphasises results and creating theory that span across various separate domains ranging from human cognition, emotion, identity, development and the self, among other fields. This book aims to systematically integrate those domains in a more profound and meaningful proposal relevant for current times and challenges.

Based on previous research bridging philosophy, psychology and neuroscience, the authors identify two alternative paradigms for conceiving of the self and human development: the so-called "autonomous self" (AS) and the "inter-processual self" (IPS). Each gives rise to opposing kinds of moral valuing and meaning making, as well as ways to act and relate to others and life. On the grounds of ontological, epistemological and teleological concerns, IPS refutes the idea of self-autonomy; it posits that the self understands and experiences role integrity *in* relationship to others. Therefore, in opposition to the prominent theories of self and human action within mainstream modern branches of psychology, IPS’s self, action and role integrity are processually produced and are defined as an integral relationship grounded in human virtue and in mutuality, under assumptions of *free and open systems*.

Inspired by the personalist philosophy of Leonardo Polo, this theoretical proposal aims to overcome the reductionism of the modern paradigm, and to complement Aristotelian insights on human nature with the invaluable richness of the human person. This amounts to a personalist virtue ethics approach and is supported by a broad range of authors, philosophers, and key representative psychologists from different cultural, geographical, and temporal backgrounds and origins. It offers a sound philosophical basis and provides better conceptual and descriptive keys for approaching the debates on human development in a current, novel way. This book considers the person as an ethical being and as the foundational cornerstone of a new theory of self, action and knowing that achieves decisive distance from modern theory’s limitations. To keep on-going dialogue on human development open, the authors introduce a new theoretical model (IPS) which can be scientifically measured and tested; they also suggest its further application in concrete, practical realms, thus touching on how adoption of the IPS paradigm inspires a renewed view of human cognition, education, governance, and business management.