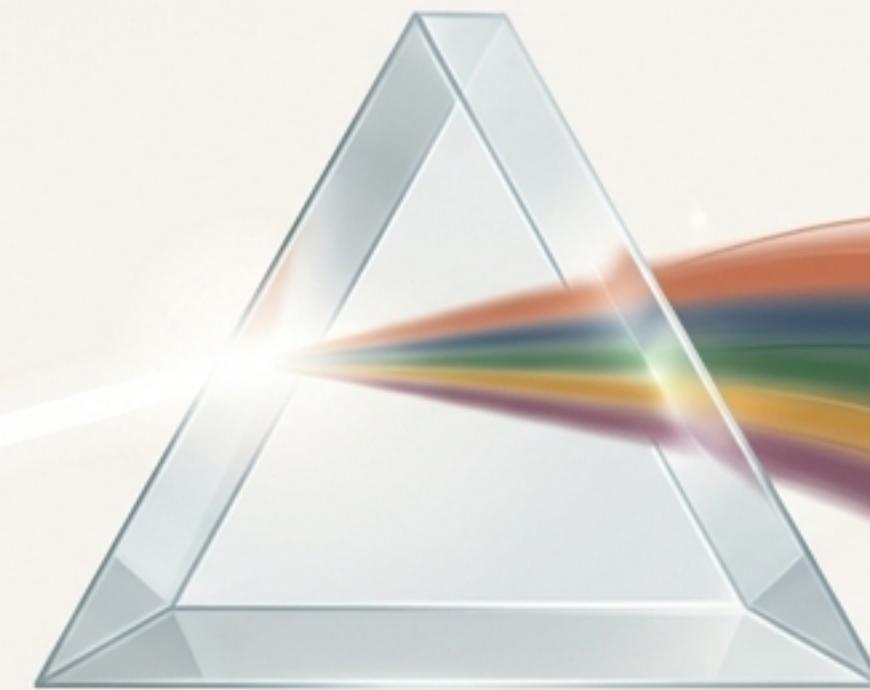




# How do worldviews form in an age of constant information?

We are surrounded by data, opinions, and narratives. Yet, people who consume the same information can arrive at vastly different conclusions. This isn't just about what we know—it's about *how* we come to know it. How are our beliefs shaped, and what allows them to harden or evolve?

# A New Lens: The Learning States Metaphor

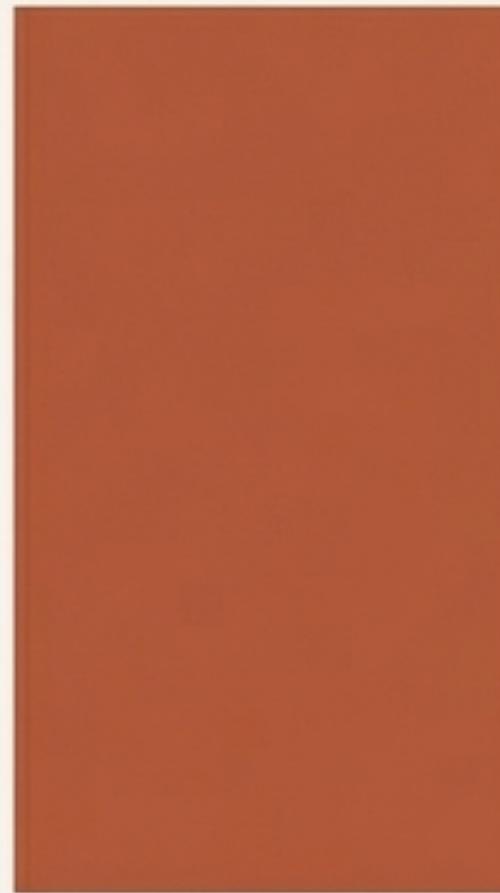


To understand how worldviews form, we can look at the underlying “learning state” an individual inhabits. This metaphor presents learning as a developmental process, not a hierarchy of intelligence. Each state represents a distinct way of engaging with information, experience, and meaning.

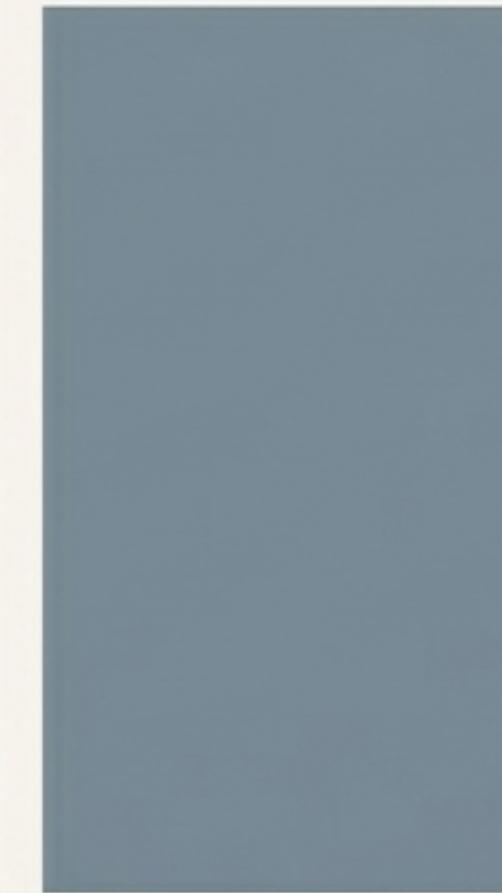
These states are not fixed identities. People may move between them across different contexts or over the course of their lives.

**L**earning is not about becoming ‘right,’ but about expanding the capacity to see, reflect, and relate responsibly within an increasingly complex world.

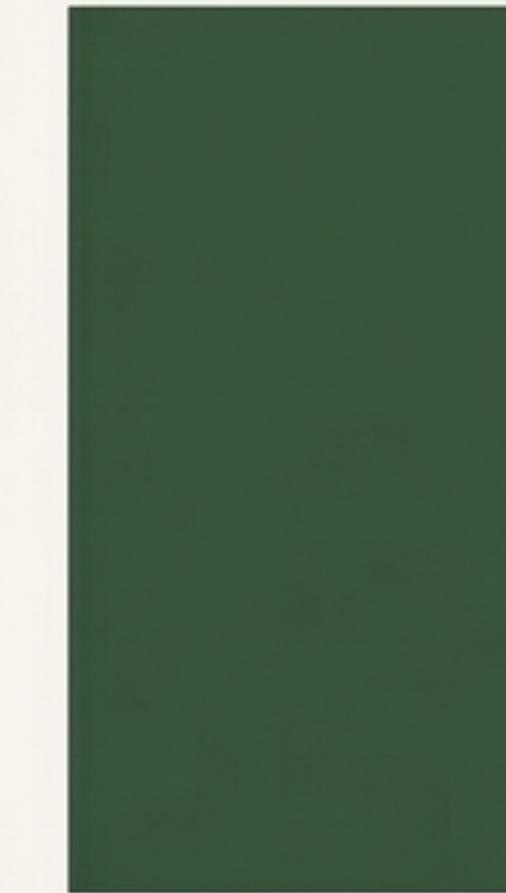
# The Five Conceptual Stages of Learning



**Dogma:**  
Learning rooted  
in rigidity and  
inherited belief.



**Rote:**  
Learning as  
accumulation  
without depth.



**Understanding:**  
Learning as  
disciplined depth.



**Wisdom:**  
Learning through  
introspection and  
perspective.



**Alterity:**  
Learning as ethical  
engagement with  
difference.

# Stage 1: The Dogmatic States

**Learning rooted in rigidity and inherited belief.**

In the dogmatic states, worldviews are not formed through independent analysis but are inherited or adopted without question.

Information that challenges these pre-existing beliefs is often ignored or rejected.





## Learning like a Parrot

- Repeats what they hear, often verbatim, without examining meaning, context, or evidence.
- Their worldview is inherited rather than formed.
- Does not develop original thoughts or opinions.



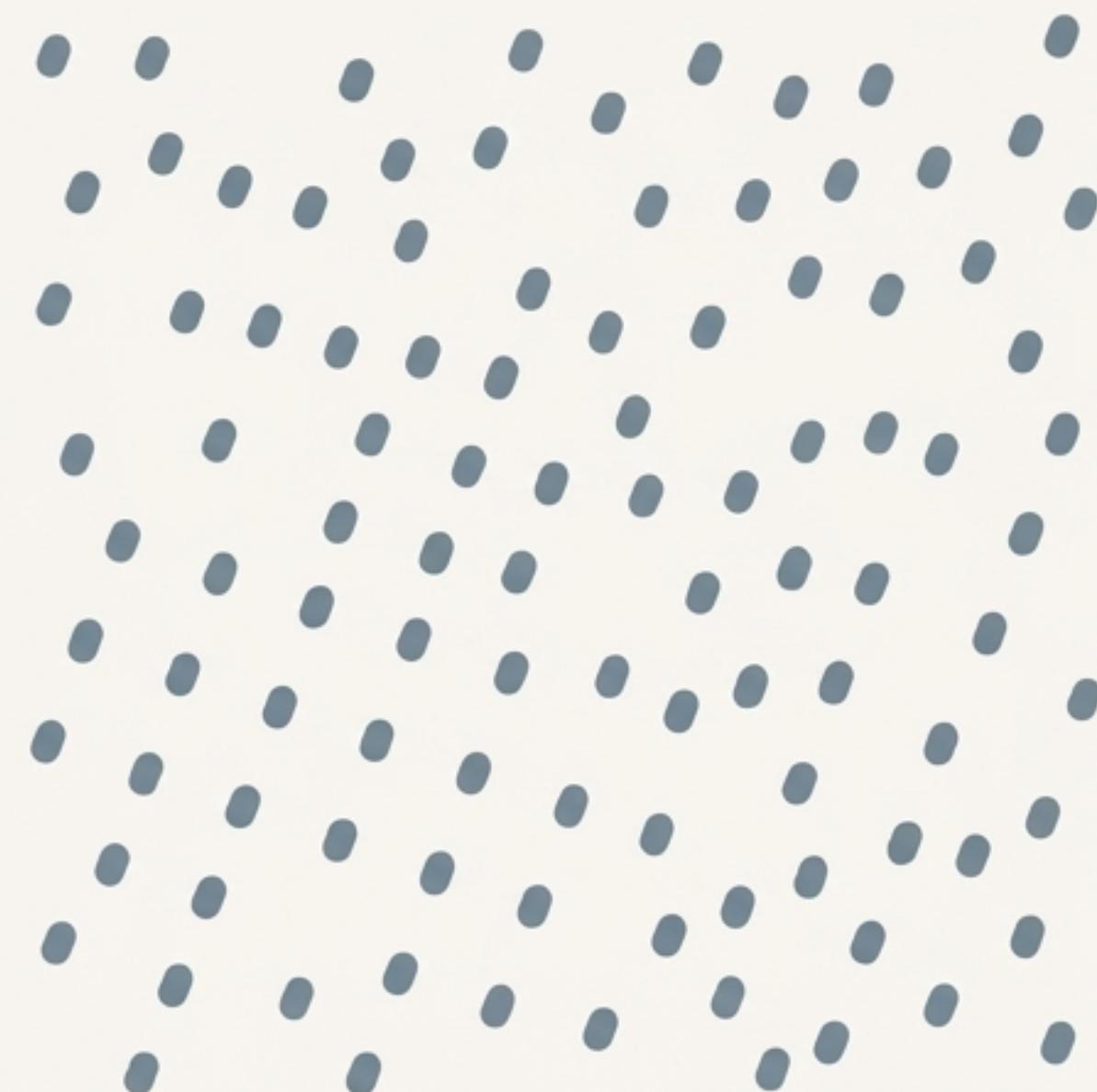
## Learning like a Turtle

- Forms a worldview from a single point of view, a narrow cause-and-effect understanding.
- Retreats when confronted with unfamiliar information or ideas that challenge their assumptions.
- Susceptible to prejudice embedded in political rhetoric, news, and religious dogma.

## Stage 2: The Rote States

**Accumulation without depth.**

Rote learning involves the collection of surface-level facts and information across many topics. While it can create a sense of being informed, it lacks the deep, connective tissue of true understanding, making it vulnerable to manipulation.





## Learning like a Frog

- Hops from topic to topic like lily pads, accumulating surface-level knowledge.
- Worldview is shaped by headlines, social media posts, and short-form content.
- Vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation.



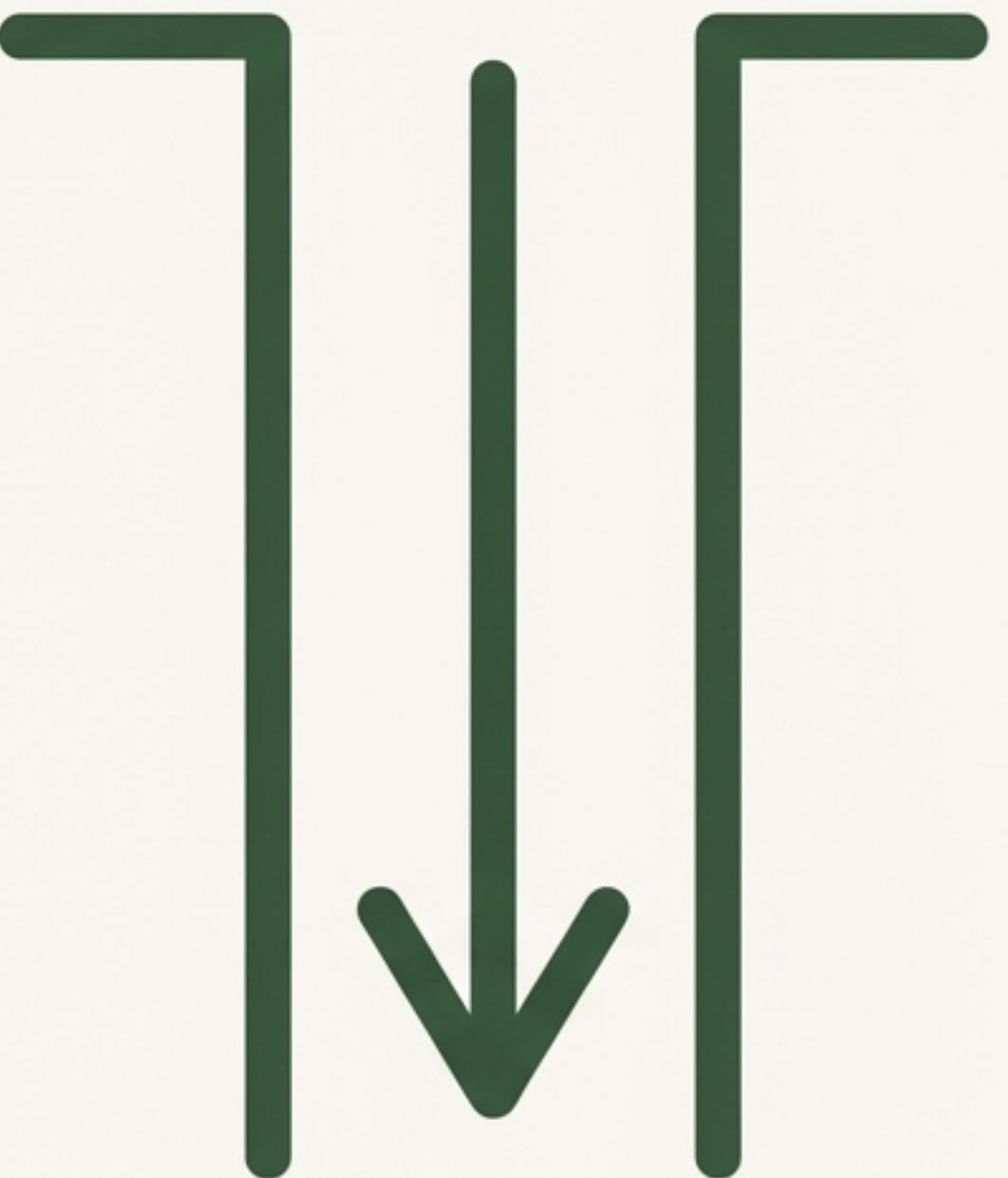
## Learning like a Dog

- Learning is largely functional and goal-oriented; they learn what is needed for a specific outcome.
- Displays curiosity and exploration, but limited by immediate purpose.
- Attuned to core emotional states; worldview is shaped by emotional cues, especially empathy.

# Stage 3: The State of Understanding

**Disciplined depth.**

This stage represents a significant evolution toward deep, specialized knowledge. Learners here have a command of a specific topic or discipline, giving them a worldview others may not be able to see without similar expertise.



# Learning like a Fish



- "**Deep Expertise**": Possesses profound understanding within a specific topic or discipline.
- "**Confined Domain**": Limited by the 'banks of the river'; their expertise is confined to their domain.
- "**System-Reliant**": Often academic and rely heavily on science or formal knowledge systems to inform their worldview.

# Stage 4: The State of Wisdom

## Introspection and perspective.

Wisdom is not about knowing all the answers, but about asking better questions. This state is characterized by introspection, a focus on personal growth, and the ability to hold multiple perspectives at once.



# Learning like an Owl



- **Question-Oriented:** Begins with questions—especially “who” and “why.”
- **Active in Uncertainty:** Still in the light of knowledge, but active in the dark of uncertainty.
- **Growth-Focused:** More interested in what they do not know; they cultivate a worldview informed by a 360-degree perspective.
- **Self-Reflective:** Often experience their own lives as a mystery worth exploring.

# Stage 5: The State of Alterity

Ethical engagement with difference.

The pinnacle of this developmental model is not just about knowing, but about becoming. This stage involves a fundamental transformation of worldview, driven by lived experience and a deep, ethical appreciation for “otherness.”



# Learning like a Caterpillar to Butterfly

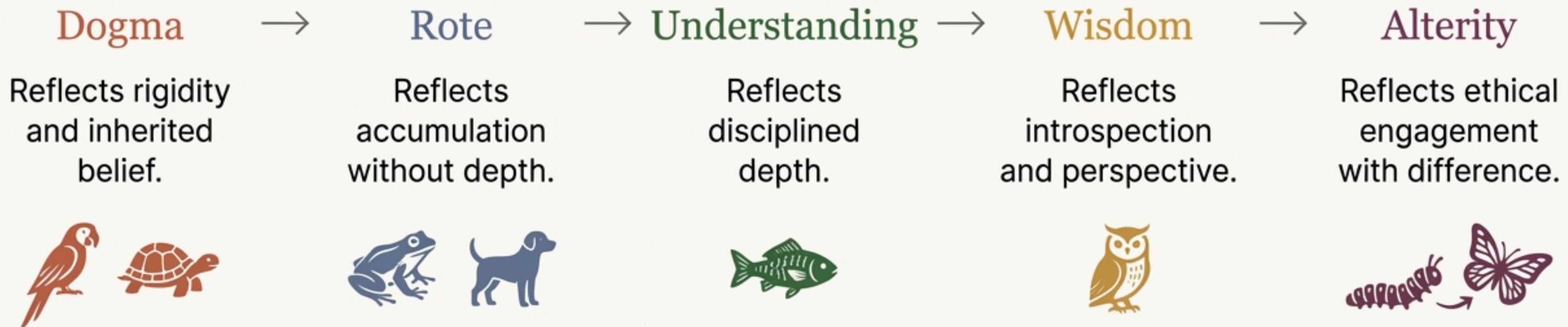


**1. Caterpillar:** Begins with a small worldview. Consumes 'leaves' (books, sources of nourishment) to grow.

**2. Chrysalis:** Lived experience is the mechanism of transformation. A period of internal change.

**3. Butterfly:** Emerges transformed. Explores cultures, respects difference, and develops an appreciation for the natural world. Their worldview is shaped by ethical engagement with otherness and an understanding of interdependence.

# The Learning States Framework: A Summary



# A Widely Applicable Lens

This framework is more than a theoretical model. It provides a powerful lens for analysis and a language for development in numerous domains:



**Education:** Designing curriculum that fosters deeper learning.



**Civic Reasoning:** Understanding political polarization and dialogue.



**Media Consumption:** Promoting literacy in an age of disinformation.



**Climate Literacy:** Navigating complex, systemic challenges.



**Cultural Dialogue:** Fostering empathy and mutual understanding.



**Leadership:** Building teams capable of navigating complexity.

# A Framework for Reflection



The value of this metaphor lies in its application. Consider:

- Where do you see these learning states in your organization, your community, or public discourse?
- Which states do you inhabit most often in different areas of your life?
- How can this framework help you or your team move toward greater understanding, wisdom, and engagement with the world?