

# A Developmental View of the Personal Psychological Journey

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## **Abstract**

**Introduction:** This paper offers a staged view of individual psychological development based on the research of Clare W. Graves and the theory popularly known as Spiral Dynamics Integral.

**Objectives:** To describe each of the stages as identified by the theory and relate the ways that they appear in individuals from the perspective of healthy and damaged aspects.

**Methods:** The paper presents an analytical, observational and experiential viewpoint based on what the theory tells us to expect and on experience gained, both personal and reports from others, in the varying practice arenas of coach, mentor, parent and trainer, as well as on personal experience.

**Results:** There are clear patterns in personal development and behaviour that correspond to the predictions of the Graves paradigm in its evolutionary, societal and organisational descriptions and predictions. These patterns can be related to both cultural context and individual upbringing. They offer a valuable lens for observation and understanding of psychological difficulties and useful prescriptive guidance for parenting that will act to reduce such difficulties.

**Conclusions:** The paper offers a strong basis for the use of the Spiral Dynamics lens as an additional perspective when working with individuals, and for further detailed research into the way that an individual forms their worldview and creates meaning as an adaptive process for thriving under differing conditions of existence.

**Keywords:** *Spiral Dynamics, parenting, child development, Graves theory*

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## **Introduction**

This article looks at human psychology through a specific developmental lens based on the theories of Professor Clare W. Graves and their extensions through the methodology now more popularly known as Spiral Dynamics Integral (SDi) (Graves, 2005; Beck & Cowan, 1996). While this developmental system has surface resemblances to others such as Maslow, Loevinger, Kegan, Torbert and Cook-Greuter, and in some cases maps quite closely to them, it also has unique features which provide a rich perspective on the topic of psychological health, damage and restoration.

I make no apologies if what I present here does not align with other psychotherapeutic approaches, and I am not seeking to invalidate any of them. Spiral Dynamics (SD) was not originally developed with a therapeutic intention. Indeed, Clare Graves was very particular about what his research data did and did not cover, and would have made no claims regarding a therapeutic context. Nor am I a qualified psychotherapist. Nevertheless, I speak from a background that began in deep personal work, involved wide exploration of the areas I will discuss, and my observations are supported by my experience in working as a coach and a facilitator in varied contexts over several decades. The outlines of this approach have been offered to parents in the mini-book “Seven stages of Parenting” (Freeman, 2013b).

I must also offer due warning that while my own perspective is deeply scientific in its approach, which is to say that I am very careful and systematic in my observations, it does not rest in the conventional scientific world-view. Any statements that I make which do not fit that conventional context are fully argued and evidenced in my book “The Science of Possibility: Patterns of Connected Consciousness” (Freeman, 2013a). That evidence is placed in a coherent philosophical, metaphysical, ontological and epistemological context, with background information from biology, genetics, physics and much more. I will not attempt to provide such justifications here.

The Graves theory offers the view that human psychology can be seen as having a number of developmental stages. That is conventional. Those stages are presented in a context of evolutionary development, where people’s worldviews are seen to be adaptive systems that support them to thrive in changing life conditions. That is unconventional – as far as I know even unique – and gives rise to a set of dynamics which affect individuals in both their inner being and in their societal interactions, and which have biological and

neurological concomitants. This article will explore that developmental trajectory and the dynamics which shape it, in order to reveal what constitutes health, and how healthy development can fail.

## **The big context: Spiral Dynamics view of bio-psychosocial development**

Spiral Dynamics Integral provides us with a way of viewing the whole of human psychosocial development from our earliest days to now. It provides a lens through which to view our own individual development since birth. It offers a descriptive framework for the many ways in which nations and societies are currently living, for what they might expect to be next in their development and for how we might support that healthy emergence. It gives us a way to look at organisations and groups so that we can improve how effectively they function. It does all of these things because it reveals some very fundamental patterns of who people are and how they think.

With biological evolution we are very used to the idea of changes that enable organisms to adapt to their environment and function more effectively in it. Our Values Systems are codes to live by, generalised answers to the question “what does it take for us to live healthily and effectively?” The answers to that question are not static, because they vary according to the conditions that we are living in. The narrative that follows is the story of that dance between life conditions and response priorities. Without being conscious of it, human beings are continually adapting to that underlying, unspoken question: “What enables us to thrive now?” The story takes us through the stages of development. The journey is a continuum, just as a spiral is, but the stages identify landmarks in that journey, broad categories of Values systems.

To begin the journey, we invite you to imagine yourself as one of the earliest humans, part of a small band living as hunter-gatherers. You could be on the savannahs of Africa, or in the forests of Borneo. You may have the most primitive of tools, you may have learned how to make or keep fire. In this, **Stage 1** of the spiral, the priority code is stark and simple; it is to **survive**. How do you find food and water? What will shelter you from the elements? How do you keep safe from predators or from other bands that may be hostile to you, jealous of your territory? Beyond this day to day existence the only long-term thought (and it is barely even a thought) that you have is to reproduce and bring your children to an age of independent survival. We colour-code this stage as **Beige**. This stage of human

existence is above that of the animals, but not far above. Of necessity, individual, personal survival comes first. Beige humanity relies on its physical senses, its instincts, its sixth sense and its vigilance. It knows its territory well but its capacity for retaining and passing on knowledge is likely to be limited and dependent on one or two individuals.

There is a corresponding stage in our personal development. Humans are all born helpless and we depend for our survival on someone else taking care of our basic needs. Those needs are absolute. Our food, warmth, safety and other biological requirements are met by others and we see those others through the lens of our needs, because our survival depends on them.

Each stage of the spiral has visible limitations and, for Beige, the fragility of existence creates a need for greater safety. As humanity's overall numbers increased, it became possible to solve this problem by coming together in larger groups, bringing **Stage 2**, the tribal stage, into existence.

The priority at Stage 2 is **safety**. As well as deriving from increased numbers, the greater stability that numbers provide enables more ancestral wisdom to be carried. The ancestral ways become ritualised as a way to build stability and encode beliefs. The tribe is typically led by its elders, the ones who carry the greatest knowledge of what will benefit the tribe. It is likely that there will be some structures – customs about who may marry whom, who will take care of the widowed or orphaned, defined property relationships such as dowries.

This stage, colour-coded **Purple**, is also very aware of its relationship with its natural world. On top of the Beige instincts and intuitions, relationships with the natural world are established. The spirits of the ancestors are recognised as part of life's continuum; the spirits of plants and animals are perceived as a reality that creates a possibility for relationships to be made with them. This relationship may be active in many tribe members, or may be a special function performed by a small number of shamans.

All of the "cool" colours – the ones with blue tones in them – are collective Values Systems. The warm, red-based colours are individual, so there is an oscillation between the I and the We. That dynamic, that polarity management, is a permanent feature of the spiral, since it is a permanent feature of life. In our personal development the equivalent of the Purple stage occurs in infancy, as the child begins to crawl and to interact with their world. At this time the relationship with parents is central. The child sees through their

eyes, copies their behaviour and absorbs the accepted way to be. This is not a cognitive process and so no questions are asked. The child observes and absorbs. While we grow out of Purple in that sense, it is retained deeply and forever as a fundamental desire to belong. This may show up as family and ethnic loyalty but we may also adopt a tribe; Manchester United is one of the biggest tribes on the planet and companies like Coca Cola and Nike spend millions in order to create a tribalistic brand loyalty.

Each stage in the spiral contains the seeds of its successor because each creates conditions with some element of tension. The tension in Purple is the expectation for conformity, stasis and suppression of individuality. Going against tribal traditions can be a painful or fatal choice, an offence against the ancestors' spirits. Since it is natural for humans to seek to express their creative spark and their urge for individual distinction, Purple may be felt by some individuals to be restrictive.

### **From Survival and Safety to Power and Purpose**

**Stage 3**, with its individuation, creative exploration and potentially heroic leadership, is an opportunity to bring about the new. This stage, colour-coded **Red**, contains an impulse to take **Power**. That power may be "power to...", an empowered choice to carve our new ways. It can also express as a wish to take power over others and this can be the downside of Red. The Red values stage remains visibly active across the planet in warlord cultures such as Afghanistan and Somalia. You can find it in inner cities as street gangs and mafia-style criminal organisations. The power relationship in Red is active whether individuals have power or not. Thriving in Red means finding a personal place in the pecking order. It may be a more successful Red strategy to find a safe place half-way down than to risk competing to be number one. This does however require some control of the naturally impulsive quality that Red has. Red wants what it wants and it wants it now. Red will take the shortest route to satisfy its desires.

You can take a little time to examine your relationship with all these qualities, because they all live within you. The heroic side of Red can also be present in the individual sportsman or the explorer. Its negative expressions can bring disapproval from those who consider themselves more civilised, but without Red humanity would never have advanced. This is obvious when we look at the Red stage of individual development. An infant cannot remain forever in their

parent's reality and we know that there is a point in time at which all children discover their individual being. The long and comfortable stage of compliance changes when they utter the magic and scary word "no". The child's desire to meet their own needs rises strongly. The child in Red is impulsive and when he/she doesn't get what he/she wants, there may be trouble. We don't refer to this stage as the "terrible two's" or in German "Trotzalter" for nothing. Yet it is an essential process, without which children don't discover their own will force, a beginning of self-actualisation without which they will achieve less as adults than they might have.

The limitations and pressures of the Red stage lie in its impulsive and power-driven qualities. Its individualism is a stress for the collective and a glance at Afghanistan or an episode of the Sopranos will tell you that it can be full of conflict and chaos. For individuals who achieve power through Red dominance it is not safe to get old. There is always someone who is ready to fight them for what they have and leaving any form of legacy is difficult.

This tension calls for **order**, a form of organisation that is stable, with a set of codes to live by, a structure that assists longevity. That is what the **Blue** stage brings. **Stage 4** in history brought the rise of the established religions, the introduction of writing systems and accountancy. Warlord bands morph into established armies with allegiance to a state or an ideology rather than an individual. Blue puts boundaries around the Red chaos, brings it more into line, channelling its heroism for a **purpose**, requiring the individual will to be in service of something bigger. Blue creates legal systems, commercial rules and supplies the means of civil enforcement – police forces and law-courts for both the criminal and civil administration. Blue also creates governmental structures and public institutions. It is the foundation for settled living in towns and cities.

In the Red system, the relationship with the Divine became more distant than Purple's direct engagement. Red places power outside and sacrifices to the Gods that it creates, in the hope that they will be benevolent. Blue takes this distancing one stage further. The Judaeo-Christian religions have priesthoods to interpret the word of God, which is now written down (for many centuries making it only accessible to elites) and even when the majority can read, it is assumed that a direct experience of or relationship with the Divine is beyond ordinary mortals. Divine power is no longer sacrificed to, but it is worshipped and it is placed where it must be invoked by prayer, in the hope that the Divine will favour us with love.

The transition to Blue can be difficult. Rome exemplified this in its ability to produce great works of engineering and its turbulent attempt to move from god-emperors towards a republic. The over-reaching ambitions of Red can rebound – trying for more power than it can sustain, taking on one enemy too many. Rome's boundaries were too stretched, Napoleon and Hitler foundered in Russia. Imposing Blue values from outside is hard if the culture is not ready internally, and modern countries have conspicuously failed to overcome the embedded power of warlords whether in Afghanistan or Somalia. Red always sits within, and societal weakness will be exploited by ambitious Red-driven leaders. Hitler rose to power in an economically stressed Germany, channelling Blue from Red within. Trump may prove to be another such example. Red and Blue can operate alongside each other for long periods. Elizabeth I had a Blue internal order and a Christian religious base, but encouraged piracy on the high seas. Her reign had laws, but the monarch was above the law.

I emphasise this relationship because it also sits strongly in our individual development. The tantrum-prone two-year-old needs boundaries. They hate having their impulses denied but will become insecure if they do not meet with some structure. As with the big historical picture, it takes a long time to take on Blue. In the West, primary grade school is a Blue-centred experience lasting many years, where children learn how to live with rules, how to use the Blue tools of writing and number and how to express their individuality in a context of a structured collective. They also fight in the schoolyard to establish the pecking order.

Blue lays the foundation stones for what we think of as civilisation and everything that is to come rests on those foundations. You cannot operate cities without Blue values. But, as with Purple, the collective enforcements can become a constraint. The challenge of Blue is that it can become restrictive. Its rules and its processes may inhibit or suppress innovation. Blue structures like things to stay in their assigned place, so class boundaries operate against new intelligence from "below". A society operating in Blue can become obsessive about how things are done, creating a box-ticking culture of compliance regardless of whether the outcomes are successful. It can turn into a police state, enforcing its "one right way" with rigidity, showing up as state or religious forms like the KGB and the inquisition. In a similar tension as existed between Purple and Red, the individuality, creativity and impulse to expand must break free of the constraints. Blue

paralysis looks like communist Russian economy, like 1970s British Leyland cars and like every “jobsworth” and rigid functionary you have ever encountered.

### **Mastering materiality, mastering ourselves**

**Stage 5** arises in response to this tension. It is another “I” response to an excess of “We” thinking and a reaction to over-dependence on rules. It is by nature entrepreneurial, expressing a self that seeks new horizons. It exploits new ideas and seeks ways to turn new scientific discoveries into products that benefit us all. The **Orange** stage of development is expansive. It is driven, striving for excellence, hungry to show “look what I can do”. It is status-driven (as distinct from power-driven Red) and measures its success both by what it can do, and how visibly it is seen to have done it. In Orange, he who dies with the most toys, wins.

Orange has brought huge blessings to humanity. Its **strive and drive** quality has an impulse to improve things for their own sake as well as for any commercial reasons. It will challenge the authority of Blue if that is in the way of those improvements and it will create strategies to get around the rules if the rules are in the way of creating a better life for itself. Individuals with strong Orange are driven to express themselves. This does not have the “at all costs” qualities of Red impulsiveness, which is inclined to destroy whatever is in its way before even considering consequences. But it resembles Red in being determined to find a way around limitations. People with strong core Orange values will do everything they can to subvert the Blue restrictions that are in between them and their goals.

In recent times we can all see this aspect of Orange in the way that the financial industry created products that were too complex for regulators to understand, defeating both the legal frameworks and the credit ratings agencies. This sits squarely in the weakness of Orange thinking – it is profoundly materialistic in every sense. It becomes greedy, sees money as an end in itself and not as the tool for commercial relationship that it was originally created to be. It is equally focussed on the material in the science that it produces, which is unable to acknowledge any form of spiritual experience – can’t even view it as real. The Divine, which has receded from human view ever since Purple, is no longer relevant at all. Humans have made themselves into technological Gods, imposing

their will upon the Earth, with minimal understanding of the consequences. The focus on material existence drives out not only the spiritual but also the personal. People are only valued for the functions they perform. Human connection and care are diminished.

For the developing child, the Orange Values System drives the process of establishing who they are to be as an individual. It takes place once teenage years are entered, as the hormonal surges wake up fresh impulses and break down previous thought-patterns. The emerging adult must draw back from parents because parents know how the world was, not how it is, still less how it is to become. The young person wants to map out their own future, find their own identity and opportunities, not repeat what a previous generation has done, or says should be done. This is a creative and essential process towards establishing healthy adult autonomy, but may involve breaking through in any area where their earlier Red attempts to establish independence were excessively suppressed. They may also challenge the Blue rules that they have been accepting until now, in order to develop their own view of what is right or wrong. There may be strong and contradictory polarisations as they do this; what was absolutely right yesterday is absolutely wrong today.

The teenager can easily find him or herself alienated, mirroring the loss of connection for societal Orange as a whole. In both cases the response to the disconnected quality of Orange individuality calls forth the next cool colour, the next expression of “We”. **Stage 6** in the spiral of human development is colour-coded **Green** and is concerned above all with the re-establishment of the **Human Bond**. Green was the leading edge of human emergence through the twentieth century – sitting on top of the continuing surge of technological Orange and bringing in addition an interest in who we are. The academic disciplines of psychology and sociology, the social expression of care through pensions systems, unemployment benefits and socialised medical support are all indications of emerging Green Values Systems<sup>ii</sup>. The teenager may explore Green at the same time as Orange, finding support in their peer group and, considering their parent’s generation out of touch, also exploring a collective response to generational change.

Where Green values become predominant in the individual or the group, there is a strong desire for

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<sup>i</sup> Response to all procedural challenge – “It’s more than my job’s worth, mate!”

<sup>ii</sup> Lynne McTaggart has documented the science of the Green system in great detail in her book “*The Bond: Connecting through the Space between us*” (Hay House, 2011).

consensus. This can have the positive effect of inclusion but can also show up as intolerance of hierarchy and as an inability to make independent decisions, which leads to personal or organisational paralysis. Green is also very concerned with fairness and may emphatically reject the prior Orange Values System as being competitive, hierarchical and hostile. Green Values can turn against the technological and commercial successes in a way that is understandable when looking at the ecological problems and the credit crunch, but would throw the baby out with the bathwater. Green values, as expressed through social care systems, rest on economic surplus and it is technology that has liberated western society from drudgery, an advance which has particularly freed women to take on work roles, many of which are in the health, teaching and caring professions. The washing machine is one of the keys to gender equality. Technology also made 40-hour working weeks viable with its higher productivity.

Just as Red power did not often deliver happiness or peace, Orange achievement likewise fails to satisfy some of the deeper human needs. Where Blue compensated for Red's turbulence with order, Green meets the empty materialism of Orange with inclusivity, caring and the search for community. Where the Tribe was ethnic and geographical and Blue collectives form around "isms", the Green community is at root voluntary, inclusive and intentional. At best it retains this openness. At worst it turns into a form of consensual enforcement that can be intolerant of divergent opinions. The intolerant form of consensus in Green can echo the "one-right way" of Blue and some call it "mean-Green".

We hope that a pattern is revealing itself in these descriptions. To repeat with emphasis, the dynamics and not the stages themselves are the core of the Spiral. At every stage, even between the stages, we are in the dance of individual and collective and we are in a Goldilocks world, where too much or too little of a Values System can become dysfunctional. Every Values System fulfils a purpose. Each of them meets a need that humanity has found as it developed, because that development is a steady increase in capacity and size/scale, from the small Beige bands to today's cities, with their many millions of citizens.

Green was not the end of Values evolution. There is no end, because each turn of the spiral generates new conditions, which call forth new Values adaptations to deal with them. Clare Graves called this "the never-

ending quest". Two more systems have already emerged since Green, and one more is on the horizon. But in order to explore these, we need to recognise that there is a different level of shift that occurs after Green.

### **A different kind of change: integrating diversity and complexity**

There are a few critical factors in the conditions that arise with Green. The first is that Green Values in the individual cause them to look at human existence in a new way. Spiral Dynamics theory exists now because psychology has arrived, because we are examining ourselves. Although the earlier stages are nested and all remain within each of us, we have not been aware of them during our development. Each of those stages contains a conscious rejection of what went before. Red Values bring rejection of the Purple constraints and Blue wants to contain the Red impulses. The Blue system may occasionally be grateful for the heroic acts on its behalf and it may even reward them, but it doesn't trust them. The Green impulse in us begins in its self-conscious investigation to catch glimpses of what lies beneath. Core Green still rejects soulless Orange and rigid Blue, but leading-edge Green begins to see something more in the diversity.

A second feature of human planetary existence is that we are all becoming increasingly aware of the complexity and the speed of change. The world has become chaotic and non-linear. There is talk of emergent systems, of fractals, of tipping points and black swans.

A third and related aspect of life, as we can see it today, is that the complexity and speed are compounding the negative outcomes of Orange blind-spots. Our impact on the planet, the visible damage that we are doing to ecology, material resource base, energy sources, species diversity and probably climate (where we seem at least to be compounding a natural cycle) appear to take us closer day by day to catastrophe. The way that we manage our economies, run our industries and make our life choices brought us close to financial meltdown and threatens to take us all the way there next time around<sup>iii</sup>.

Added to the complexity, speed, non-linearity and urgency with which solutions to these problems are required, is their global scale. The combination of Green diversity awareness and Orange technological connectivity means that humanity can see all of this

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<sup>iii</sup> Our relationship with finance, and the changes that are needed are dealt with in depth in my book *"Reinventing*

*Capitalism"* (2014). Our systems reflect the Values that they were built from. Our Values are shifting; systems must too.

across the planet. Politically it shows up in terrorism, mass refugee migration, multi-country rightward shifts, trade wars and Brexit.

I am describing this complexity at the global scale, but the corporate CEOs experience the same phenomenon. Some of their widely perceived unpredictability is in the external world of competition, resource prices and political or economic shifts. However, they also face the challenge of internal diversity, of niche technical expertise which breaks hierarchical systems, of internal complexity within large-scale organisations and of the need to engender agility in organisations that move like Giant Tortoises.

### **Making the momentous leap**

Welcome to the Green-Yellow shift, a stage which Clare Graves characterised as “a momentous leap”. In the first six stages (which he called “First Tier”) humankind has been in subsistence. In Beige there is limited future orientation because survival is day to day and even in Orange our ability to take on board long-term consequences of our actions shows obvious deficiencies. In Graves’ words (1974):

“As man moves from the sixth or personalistic level – the level of being with self and other men – to the seventh level – the cognitive level of existence – a chasm of unbelievable depth of meaning is crossed. The gap between the sixth level and the seventh level is the gap between getting and giving, taking and contributing, destroying and constructing. It is the gap between deficiency or deficit motivation and growth or abundance motivations. It is the gap between similarity to animals and dissimilarity to animals, because only man is possessed of future orientation.”

In **Stage 7**, which is colour-coded **Yellow**, we take a leap towards integration. The first-tier levels do not disappear and they do not become irrelevant, far from it. They are the platform on which our being depends. The task is not to jettison the first six stages but to see them all, to mobilise them within ourselves and within society to the best possible effect. We do not cease to need Blue order or Orange entrepreneurialism or Green caring. We need to revise, integrate, balance and use them all purposefully. We need the inbuilt balances of the whole spiral to-date.

The leap that is required has another more important characteristic. In the first tier it has been possible to operate with a linear thinking, cause-and-effect model. People were able to disentangle the strands and separate out the variables. We can no longer expect to do that. We have to find a new way that is more agile,

flexible and immediate. We have to be able to make decisions now, for the present, and be willing to adjust them as necessary in light of outcomes or the external changes as they arise.

This does not mean that we can let go of first-stage Values. They each are applicable in the appropriate conditions. It does however mean that we must let go of earlier decisions that we made, habits that we embedded or rules that we articulated from those Values systems. We cannot leap to second-tier carrying the baggage of the first. When we apply the first-tier Values in the second-tier world we must apply them fresh, we must presence them in the moment. In order to respond to fractal, chaotic complexity we must be **flexing and flowing**, surfing the wave of existence.

The shift into true adulthood calls for humans to take responsibility for ourselves. We have to step away from treating politicians as surrogate parents, cocooning ourselves in imaginary safety. We have to step away from emotional addictions and from systems, like the communications media that feed our addiction to being scared or angry, to having our unproductive emotions stirred up.

The Yellow response is integrative and systemic. The companies of the future and the governments of the future will need to find new blends of central control with distributed autonomy. The shift, as Don Beck puts it, is from “live and let live” to “thrive and help thrive”. This new level of thinking will not buy into the destructive myth that all of evolution was competitive because it will fully recognise the equal contribution that collaboration makes to successful co-existence. Indeed, learning how to collaborate and compete at the same time will become a key to Yellow existence.

Second-tier is a leap into personal accountability. We will have to ensure that the accountability, the responsibility for who we are is balanced by empowerment to take our own choices. Autonomous decision-making will be essential because the centralised awareness cannot see everything at the periphery. Command and control expire, along with linear thinking, because it cannot achieve the flexibility and responsiveness that are needed. Humans with Yellow values are more capable of stepping free in themselves of the survival fears, the impulsiveness and greed of what has gone before and are less in need of reacting to those aspects in others with control and constraint. In Yellow we also regain visibility of the non-material reality, of connection in the realms of meaning, context and a shared consciousness. Yellow is

still a warm-colour system but its “I” aspect transfers in some degree to the entire human species in its awareness that people depend on the planetary system and on each other. Our species survives together or falls together.

The **eighth stage**, known as **Turquoise**, sees a more complete connection. It recognises that both physics and biology have space for what used to be thought “spiritual”, though that term is reframed in the process. The data arising from context, cultural and collective reality frames, relationships, the persistence of the past and the sensitivity to information in the non-ordinary or non-material aspects of the world become as important as the hard, material and scientific evidence that Orange made to be of exclusive value. Overlaying on the meshwork of Yellow interconnection in the practical and systemic realms, Turquoise brings a level of **holistic** awareness. It is also a revisiting of Purple spirituality at a higher level, where we re-engage both personally and collectively with the spiritual life in all things. The planet as a whole takes priority over or at least alongside humanity because we know and experience that the two are not separate.

Turquoise is the leading edge of human development at this point. SDi theory does anticipate a next stage which it was colour-coded as **Coral**. It is likely that this stage will echo the Red individuation that rose out of tribal Purple, so one might expect that new forms of individual empowerment will develop, as humans increase their mastery of the new levels of connectedness, and their ability to engage with the creative aspects of a conscious universe. To say even that much is speculation and we will say no more.

The foregoing presentation simplifies SDi greatly. It can sometimes be difficult to understand the difference between underlying Values (how people think) and the content with which they may be expressed (what they think). And in truth, this is a science still in its early stages. The technology of applying this theory to individuals, organizations and cultures, while already powerful and urgently needed in the world, is nonetheless still in its early development. Even so, there are already significant visible implications for psychological health and psychotherapy.

**Personal development as a microcosm and reflection of the human journey**

In describing the overall spiral, I have pointed to the way that relationships with self and others change at each stage. The overall trajectory of human evolution

is mirrored in our childhood journey – a parallel to the biological law that “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”. That has implications for how we raise children, which I have summarised in my mini-book “The Seven stages of Parenting” (2013b). In turn, the failure to recognise what children need leads to many of the issues that are encountered in a therapeutic journey. The following table summarises the needs.

Stage	Parent as...	
1. Beige	Incubator	For <b>survival</b> , for everything, a baby depends on their parents and other carers and there is nothing else to do but to take care of those needs: keep moderately warm and free from harm, feed when hungry, clean when soiled and comfort when distressed.
2. Purple	Tribal Chief	Infants, even pre-verbal ones, observe and copy. They learn language. They will take on parental habits. What they see is how they will behave. They will love familiarity and routine – the song that is sung over and again, the story that never loses its appeal. For a child at this stage, the family and parents especially are their entire world, and that world is surrounded by mystical and magical beings – Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy. The sun has a big smiley face; Mickey Mouse and teddy-bear are as real as each other. <b>Psychological safety</b> depends on all of them and parents threaten this reality at their peril.
3. Red	Border Patrol	Children need to develop their sense of



		<p>“I”. This is often a strong life-force, <b>assertive and impulsive</b>. The child still has no ability to rationalise and cannot be persuaded out of a tantrum. From the child’s point of view, learning “who am I” and experiencing “what do I feel” involves testing themselves against the world. They have to gain the inner experience of consequences and of “who others are”. There is insecurity underneath this separation. The job at this stage is to provide the boundaries and it is as important as any that a parent performs.</p>			<p>suppressed to even try) is seeking to maximise their individual expression. “Who can I be?” The first thing that the teenager needs to invent is themselves.</p> <p>This requires them to distance themselves from their parents. Identities will be tried on and discarded. The parent has to step back in order to facilitate this often turbulent process, supporting the <b>exploration</b> and development of autonomy and the <b>creative beginnings of self-actualisation</b>. True intellect is only now awakening and will develop over years. The teenager will want the security of knowing that parents care, but may rather die than admit that. They will want total independence at the same time as continued support for all their wants.</p>
4. Blue	Rule-maker	<p>The child needs <b>codes to live by</b>. Where the adult version is laws and accounting systems, the child needs rules of behaviour that are generalizable – similar to Robert Fulghum’s essay<sup>iv</sup> “all I really need to know I learned in kindergarten”.</p> <p>As the infant emerges from the turbulence of the Red years, he/she needs to learn how “we” live together. Individual boundaries are not enough and there are containers for “my will”. The parent’s job is to supply and nurture the codes.</p>			
5. Orange	Facilitator	<p>Having learned the “rules”, the young person in the Orange stage (if not too constrained or</p>			
			6. Green	Guide/ Mentor	<p>In teenagers, Green and Orange often show up together in a confusing mix. The young person is addressing two challenges at once – the individual identity “who am I becoming?” and the collective “what is the world calling for from my generation?”. They will seek to <b>bond with peers</b>, though there may be cliques within as they try on being a geek, a goth, a</p>

<sup>iv</sup> Fulghum, Robert (1986). *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things*. Harper Collins: NY.

		<p>punk, a jock, a fashionista or a rights activist. There is a dance between collective bonding and individuality, between <b>conformity and diversity</b>. The parent's role is one requiring patience and allowance – intervening only when there is clear danger, giving advice only when asked.</p>
7. Yellow	Friend	<p>If the developing person reaches the Yellow stage, the parenting job is largely over and the emerging autonomy has to be respected. The unending growth challenge from here on is the integration of all previous stages and their contributions to personal and human existence. The child may well be surpassing the parent in capacity and developmental level. A parent needs to be willing to become an equal in status, even when support may still be needed.</p>

The above is an idealised description that implies clear distinction between the stages. It is a good map but it is not the territory. The territory has more overlaps in which humans can swim forward and backwards through stages at any time. Nor are individuals ever located in one stage alone, though they may have a strong centre in a stage.

The description of progression is also not inevitable. In the developmental process an individual may reach a stage and go no further. In some parts of the world this may validly reflect the life conditions that the person faces. If their life conditions call for Red-Blue behaviour then it is healthy for them to rest at that level. Thus, what follows reflects more the

conditions in which psychotherapy is commonly taking place – which is Western societies which span stages 3 to 6, Blue through Green and above. The comic narrative of the appropriately titled series “Arrested Development”<sup>v</sup> portrays individual failure to progress at its absurd extreme, across family generations. Some of the psychotherapeutic issues may arise because the person becomes arrested for a long period at a stage, or permanently closed there. The causes of this will often be in childhood, hence the importance of the parenting requirements, but this is not exclusively the case.

### **Neurology and learning systems**

All the preceding descriptions are in the realm of thoughts and feelings. This is not the whole story either. Clare Graves identified changes in neurology and neurochemistry that are associated with the stages. Some capacities arise with structural shifts. Different stimuli are processed in each stage. Graves cited literature showing, for instance, that the Purple stage responds to variation within the same sensory modality (increase or decrease light or sound) but that the Red stage is activated by patterns of light or sound.

He also cited changes in chemistry. An example of this is the difference between Red and Blue systems in the ratio between noradrenaline and adrenaline. Red is higher in noradrenaline and Blue is higher in adrenaline. Of course, we now know that the picture of hormonal chemistry and its effects on emotional states is highly complex. The title of Candace Pert's book “Molecules of Emotion”<sup>vi</sup> indicates this. The research has not yet been done to relate this knowledge to the way that stages show up. The importance of neurochemistry indicates that the systems we are examining here are not only in the brain and not only about “wiring”. Psychoneuroimmunology is a whole-body phenomenon.

Graves was also able to show, originally in tachistoscopic experiments, and more recently replicated in Cologne using fMRI (Caspers et al., 2011), that individuals will respond more rapidly to keywords that are representative of the stage that they are operating from and that these responses will light up different parts of the brain. In place of the SD language of “Values” or “priority codes”, the Caspers' paper uses the description “superordinate

<sup>v</sup> TV Series, 2003-2006. Currently available on Netflix.

<sup>vi</sup> Pert, Candace (1997). *Molecules of Emotion*. Simon and Schuster: NY.

moral concepts”. The abstract states: *“Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) with a forced-choice paradigm on word pairs representing abstract values, we show that the brain handles such decisions depending on the person’s superordinate moral concept. Persons with a predominant collectivistic (altruistic) value system applied a ‘balancing and weighing’ strategy, recruiting brain regions of rostral inferior and intraparietal, and midcingulate and frontal cortex. Conversely, subjects with mainly individualistic (egocentric) value preferences applied a ‘fight-and-flight’ strategy by recruiting the left amygdala. Finally, if subjects experience a value conflict when rejecting an alternative congruent to their own predominant value preference, comparable brain regions are activated as found in actual moral dilemma situations, i.e. midcingulate and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. Our results demonstrate that superordinate moral concepts influence the strategy and the neural mechanisms in decision processes, independent of actual situations, showing that decisions are based on general neural principles.”*

Graves amassed a good deal of data from his own work and other studies regarding the different learning processes at each stage (Graves, 2005). His conclusions are summarised in the following list:

- Beige** – the learning is Habituation;
- Purple** – the learning is Pavlovian conditioning;
- Red** system – the learning is Operant or instrumental conditioning;
- Blue** – the learning is Avoidance conditioning;
- Orange** system – the learning is Expectancy learning;
- Green** system – the learning is a Social Operational learning system.

These differences have significant impact on how any dysfunction is embedded in the human system according to the stage it is associated with/ arose in. This affects the capability of the system to change, and what methods may be effective in bringing about such change. I will say more of this below, in relation to the stages themselves.

Before delving into that arena, there is one more background aspect to present.

### **Re-framing our view of the senses**

We are accustomed to use a description of the sensing systems that is based on that offered by Aristotle. We think still of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. This is not adequate to our current knowledge in a few ways. How we see is affected by our learning from touch. For example, we know that a cup is not two-dimensional and is a container because we learn to feel depth. We know that the plane we are in during take-off is no longer horizontal, not because our visual cues have changed, but because our balancing systems in the inner ear tell us so. Nevertheless, we would say that we “see” it.

The sensory experience of music, the way that we manage our bodies when playing tennis, the fact that you could close your eyes right now and still locate your hands in space are indicative of much more complex interactions between the exterior senses and a multitude of internal processes.

The above covers our physiological detection. But we also know that we are aware of our emotions and that there is a gut-brain chemistry influencing our perceptions through the vagus nerve network. We know of the activity of mirror neurons and some of us know of the ability to detect information not available to any other senses through direct intuition. The work of the HeartMath institute (McCraty, Childers and others<sup>vii</sup>) on heart intelligence explores another avenue of our knowing. Those who have done work with systems, such as Bert Hellinger’s “Family Constellations”, will be aware of the deep knowing that people have access to in respect of aspects beyond the immediate environment that are influencing behaviour. Our view of the therapeutic territory needs to include all these potential sources of awareness, since they have affected the way that we experience, frame that experience, and store it. The blending of cognitive and somatic approaches has historically favoured the former. What we are about to examine calls for deep engagement with the latter.

### **The stages of development – learnings, capacities, and wounds**

I repeat the earlier caveat that I am not a psychotherapist, though what I am about to say has been reviewed by someone expert in Spiral Dynamics who is qualified in this area (Rice, 2006).

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<sup>vii</sup> See a summary of HeartMath findings by Raymond Trevor Bradley in The World Futures Journal of General Evolution,

at <http://noosphere.princeton.edu/papers/pdf/bradley.intuition.2007.pdf>.

**Code 1: How I survive – Beige system**

Learning	Capacities	Wounds
<p>Learning at this stage is visceral. What does this taste like and feel like? What hurts and what pleases?</p> <p>As Graves observed, habituation is the primary mode. The child learns through repetition, and anyone who has played with a one-year old will have experienced their relish for that.</p> <p>A picture of the world is being formed and this includes an interior map of the infant's basic physiological relationship in respect of warmth, food and environmental security, as well as their emotional and human connection.</p> <p>The habituation and learning in Beige are highly oriented towards physiological needs and the physical world. This does not stop with the onset of Purple. It persists through subsequent stages. Even advanced skills rely on the development of muscle memory.</p>	<p>This is hard to determine as we are dealing with a pre-verbal subject. However, our view is that while this stage is early in the formation of cognitive capability, there are vast amounts of pattern recognition and environment mapping taking place.</p> <p>In addition, there is reason to believe that there is considerable sensitivity to external clues, including those which are arising from somatic and intuitive sensing.</p> <p>Lastly, sensitivity to their internal environment is high and there is no learned inhibition against communication of the physiological discomfort arising from hunger, cold or pain etc.</p>	<p>Damage at this stage will inevitably be deeply unconscious. Failures to nurture the neonate (e.g. isolation in incubators) is known to potentially be fatal. This also reflects the knowledge of primates provided by Harlow's famous contact-comfort experiment with the terry-cloth mothers.</p> <p>Psychological shut-down is at the extreme end of the damage spectrum, but varying degrees of existential insecurity can arise. Infants who are not cared for may fail to ever establish a basis of safety in the world, and a deep level of underlying and never-satisfiable need may permeate all later development and impose an upper limit on what it is possible for the individual to achieve and sustain.</p> <p>Such insecurity is also likely to affect their level of resilience and inner reserves when conditions are challenging. Hard as it may be to establish, it would not be surprising if, in some people, depression arises from this stage.</p>

**Code 2: Core bonding and identity – Purple system**

Learning	Capacities	Wounds
<p>In Purple, development extends from the physiological realm towards connection. The child begins to explore themselves through their connection with parents or other close carers.</p> <p>The child at this stage does not see themselves as distinct. "Who you are is who I am." The learning is that of a root identity in the collective. "This is the way that we do things." As Graves observes, conditioning is Pavlovian because the child observes, and connects stimuli to responses.</p>	<p>The infant is continuing to develop physical capacities, walking, self-feeding, manipulation. Alongside these come language skills and the ability to interact with others.</p> <p>Much of this continues to be by observation and then by mimicry. The child will do what he/she sees Mum or Dad do. He/she wants to be what they are. This is more even than being "like" them, because the identity is not separate enough for that to apply.</p>	<p>In the second stage, psychological safety builds on the foundation of existential security. The existence of a strong primary bond is key to this.</p> <p>Consistent care underpins the strength of stimulus-response association. The child is sensitive to the emotional connection behind caregiving. Healthy parenting includes hugs and cuddles, attention and play. It is natural and instinctive for most parents to give this.</p> <p>When the consistency and the affective security are not present, the results vary from anxiety and depression to social phobia. There is</p>

<p>In healthy societies and families this works well and is harmonious. A base for future existence is established, and with it comes a core bond of psychological security and a knowing of being embedded and loved. This is a foundation for all that follows, a sense of knowing one's roots. It can be drawn upon as the soil from which the individual emerges.</p>	<p>At the same time, he/she is beginning to observe relationships to others, because he/she sees Mum or Dad do or say something, and other people respond. The family collective has patterns of interaction which can be learned and the child embeds the behaviours that will enable him/her to mesh into to those patterns. He/she becomes another cell in the organism.</p>	<p>vast literature on the effects of parental conflict, of Narcissistic Personality Disorder in a parent, and of simple neglect; this is presumed to be familiar to readers. Attachment disorders may also lead to premature and unhealthy emergence of the next (Red) system.</p> <p>What may be less familiar is the extent to which this is still pre-verbal and not part of an individual's memory, cognition or self-awareness. It lives not only in the mind, but in the physiology, in muscle tension, posture and fluidity of movement, because the being is armoured and closed in self-protection. Many psychotherapeutic interventions will fail to deal effectively with this if they are not accompanied by other approaches that address the underlying physiology.</p> <p>Parents also need to know that during this stage and the next, there is no point in explanation or in reasoning with the child. The child will learn by what he/she observes and will "do as you do". There is no "do as I say", and parents have to model what they wish to see. Nothing else will be effective.</p>
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**Code 3: Sense of self and autonomy – Red system**

<b>Learning</b>	<b>Capacities</b>	<b>Wounds</b>
<p>The family is the medium in which the child establishes roots, but he/she does not stay in that collective identity for ever. At some point he/she discovers that he/she can be away from others and is a distinct identity, able to make individual choices.</p> <p>There is a loss of security in this, and we see how small children explore "away" but return regularly to the base of safety and reassurance. At the same time as this physical differentiation and distancing is taking place, there is a psychological shift, a discovery that somewhere</p>	<p>The child is continuing to develop exterior capacities, to do more physically and to handle more complexity in their relationships with larger numbers of others.</p> <p>Less visible, but crucially important, is the knowledge that this person is developing of who he/she is as an individual, what he/she likes or doesn't like and what it means to choose for themselves. This is the establishment of the capacity for distinct identity.</p>	<p>There are two boundaries to the channel of healthy exploration for the child at this age. On one side is the need to be allowed to explore, to express themselves, to experience the desires and impulses that arise. If that exploration is in itself made wrong, the child may learn that it is not OK for him/her to be a distinct and empowered individual. He/she learns compliance. He/she is squashed.</p> <p>On the other side is the need he/she has for guidance and boundaries. Without this there is no feedback from the system. Underneath, this leads to insecurity – the child will feel abandoned. He/she may exaggerate</p>

among the “we” that has been his world, exists an I that stands alone.

That “I” has ideas, impulses, wishes and desires that arise independently. Magical words enter their vocabulary: “No”, and “Mine” and “I want”. These words are not considered. They are impulses, and the Red stage is inherently in the moment and in the desire for immediate gratification.

This in turn means that he/she discovers a relationship with others where they are no longer aligned with his/her will, where two people want the same toy, and where a second chocolate is refused. There is an inherent power battle developing. The individual has to learn their relationship with power in others, and also is developing their own sense of personal empowerment. “What can I do?”

With that power struggle come also frustration and anger when the desire cannot be satisfied. We think of this mostly as the tantrum and anger at being blocked by others, and, as parents, we live with this as a consequence of setting boundaries. As parents, we know that the boundaries are essential for the good of the child, for their safety and for the collective wellbeing.

But the tantrum can also be against the self, or the world itself, when the child is unable to do something he/she is trying to do. It is part of healthy development for us to go through that experience and to learn how to channel our motivation for success next time round.

It is also the establishment of an internal force of will. One aspect of this is developing the ability to take power over their environment or over others in it. And that goes alongside the capacity to recognise and accommodate to the power of others. We are not all the same, not all equal, and learning to recognise this is a skill. In some environments it may be a survival skill. In most at least, it is a key to thriving.

The other aspect, sometimes less observed, is feeling empowered as an individual – the internal recognition of “I can” and “I will”. The healthy growth of this will be a key in determining how successful he/she will be in future endeavours, as distinct from giving up and settling for less than he/she dreams.

This makes Red a very critical developmental stage.

the behaviour in the attempt to get the feedback he/she needs, and appears deliberately delinquent. On the surface, a message is being received that there are no limits, that anything goes and that the goal is to learn how much he/she can get away with.

The Red stage is characterised by a drive to express the self, and to hell with others. When we look at that from our later-stage altitude, we know that it is not sustainable. However, the child needs to experience this for themselves. He/she is finding out who he/she can be, not who he/she is forced to be. When the child is made wrong for seeking that experience – which typically arises either from harsh and punitive parenting or from the tender trap of over-protection – he/she is deprived of the opportunity to develop their own will. That will is what creates our sporting heroes, our passionate artists and our pioneering leaders.

Forcing boundaries may result in compliance and lack of will, but it may also embed deep anger and frustration. That energy can re-emerge later as bullying and dominance. The child who is hit at the age of three is the one who decks his (her) father at the age of fifteen, and goes on to dominate others.

However, dominance and bullying can also be the result of weak boundaries because the child expects to always get her own way. Violence is not the only form for this. Emotional manipulation is also an effective route to power and Narcissistic Personality Disorder can be an extreme manifestation of this.

The child in the Red stage is incapable of guilt. He/she is his/her own arbiter of what is right, and that is what is “right for me”. However, he/she is susceptible to shame and

		<p>wishes to avoid it. The “naughty corner” is effective.</p> <p>Since the learning mode in this stage is operant conditioning, the feedback mechanism for issues rooted in this stage is one of reinforcement. Helping the individual experience and recognise the consequences – that something good is taken away or that something unpleasant happens – is what supplies the feedback, so that the individual can experience the results of their choices. Because the Red stage is fully in the now, that feedback needs to happen at the time. Neither reward nor punishment are effective if delayed.</p>
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**Code 4: Relationships and expectations from world and others – Blue system**

<b>Learning</b>	<b>Capacities</b>	<b>Wounds</b>
<p>As indicated earlier, the Blue stage is where the child learns what is involved in expressing the individuality of Red in a context of our collective societal existence. In the Purple tribal environment, that context was defined by the stories, myths and ancestral wisdoms. But while that may still be an element (for instance giving children the stories of ancestral models), it is not the context in which we or our children are growing up.</p> <p>Initially the child meets the simpler codes that we live by. Don't hurt, don't steal. But society is full of rules, both explicit and subtle, which determine how we live and work together.</p> <p>The Red stage continues to be present and the child is learning to create the space within which their own will can be expressed, but in compliance with the rules.</p> <p>Blue is moving beyond the purely impulsive drive of Red for instant gratification. It can anticipate reward in the future. Deferred</p>	<p>With the Blue stage a great deal of capacity shows up. It is where logical thinking and reasoning begin. It is where long-term thinking and cause-and-effect chains can be grasped. As stated earlier, this grows over time and occupies a large portion of childhood.</p> <p>Externally, Blue provides the consistent framework that supports large scale activities – major religions, cities and states, coordinated military structures. These connect power to an external authority given by the structure. You are Archbishop not because you are the biggest or most physically aggressive, but because the structure grants you that power on its behalf. Blue ways of thinking are also the foundation of written communication, of accounting systems and of legal structures.</p> <p>A great deal of what a child learns in school is how to use these systems, how to operate effectively within their</p>	<p>What kinds of psychological damage arise in and around the Blue system?</p> <p>Some of the rules that we learn are containers for the chaos that otherwise arises from unhealthy and unfettered Red mind-sets and behaviours. They limit and channel power and they define the boundaries for acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>Some of the internalisation of rules, and the need that we develop to avoid the guilt that would arise with transgression, are healthy modifiers, providing a call to think before we act.</p> <p>However, you can have too much of a 'good' thing. Some of the religious systems have arguably been excessive in their inculcation of guilt. Some have been excessively punitive both through parents and through the schools or care homes that took in young people with, in theory, charitable intent.</p> <p>Excess Red/Blue tension may also show up as OCD or in the sexual guilt. In Freudian language, a Blue Superego is over-repressing Red Id. Depression or outbreaks of mania are both potential outcomes.</p>

<p>gratification can eventually extend in the adult to “rewards in the next life”, but for the child, the promise of a treat tomorrow or of extra pocket money at the weekend is felt as real to their system.</p> <p>It is typical of rules-based systems that a breach of the rules has consequences. The child in this stage, unless it is dealing with unresolved Red stage issues, will normally be motivated to avoid those consequences, whatever they are.</p> <p>Since Blue can anticipate the future, he/she can not only moderate their behaviour to avoid future consequences, he/she can also internalise the perception of wrongness. In contrast to Red, Blue is also capable of taking on guilt and many of our systems, most notably religions, build that into their design.</p>	<p>hierarchies, and the value of respecting the systems.</p>	<p>The reality of Blue is that in many cases it is distorted by Red behaviours. Blue creates an opportunity for some, to gain personal power and to use it beyond what the system allows. They take the “one right way” element of Blue order and bend it to their personal agenda.</p> <p>While that may seem like, and often is, a socio-political statement, the consequences for individuals are also significant. The internalisation of guilt can lead to self-hatred and paralysis of normal behaviour. Much that happens in sexual dysfunction can arise from religious proscriptions and the consequences for those such as LGBT are well-known.</p> <p>But even for heterosexuals, there is large realm in which sexual guilt can operate, and beyond that specific context, a great deal of enforcement for conformity. Avoidance of consequences is healthy and natural. To live in permanent fear, either of being punished on Earth or of being consigned to the flames of Hell is damaging.</p> <p>Excessive Blue can also be paralysing to an individual’s ability to function well in society. It may lead to obsessive enforcement of minor rules and the inability to apply any creative thinking to new situations. It can lead to anxiety when the rules are not clear and to permanent and embedded fear of failure or of anticipated damnation. It may possibly be an aspect of OCD in some cases.</p>
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**Code 5: Who can I be and how can I achieve? – Orange system**

<b>Learning</b>	<b>Capacities</b>	<b>Wounds</b>
<p>Clare Graves’ Learning keynote for Orange is Expectancy Learning.</p> <p>Where stage 4 is conditioned to avoid negative outcomes, the Strategic drive of the Orange system is reflected in learning based on the</p>	<p>We live among the results of the Orange stage, the vast explosion of intellectual development and technical creativity that the world has experienced in the past two centuries.</p>	<p>The Orange system brings a further step in the expression of self. It is dependent on what has previously been activated during Red.</p> <p>As it emerges in the individual, the Red autonomy and sense of self are</p>



<p>success of achieving an anticipated outcome.</p> <p>Since the developing individual does not enter this stage (if at all) until teenage years, it is in general not directly represented in the psychotherapeutic context.</p> <p>However, there are some implications that reveal themselves in Orange as reflections of issues from prior stages. It is appropriate to note them here.</p>	<p>In the individual, the capacities that produce such outcomes include a drive and determination for continuous improvement and the intellectual tools to make those improvements happen.</p>	<p>thrown into question. The teenager is seeking to see themselves beyond the limiting worldview of the Purple culture. Seeing beyond the past and present, he/she has the possibility of creating themselves to be something beyond anything that his/her parents might have imagined, and forging a future that only he/she can see.</p> <p>The extent to which this is possible is increased if the autonomy and self-belief have not been damaged during their early development. If a healthy relationship to boundaries is in place, Orange will express themselves strongly in ways which exploit any room for innovation that the Blue rules have left open.</p> <p>However, if there has been damage or if that healthy relationship has not yet been established, the strength of individual impulse for self-expression may also show up in challenge, rule-breaking and rebellion. The teenager is often self-centred and will bring through the Red impulses for a second attempt at carving a place for themselves. If that happens, it may now be more difficult for others – parents and society – to provide the safe container that was needed. Orange, with its Red within, may take risks, seek extreme experiences regardless of the consequences, and threaten to become unmanageable.</p> <p>This can be hard to deal with. Some of the most successful interventions are provided by environments which channel the impulse to succeed within a context of constraints that the individual accepts as part of their conditions of engagement. One example of this is sport, where the young person can see that they must operate within the rules to be successful. The esteem of others, and visible markers of achievement and status are very important to Orange, and it will work for them. Successful discipline for Orange is self-discipline.</p>
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**Code 6: Knowing and valuing self and others – Green system**

Learning	Capacities	Wounds
<p>Green development involves learning about humans – self and others –, in a context of diversity (we are all equally valuable) and of a shared human bond (caring for all regardless).</p> <p>Learning in Green is a more complex process that reflects the many available ways that have already been used, and adds to them. Graves referred to a question from Alfred Russell Wallace to Darwin, asking him to explain why the brain of man contains far more structures than are necessary to provide for the survival of the species. And just as Darwin ignored the question, Graves (2005, p. 37) contended that our learning theories ignore it today.</p> <p>Graves describes learning at Green stage as a combination of Social Learning and Observational Learning. It is Operational because Green wants to solve problems, and he/she wants to do so through philosophical thought and through working <i>with</i> (Graves emphasis) the teacher, leader, manager etc.</p> <p>Green brings forward the capacity already arising in Orange to analyse information and to make conscious decisions. That information now expands and becomes a process of sense-making that includes not only factual data and knowledge, but also more subtle data arising from the societal context.</p> <p>Thus, a second aspect of operational learning is that it is not purely individual. It reflects the “We” nature of the Green system and its interest in consensus. Decision-making combines experience with observations, insights and lessons learnt within teams.</p>	<p>The capacity which expands most strongly in people as they develop their Green code is the ability to work together with others. While this can be present in Blue through working to predefined rules and constraints, Green opens up the opportunity for creating new initiatives. It leverages the strategy and excellence that it has explored in the Orange stage within a collaborative frame.</p> <p>Green also can explore the full possibilities of caring and mutual understanding, to expand the boundaries of support to individuals in their distinctiveness. The data and knowledge that inform his/her decision-making include greater understanding of people in respect of their personal histories, cultures, temperaments and ways of being.</p> <p>The other notable capacity in Green at their best is his/her willingness to listen, to incorporate multiple viewpoints and find consensual solutions.</p>	<p>There are challenges for the Green psyche. Here too we are talking of aspects that emerge in teenage and adult years and which reflect aspects of previous systems.</p> <p>Green is particularly subject to “shadow” issues – that which he/she fails to see arising from prior stages.</p> <p>Green can be very blind to Red in others, and find themselves exploited or in a victim relationship. He/she expects that Red will be like them, as interested in the wellbeing of others as he/she is. He/she imagines that when Red isn’t like this, it is because he/she is not getting enough love or support. He/she cannot see the self-centredness of the Red system and their need for Blue containment.</p> <p>Green can be blind to Red in themselves. He/she can fail to see their self-centredness, or attempt to conceal it beneath the expressed belief that everyone has a right to self-expression. While outwardly espousing community, this can be very destructive of him/her.</p> <p>Green can be very disapproving of Blue, which not only compounds the failure to contain Red, but also results in indecisiveness, lack of leadership and failure to adopt healthy structures and self-discipline.</p> <p>He/she can also be blind to his/her lack of Blue, and attempts to work through collective “right way” in which he/she achieves apparent consensus by excluding those who disagree. He/she can be highly punitive and judgemental, and fails to notice the implicit hierarchy by which he/she imposes their shared belief.</p> <p>Green has emerged from Orange and benefits from the drive that</p>

		<p>creates the conditions in which there is sufficient space and time for self-exploration, and enough surplus energy (economic or otherwise) to support larger care systems. At the same time, he/she arises from the rejection of Orange depersonalisation and materialism and is inclined to bite the hand that feeds him/her.</p> <p>All of these shadow issues can show up in individual beliefs and personal behaviours. In their more intense and extreme forms they are as capable as any other system of dysfunctional and psychotic expression.</p>
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Codes 7 and above are not presented in terms of psychological damage because the emergence of these stages is, to a significant degree, dependent on the resolution of such problems as described in stages 1 through 6, and on the achievement of a) healthy expressions of each code, and b) alignment and balance between the expression of the codes within the psyche.

Individuals functioning in later codes are increasingly likely to be capable of orchestrating the earlier codes as required to function best in contexts that they encounter. All codes remain available, and while individuals may have an identifiable “stage” that they have reached or habitually occupy, all people display a mix of the codes.

### Conclusion

The descriptions in this paper have sought to lay out the relationship between the ways that people think, as they evolve through the stages of the Gravesian developmental sequence, and the types of learning that are effective in each of the codes involved. These descriptions further portray the relationship between the learning processes, the ways of parenting and teaching that support those processes, and the typical manifestations of failure to accomplish healthy learning and development. These patterns have great significance for the way that we view parenting at different times in the child’s development, and on the appropriate way in which we teach children and support them psychologically. For those whose development takes them towards dysfunction and distress, this model points towards a

way of recognising more precisely how a wound may have been experienced, and to understand what the individual would need in order to heal and re-learn.

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