Introduction to Spiral Dynamics

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I would also like to pay tribute to the work of Professor Clare Graves without whom there would be no Spiral Dynamics. The description of Professor Graves' work is taken from his published papers, in particular from his paper "Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap" published in The Futurist in 1974 and the transcripts of Professor Graves' other addresses to seminars and university groups.

I wish to express a special thanks to Dr Don Beck for bringing us the language of the codes of Spiral Dynamics integral and for his insights on MeshWORKS; an area of increasing importance as we face greater complexity.

Many of the illustrations within this document have been licensed from iStockPhotos.

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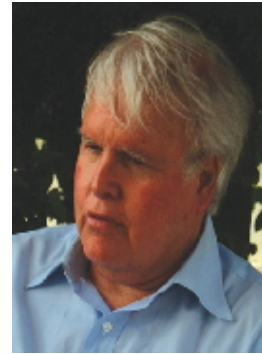
Dr Don Beck

We will see in this introduction that the ideas of Spiral Dynamics grew out of the work of Professor Clare Graves and his ground breaking research on the development of the healthy human personality. That work was taken further by two post-doctoral members of staff who worked with Professor Graves and went on to produce the seminal work "Spiral Dynamics, mastering values, leadership and change" published in 1996. Both before and since one of the authors of that work, Dr Don Beck has worked consistently to develop the model into a range of psychological insights that have become an invaluable tool for tackling the problems of our rapidly changing world. Widely influential, his work is frequently cited by other leading writers.

Dr Beck's outstanding contribution has been in the development of the techniques for the application of Spiral Dynamics to large-scale human psychology. Following early guidance from Professor Graves, Dr Beck is well known for his work in assisting in the dismantling of Apartheid and in providing the background "hearts and minds", influencing the life conditions there over many years in order to support eventual shifts in Values. He is perhaps less well known for his work in the Middle East and his ongoing attempts to support a resolution in Palestine as well as currently providing insights in Afghanistan.

Dr Don Beck has helped develop the ideas of Spiral Dynamics into a model which reflects the dynamic, flowing nature of the deep set codes in response to life conditions. He has also turned the organisational templates into practical working tools for Organisational Design and sophisticated responses relevant to the challenges of rapid non-linear change and complex markets.

Dr Beck is currently spending much of his time developing ideas around MeshWORKing which is a way of connecting multiple minds to complex problems for more innovative solutions. His work is being developed into new applications for real world situations through a network of Centres for Human Emergence which are now operational in a number of regions of the world including Holland, The Middle East, California, Chile, Mexico and in the United Kingdom. Spiral Dynamics is demonstrating its' ability to transform understanding in many areas of the world.

Introduction to Spiral Dynamics

1.0 Introduction

Spiral Dynamics should not be thought of as a product or service; it is an awareness, a way of thinking which brings a level of understanding and insight. It is not a personal development tool but it provides exceptional insight into personal development. It is a remarkable map of how life is; and that is the point. It has not been arrived at as a hypothesis or a theory; it has arisen out of the data of how people are.

Think of something alive, ever changing, dynamic and subtle. Something adapting, growing and capable of both total simplicity and enormous complexity and you start to get an idea of the adult human mind.

There is an expression " Cometh the moment, cometh the man." As you start to understand the ideas of Spiral Dynamics you recognise that this is not a statement concerning the arrival of a teacher or guru from some distant place, like a superhero. It is the recognition that as you are drawn to face more and more complexity, your mind will adapt to more complex thinking. You will become the person required to fulfil the role, to understand the complexity, to adapt to changing life conditions. That revelation is the story of Spiral Dynamics.

This introduction should not be seen as a replacement for the seminal work on Spiral Dynamics written by Dr Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, "Spiral Dynamics" but as an appetizer and introduction into the dynamic nature of the changes within a healthy adult personality.

2.0 Perception

Each and every one of us looks at the world through a different set of lenses. We see, or more accurately, perceive the world in our own unique way. We each perceive a very different view of the life that we imagine surrounds us. If we look at our basic senses of sight, sound, taste and touch; we only get a very limited view. Our sight is limited in the bandwidth which we can see. We have no sight in darkness and yet many animals have night vision, enabling them to navigate at night. A fox in the garden will walk around the edge of an infra red security light source which he can see but is invisible to us. A bat will use high frequency ultra-sonic sounds to navigate, well beyond the range of humans. We have no sense of radio waves yet the space around us is totally invaded with signals from cell phones, television and radio. We can only "see" a very small amount of the total world that is around us.

Once we have received signals from our senses, it is up to our brain to interpret these limited signals and to make sense of them. When we are born everything is a mystery and novel to us. We start to make sense of our world based on our experience. We know that a reassuring voice will provide a solution to our pain or hunger. We start to learn the difference between hard and soft, warm and cool, light and dark. We start to have preferences. The conditions which surround us determine what we learn and how we interpret it. As we have experiences, we generate memories and we compare our present situation with the memory of the last time we were in a similar situation. This is done continually in the subconscious part of our brain; the part we are not aware of. At one level we learn to recognise danger and develop survival skills and at the other, we develop likes and dislikes, preferences and aversions.

Everything we sense, feel and think uses images of previous encounters with the outside world to interpret the present. The experiences we have had and the places we have been to, dictate how we view our daily lives. The experience that we interpret as "life" is coloured by all that has gone before both in interpreting our senses and also in interpreting our imagination and the stories that we have been told. The brain does not initially separate out the things we actually experience from those we hold in our imagination; it requires a cognitive step.

It becomes very clear that our experience of "now" is a limited and distorted view as it has passed through two distinct groups of filters. The first filters are shaped by the nature of our senses and their intensity and accuracy. The second set of filters is built upon a model of our past and our previous experiences. Our life experiences and the conditions of life that we have

encountered dictate our view of our own reality. This will not be the same interpretation of reality as experienced by somebody with more acute senses and a different experience of the past.

If we look at our senses, even they betray us. The image illustrates a form of mental ambiguity. The eye will find one of two images and once we become aware of the two potential figures we can alternate between them. There is however a reluctance to see the alternative image initially. We become bound to the first interpretation and we sometimes need persuasion that the second image exists. Which do you see first, the young lady with a big hat or the older lady with the scarf and protruding nose?

Visual Ambiguity

We tend to only see what we expect to see. Our brain interprets the images from our senses based on our prior experiences and tries to find a fit. We personalise both our recognition and our interpretation to replicate and reinforce the world that we already know.

Have a look at this young lady:

And now turn the page upside-down.   Our brain thinks we are looking at a smiling face but initially does not see the inverted mouth and eyes.

The images above are the very obvious examples of where our eyes and brain get a confused message and we become aware that something is not computing. How often do all our senses combine to send a mixed message which we do not notice is confused or ambiguous?

If we consider the next phase of inbuilt filtering, once the senses have passed a message to the brain and it has been interpreted, then we must look at the sense we make of the information, the emotions that are triggered and the subsequent actions that come from it.

Some signals we simply see and they are recognised as danger, triggering a fight or flight reaction. If we step off the pavement and our brain sees the image of a red bus twenty feet from us then the legs are powered into immediate action and we are safely back on the kerb; all be it a little shaken. Our brain does not go through a conscious loop of saying   "That looks like a 22 bus. I did not expect to see that at this time. I am in the middle of the road and could be killed. I better move my legs to get back on the pavement." We programme the firmware of the brain, close to the brainstem, with information that will help our survival. This is packed close to the systems that control our breathing, temperature and other body functions and normally require no intervention.

In the first few years of our life we are busy acquiring information, trying to make sense of it, and assembling that information into a form of database that allows us to make sense of the world outside. We assemble likes and dislikes. We think of things as being good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, safe or threatening. These judgements are based on our experiences. There is simply nothing else to assemble them from other than the behaviour of

those around us and the messages we receive from television, computers, books and other media that we use to tell us stories about the nature of life. This information provides the filtering that is the second way in which we effectively distort and selectively react to the information we receive from the outside world. Our sense of the world is fundamentally unique to us. We have created our own rules for viewing the world based on the experiences we have been through. We see this as who we are and our truth.

The recognition that we see the world in our own way and interpret it with the light of our own experience is fundamental in communicating to others. We need to know that they have the same sense as the message we are trying to send. If I ask for assistance in finding a particular book then it is helpful if I can not only give the title and author but as much description of the appearance as possible so those helping me to find it have a similar image of the book as mine.

Our ideas about who we are, what constitutes a healthy person and who we think is well adjusted are also all determined by our own experience and by the lessons we have learnt from both the people and events that we have come across in our own lives.

3.0 Professor Clare Graves

In the 1950s Professor Clare Graves was finding it increasingly difficult to discuss the different theories of personal development with his psychology students and to say which theory was correct. He felt that the world of psychology was in a mess with the different views and models of human behaviour. He did not want to act as a referee in the ongoing arguments between the differing factions.

Professor Graves decided to embark on an area of research where he saw the greatest confusion. He started to ask his students:

"Can one substantiate that conflict and contradiction, confusion and controversy are represented in the conceptions of psychological health? "

 "What are the conceptions of psychological health extant in the minds of biologically mature human beings?"

"Do the existing concepts suggest that psychological health should be viewed as a state, a condition or as a psychological process? "

Professor Graves' students were aged between 18 and 61 and the group contained both male and female students.

Graves was teaching second year psychology in three schools; One with an all male population, one all female and one with a mixed group of adults. His students became the pragmatic choice for his research subjects. He felt that the students would not have sufficient prior knowledge of any single theory but would be sufficiently interested in the project to make it worthwhile.

Graves asked his students to spend the first five weeks of their course openly discussing what they would put into the conception of a health personality. After the five weeks he asked them to write a paper on their personal ideas of what is a healthy human being.

At the end of the five weeks Graves collected the papers from his students, copied and graded the responses and handed back the work. In the following five weeks the students formed random small groups and presented their own conceptions to their peers who offered critiques and asked questions. Graves witnessed the process as each person was quizzed by their peers and responded to criticism. At the end of this process each student was asked to write a further paper either defending or modifying their original conceptualisation after the peer feedback. The papers were again copied and graded.

In the third phase the students then studied various authorities in the field and what they had to say about the ideas of a healthy personality. The students were then asked to write a further defence or modification of their original concept of a healthy personality.

Graves then sat down with a randomly selected group of his students to discuss their concepts and how these had been modified or confirmed by the peer discussion and by exposure to the work of others writing in this field.

Graves repeated this procedure with eight different sets of students providing his first data set into the conceptualisation of a healthy personality within a mature adult. He established a group of independent judges to classify the conceptions in any way that they felt appropriate. Graves took these classifications and then passed the original data to a further independent panel of judges, who were ignorant of the first analysis, and asked them to classify the conceptualisations of his students however they felt appropriate. Graves then repeated the whole process each year for eight years, each time using independent judges who had no prior knowledge of the earlier classifications.

This rigour provided a sound foundation of data for the different classification groupings offered by the raft of independent judges operating over the total eight years of the project. Each group of judges classified all the data that had been accumulated up to that point so as the data accumulated, so it was re-classified alongside the more recent data. The final judges assessed all eight years of data.

The early findings showed that 60% of all the conceptions fell into two categories with two sub types each:
Deny Self Category (sacrificial) which had the sub groupings of ;
      Deny self for reward later
      Deny self to gain acceptance now.

Express Self Category (expressive) which had the sub groupings of;
      Express self as self desires in a calculating fashion and at the expense of others.
      Express self as self desires but not at the expense of others.

Graves looked at these four sub type themes and started then to look at how the conceptions had been modified during each five week period. He looked at how the concepts and their classification had been formed, at how they had been modified by peer pressure and peer criticism. Finally he looked at how authority criticism had caused the conceptualisations to be changed.

When Graves studied both the original data and the change data he realised that people were changing within a pattern.

Deny Self (for reward later) changed to,
Express Self (at the expense of others) to,
Deny Self (to get acceptance now) to,
Express Self (not at others expense) to
Deny Self (to conform to existential realities). *A concept not in the original data.*

Graves wrote about some of the people who had defined the healthy adult as Express self but not at the expense of others, "I had people show up who said that they used to believe that this was a healthy human being, but that they no longer believed it." A new classification of Deny self to conform… had emerged during the course of the work itself.

As the study evolved the student body attending his classes became more inclusive of those who had been denied a college education in earlier years. As they provided data for the later classifications a sixth category emerged as Express self at any cost.

The emerging pattern became:

Express self at any cost
Deny self now for reward later
Express self for self gain at the expense of others
Deny self now to get acceptance now
Express self, but not at the expense of others
Deny self to conform to existential realities

Graves started to realise that he was not dealing with psychological health but that the conceptions were reflecting the personalities systems active within the study population. With this awareness Graves started to refine his research.
As his students moved through the college years the majority of them remained available to him for continued contact. He started to construct results around how groups responded to standardised tests, how groups with similar conceptualisations worked together to solve problems, how individuals within groups interacted with each other and how long it took for the groups

to come up with solutions to standardised problems. He also looked at how many potential solutions each group would find to the problem the group was facing and assessed the quality of those solutions.

One clear result started to emerge out of all the data. The group, who had conceptualised a healthy personality as Express self, but not at the expense of others, were providing more good quality solutions faster than any of the other groups. Graves concluded that once the concept of a healthy personality embraced both expression of self and consideration of others, then a step change occurred in their way of thinking.

As Clare Graves worked in more detail with the results he realised he was looking at a model of the way that personality developed and there was clear evidence of some form of cyclical swing between Express Self and Deny Self states. Graves never had an initial hypothesis; in his papers he makes reference to letting the data do the talking. At one point he exclaimed "The data stopped me cold for a while. I didn't know what to do with it!"

In the 1960s Clare Graves worked with the data, following the patterns and trends that the data was showing him. A dynamic model of the development of personality started to emerge. Graves recognised in the data two facets to personality that change with time. "They have the character that they spurt and then plateau for a period of time, and then they spurt and plateau again." The model evolved towards that of a spiral double helix: the two elements of the helix being the interplay of the effects of the individual on his environment and the effects of the environment on the individual.

In 1971 Graves made a presentation of his work to the delegates at the Washington School of Psychiatry in "A Seminar on Levels of Human Existence." He presented the reasons for his research, areas of research concern, his methodology of collecting and analysing the data. "Briefly, what I am proposing is that the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating spiral process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behaviour systems to newer, higher order systems as man's existential problems change."

Two protégées of Clare Graves, Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, took the model of the "Emergent, Cyclical, Double Helix Model of Adult Biopsychosocial Development" and developed it further in "Spiral Dynamics" which was published as a book in 1996.

4.0 A World of Change

One of the key elements to the Graves work is that the personality of the adult human being has an impact on the environment and the environment also has an impact on the human being. We will see later in this document the nature of each code of personality identified in the Graves data but there are two significant elements which I believe are essential to understanding Spiral Dynamics. Graves found a close correlation between his emergent states and increasing cognitive ability and that the need to invoke more complex thinking, because of changing life conditions, is the prime motivator for change. When the need becomes so intense that it causes discomfort, then the shift to transition will start.

This should be no surprise to us. If we look at nature, we see change in response to life conditions all around us. If we consider plants and the way that root systems evolve in response to the prevailing condition, we see a graphic illustration of that adaptation.


Adaptation of root systems to soil and water conditions.

Spiral Dynamics is built around the idea of Values Systems and the way they adapt and change to allow us, as mature adult human beings, to live in changing life conditions. So what are Value Systems? They are our roots. They are the element driven deep down into the very foundations of our being. They are not always obvious and when the going gets tough we protect them at all costs.

If we again look at nature we can find an appropriate analogy if we look at the water lily.   We have a view of ourselves which we show to the world. This is often the best presentation that we can offer and we spend time making sure that it is acceptable, attractive to others whilst blending into its surroundings and being sustainable. In the model of the lily, the element we present is the flower.

Supporting that flower is the stem passing through the depth of water. It supports the flower, adapts to variations in water depth and provides an essential of the total plant. It can be glimpsed from the surface but is not as conspicuous as the flowering lily pad.

Deeper down, buried in the mud at the bottom of the pool but very much connected to both the flower and stem is the corm and root structure of the lily pad. It is the basic DNA that is within the very heart of the plant that determines the nature of the flower and its wellbeing.
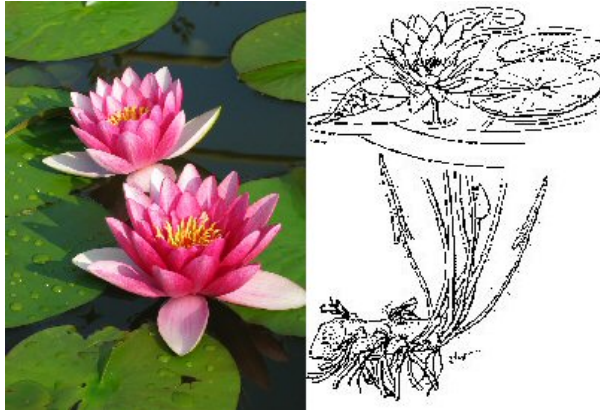
Value Systems- At the Core.

Our Values System is equivalent to the lily's corm and root structure. Our Values System is at the very heart of our being. It is protected and not open to public scrutiny unless by choice. It is the element which needs to adapt and change so the lily can survive if the soil changes. Ultimately it drives the public face seen above the pond surface.

So what was it that Graves was seeing change in his students? What was it that was "Emergent and Cyclical"? It was the values system that was changing and adapting in response to the changing life conditions. When real dissonance was experienced for a sustained period the core element adapted so that the students could continue to thrive in a more complex environment.

Beck and Cowan's book, Spiral Dynamics, brought another element to the table, "the Meme". Richard Dawkins had used the word to describe an element of cultural information, fashion or political ideology. Rupert Sheldrake, in "The presence of the Past" draws the comparison between Dawkins' meme and the idea of the Morphic Field, where ideas once generated, propagate and simultaneously appear at different, apparently unlinked, locations. The acceptance of mobile phones across cultural and geographic boundaries, in a short space of time, could be seen as a current day manifestation of a meme. Beck and Cowan introduced the idea of a "vMEME" or Values Meme as a value that becomes embedded within a culture. The assembly of our vMEMEs becomes a Values System.

The conceptualisation is that it is our Values System which is reacting to the life conditions and is emerging and cyclical as we experience the dissonance of being unable to solve increasingly complex issues with ways of thinking that are no longer adequate and are demonstrably in need of upgrading.

The double helix model offered by Graves was formed by the two elements of interaction; the influence of the individual on the environment and the influence of the environment on the individual. When neither had anything

left to give, a twist of the spiral was complete and the transition took place to the next code, with the ability to adapt. The new set of Values was again relevant to the changed life conditions for a period, providing the plateau of development observed by Graves in his students.

A Basic Double Helix

In the basic double helix illustrated above the blue ribbon can be regarded as the effects of the environment on the individual and the orange, the effects of the individual on the environment.

The results of study showed that as we moved along the helix, on our path of development, each code is complete and more complex than its predecessor. Each emergent code transcends and includes the elements of the previous code. This means that we don't forget the old way of thinking when we move but we take it with us and build on it, enabling us to deal with the increased complexity. In this way our double helix model changes as each step represents an ability to deal with greater complexity and is itself, a greater step. We become all the people we have ever been. Our double helix representation becomes more like:

The Double Helix model of Spiral Dynamics.

We now have the image presented to the world by Beck and Cowan to represent the "Emergent, Cyclical, Double Helix Model of Adult Biopsychosocial Development."

5.0 Codes on the Spiral

What is it that Graves observed as changing in his students when they considered the concept of psychological health? What was the element of personality that was undergoing change in response to their life conditions? Beck and Cowan introduced the concept of the gene-like vMEME as a DNA-like code within the brain that responds to the Bio-Psychosocial systems external to the individual. Elements are awakened and others dimmed to provide the complexity of thinking necessary to solve the problems associated with more complex life conditions.

As the students matured and dealt with the issues surrounding them they moved towards a state where they could express themselves but not at the expense of others. They moved from expressing themselves at any cost, holding only the perspective of self, towards a condition where they could not only recognise others but were considerate of them. This is additional complexity in their daily perception of life. Their mind set had changed to hold more than one perspective. They were managing their own perception of life simultaneously with holding the perspective of multiple others.

In the book Spiral Dynamics colours are given to the eight codes identified by Graves. One of Graves's fundamental principles was that any individual was perfectly entitled to be the person they were. There was no inherent pressure to change or progress through the codes of development. Colours are non judgemental and non ranking. Blue is neither better nor worse than Red. It just is. The colours reflect that entitlement to just be.

The research indicates that everybody starts at the same point on their journey and progresses through the codes in the same order to a point where they are able to deal with the prevailing life conditions with an appropriate complexity of thinking. Change is often linked to dissonance or discomfort and sometimes individuals cannot see the way forward to the next code and become blocked. They experience increased frustration because they need the additional abilities to cope but cannot find a way through. Others become so attached to a way of thinking that they do not want to change and limit their activities so that they can cope. They have become closed to change.

Many of us misread some of the indicators and because of distorted perceptions have a dysfunctional experience with a code we are in and

accelerate out of it as fast as we are able, assuming we do not become blocked. This may introduce weakness, which undermines our healthy experience of later codes. If our progress appears to us as blocked and our interaction dysfunctional; then the associated behaviour will be seen as inappropriate or dysfunctional. Any code may shift from a healthy to unhealthy manifestation. The pathway through the Spiral of the double helix is not a smooth ride.

5.1 First Code: Beige

When we are born we have a very limited view of the world. Our sphere of existence is totally dominated by our survival needs. The total complexity of the outside world is beyond our comprehension as we have no experiences, reference points or guidelines. We literally cannot perceive the outside world as our filters are unformed and empty of data. Our total experience is of our own body and its immediate surroundings. The world is dominated with simple states. Am I hungry? Am I in pain? Do I feel safe?   This is our common starting point.

At times of great illness we may re-visit it or if we become totally overwhelmed by the outside world we may retreat into it. The complexity of thinking is very elemental and we are largely driven by the survival skills embedded in our reptilian brain. Emotions may well be very basic, principally fear-based and close to biological impulses, and there may be little sense of time beyond now.

We are simply driven to satisfy the most basic of psychological needs. This first code is coloured as Beige. This is elemental survival at its most basic. We are born into it and may regress into it at times of extreme trauma or illness. This is our foothold on the spiral, and sometimes our departure point.

5.2 Second Code: Purple

The second vMEME of the Spiral is designated the colour Purple. Purple represents tribal, clannish behaviour typified by subordination to the Power Gods or traditions. It is a logical extension of Beige with the recognition that two or more people joining together are stronger and more able to survive than an isolated individual. There is less internalised sense of right and wrong so rituals and elders are followed without question.

In a healthy embodiment of Purple we may recognise that our safety comes through the trust of blood bonds and extended family. We recognise that we are the wisdom keepers of past generations and honour our ancestors and elders accordingly. There is little sense of personal responsibility so life is in the hands of the Gods. We recognise that the milestones of our life are marked by traditional rituals, rites of passage and traditional culture.

Purple has arisen as Beige becomes curious about a wider world and more aware of safety and vulnerability. The power of the family, clan, tribe or community comes from a healthy embodiment of the Purple vMEME. The collective fulfils the role of providing shelter and food so there becomes additional time for music and dance, conversation and ritual. In children we see the wonder of fairytales or Disney. Kids love to have gangs or groups with secret rituals, passwords and rites of passage.

In less functional surroundings where the family may not meet these needs, we see the emergence of gang/club culture with its own rituals, "Gods" and folk lore. We see a willingness to share within the group but defend fiercely against others.

A healthy developmental experience of Purple is important in putting down a firm foundation for the rest of life. This is the recognition of family bonding and the experience of unconditional love. We have somewhere to share and be nurtured if the going gets tough and people to celebrate with when everything is wonderful.   As we are able to enjoy the support of Purple it again releases time and energy to explore. This is kept in check by the natural boundaries of the leaders, elders and traditions but there becomes a time when curiosity and impatience start the change process. Alternatively,

the traditional ways may be experienced as inadequate when other aspects of the living environment are changing. A sense of frustration and confidence forge our move to a third code.

5.3 Third Code: Red

"The Ego has Landed"; the emergence of Ego drives us to gratify personal impulses without the regard for others. There is no sense of guilt or constraint in the search for instant gratification. "If I want it, then I will have it" becomes the mantra of Red. The ideas of respect and reputation become more important than anything else. Whatever needs to be done to avoid shame or being disrespected will be done without any sense of guilt or even awareness of others.

The myths and rituals of Purple fall away to the fearless warrior prepared to become a power-god at any cost. Boundaries will be pushed and expanded. Limits, whether set by man or nature are there to be challenged and defeated.

A healthy embodiment is evident in sport, climbing and areas of personal endeavour against nature. One person against the mountain, ocean or wind becomes the playground for Red. It is a demonstration of fearless strength over perceived weakness. Red can also be heroic in the protection of "its own".

Red will use force or intimidation, without any thought of guilt or remorse, to achieve a pinnacle of personal power. Playground games of strength, guile and personal skill, extreme sports, become the healthy outlet for Red. When those outlets are unavailable and the natural emergence becomes blocked by lack of resources or opportunity it will manifest itself as personal violence and anti-social behaviour.

Red is in all of us and we need to have a healthy experience of personal challenge, overcoming obstacles and expressing the pure exhilaration of an unbridled Life Force. If we deny and repress Red then we will create a powder keg of resentment, latent violence and even depression; for we are depressing an essential element of life itself.

As we explore the Red energy and overcome the challenges, we get less personal pay back and the law of diminishing return sets in. Weakening of personal power with age and desire for a stable base to raise a family bring individual and collective hunger for peace and order. Slowly a sense of needing something else and the idea of personal guilt emerge and Red no longer satisfies. The Spiral has taken a further turn.

5.4 Fourth Code: Blue

The egocentric days of Red ultimately produce an emptiness of purpose and an escalating sense of guilt as an awareness of others starts to build. The fourth code, Blue, is about aligning with purpose and finding order and stability. If we align with a group and play by the group rules then personal guilt is assuaged. We can start to find some true meaning by aligning behind a greater cause and recognising that joint effort will build stability and remove the impulsivity of earlier codes.

Children start to seek out clubs ands teams. They want to be part of a football team or Brownies. They like working for a form project; they want to belong and have their efforts recognised within the framework of a team. Boundaries and rules provide security. Martial arts clubs provide an ideal transition for many youngsters as they use the energy, aggression and personal sense of respect within a framework of strict rules whilst honouring the traditions and role models of the healthy Purple. Earlier codes are honoured and included within a discipline which removes any sense of personal guilt.

In a spiritual context attending church and being part of a congregation gives a sense of belonging and a sense of living within a structure whilst honouring the Divine and our ancestry. The rituals and rites of passage again support the earlier code of Purple but now with a sense of purpose and a route to forgiveness to replace emergent guilt.

Building order out of chaos gives a sense of communal security and makes individual suffering appear more remote as a threat. If we play by the rules and are "ethical" or operate within the ethos of the community, we will be

looked after. Blue has a link to Purple but within a framework and rules with greater security and a sense of purpose. The complexity of thinking has increased. We have learnt to recognise guilt and the moral rights of others. We have learnt that rules and purpose will endure longer than chaos and brute force.

Authority within the Blue framework starts to walk the boundary line of the rules and explore the edges. This is authority and leadership with purpose. At the same time, the order can become restrictive, inhibit innovation and discourage personal achievement. In its less healthy forms, Blue can become over-regulated, even turning into a police state. The conditions are created where independence is starting to become attractive, individual creativity asserts itself and tensions are produced.

5.5 Fifth Code: Orange

The comfort of the structure from Blue no longer holds the same attraction as we start to feel autonomy and independence. We recognise that the hard effort and strong work ethic learnt as part of the earlier codes has the capacity to provide material rewards and aspirations to toys and joys can be realised. The logic learnt through understanding rules now stands in good stead. It shows the pathway in a scientific world of multiple solutions and open competition.

The sense of personal freedom forged in Red and tempered with the rules and structure of Blue ignite a hunger for self expression and the chance to excel. There is a purpose around winning and personal success. Orange brings a relish to being measured and found to be a winner as designated by society. In a materialistic world this is expressed by the toys of consumerism. In a society where the material world is either not available or without regard, then personal success will be expressed in other forms. In a fundamentalist environment this may even include intentional martyrdom in the knowledge that a martyr's family will be rewarded within the culture.

Orange brings the perceived power to manipulate the environment and resourced to bring about the "good life". There is an inherent optimism and

sense of calculated risk on the journey to success that fuels the sense of control and achievement. Society is seen as progressing through the use of strategy, technology and competitiveness. There is little regard for the longer term effect on others, merely a strategic attempt to avoid creating their hostility now. Success now in the short term with the belief that science and technology will look after the future is the credo.

Orange can become excessive, resulting in excessive greed and self-centred behaviour. After a time it can lead to alienation and feelings of emptiness where we notice the loss of human caring and reduced valuing of people. Once again we see increasing awareness of "We" and the ability to see the impact on local community and a larger world picture. The complexity of thinking increases as eyes are lifted to a wider horizon. "What are we doing?" starts the process of dissonance and further change.

5.6 Sixth Code: Green

Recognising the need for human connection and the care for other people propels the change out of the materialistic dash of Orange into a more feeling and considerate phase of Green. There is a prevailing sense of equality and a desire to share the resources of the plane equitably and in a sustainable way. Decisions are no longer driven through by authority and power but sought through reconciliation and consensus.

 Sensitivity and sense of caring replace the cold logic of materialism and with them a new sense of the human spirit, which enriches the life experience.

A strong rejection of the earlier materialism and clinical pragmatism of Orange emerges and a desire to remove greed and create harmony replaces personal objectives. A sense of community and common purpose becomes paramount. Diversity is welcomed with the proviso that it enhances and enriches the experience for all. There is a sense of a growing family, respecting feelings and working for the common good.

This is the birth place of Political Correctness and policies of inclusion and acceptance, at any cost.

Doubts about the effectiveness of collective decision making and a sense of wider connection within the universe, start to engender a resurgence of personal empowerment. The focus on caring for all comes at a price and doubts around the sustainability and wisdom of supporting all regardless of cost starts the process of movement and change.

The attachment to group think dissolves and a rediscovered self, equally at home in company or in solitude, with a greater confidence and a greater sense of spiritual connection starts to emerge.
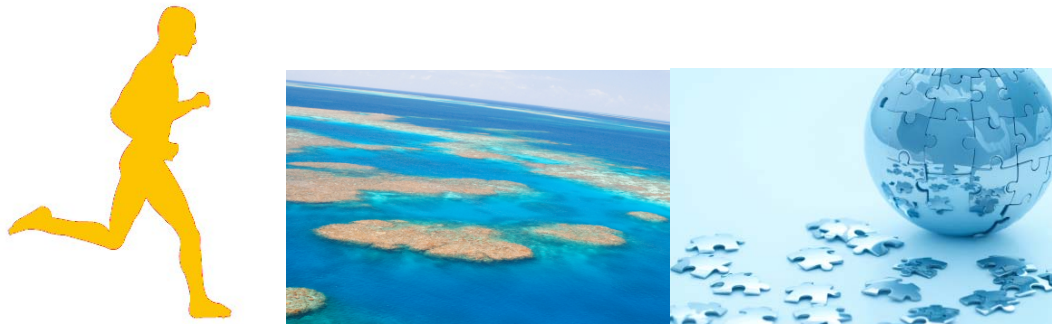
5.7 Seventh Code: Yellow

Clare Graves described the change from the sixth to the seventh code as a "momentous leap". It is a change into another order of thinking, a great shift where a glimpse of the whole becomes visible. We will see that at earlier codes it is difficult to relate to others at different codes to our own; but at the seventh code we can hold multiple perspectives simultaneously and recognise them as both valid and different. We can view the whole spectrum of the Spiral with its complexity and elegance.

Chaos is the playground of Yellow. Ebb and flow, catastrophic change and subtle adaptation are all valid models and can be embraced, understood and meshed into effective processes which are far greater than the sum of the pieces. Flex and flow become the natural rhythms. Companies, organisations and even nations grow, collapse, morph and evolve. Scenario planning is replaced by true flexibility capable of responding to whatever is as and when it arises. Whatever is right today may not be right tomorrow.

The seventh code embraces a far greater understanding of complexity and sees solutions appropriate to the prevailing life conditions and relevant to those experiencing them. Leadership becomes the implementation of what the planet, people, organisation, needs rather than what it wants.

It is not clear yet what the constraints of a Yellow system will be that propel the next set of codes on a more widespread basis. In the second tier, the " I / We" oscillation begins to take on new character, being not just the individual I/We, but swings between anthropocentric and holistic collective of our planet and universe.   In Yellow, we may still put human survival first.   Competition may still echo up from first tier. We still retain elements of the belief that "I", or a more local "We" can thrive when others are not thriving.   But slowly a sense of the Great Picture starts to draw us away to the eighth code. We see not only the chaos and complexity of this world but the interconnectedness of all life-forms and of all sciences. We recognise the mirroring of the micro in the macro. We get drawn towards the world of quantum reality, spirituality and the sheer wholeness of all.

5.8 Eighth Code: Turquoise

There is no distinction between self and the universe; there is an interconnectedness that irrevocably links all forms of life and matter in one integrated whole. Everything connects to everything and nothing happens without influencing everything else.

There is both self and non-self and no division between. All forms of energy interconnect to influence each other so no action is seen in isolation.

This is the true holism that is behind holistic, not the Purple ritual and awe of something little understood. But it contains a re-emergence of the shamanistic and intuitive forms of perception that have been absent since Blue systems separated us from the natural world, and Orange science made non-material forms of perception untrustworthy. Inner knowing is re-awakened, adding to our Yellow map of complexity in a way that links deep spirituality with the ability to do whatever needs to be done for the greater good of the whole.

There is a clear vision that we are the sum of not only all the people that we have been, but the sum of all our ancestors and who they have been.

Multiple perspectives are easily held and balanced, not for compromise, but for the greater good.

This is the greatest complexity of thinking that we understand currently and yet the doubt starts to generate the change process as our understanding of the universe unravels to reveal yet greater complexity than we ever imagined.

5.9 The Flow of the Spiral

In 1978 Clare Graves stated his vision of the Spiral at North Texas State University " What I am proposing is that the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiralling process, marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behaviour systems to newer, higher order systems as man's existential problems change."

Continuing research and data collected by The Values Centre, Denton, Texas we have confirmed that oscillating dynamic change where our focus changes cyclically between Self Expression and Self Denial. It emerges progressively in response to increasing complexity (for instance the shift from tribes, to towns, to cities and global interconnection).   At Turquoise, even the sense of what it means to have a separate self comes into questioning focus. This does not mean however that we lose the sense of self altogether and it should not be confused with a mystic, blissful or enlightened state.   It is anticipated that emergence will continue beyond Turquoise, and a ninth "Coral" code is anticipated.

We can see how the need for added safety drives the change from personal Survival to the protection of Tribe. How additional time and confidence fosters the emergence of self and the Ego of Red. Developing guilt drives us to the protection of rules and structure, a common goal provides purpose as we discover Blue. A sense of exploration and a desire to express ourselves once again takes hold as we seek the good life in Orange. The emptiness of materialism is then replaced by a sense of the greater community and a common sharing of our resources. We pause here a while preparing for the "momentous leap" as we find ourselves able for the first time to hold multiple perspectives and feel comfortable with chaotic flow as we enter Yellow.

Everything becomes connected to everything else and a fresh awareness of the interconnectedness of all things takes us to Turquoise. The Spiral has turned eight times taking mankind on a journey from the isolated sphere of personal survival to an understanding of the complexity of the universe itself.

There is no imperative to progress on the Spiral if life conditions remain unchanged. Clare Graves was emphatic that everybody has the right to be who they are. We all pause at different points on the Spiral, some going no further by choice and others through a sense of being blocked or trapped. We may also move collectively back down the spiral if life conditions place emphasis on the need for the skills we transcended. A disaster like Katrina can propel inhabitants of a city like New Orleans from their life in Blue and Orange straight back to Beige or Red fighting for survival.

Likewise, every skill we pick up remains available to us so if the going gets rough we can dig in and re-ignite the earlier ways of thinking that served us well. We regress to the thinking appropriate to our life conditions or are drawn towards new ways of thinking as we become exposed to more complex problems.

6.0 The Change Process

The change of dominant codes is not like a light switch but is a gradual transition as in the swept transition between two film shots in a movie. The existing dominant code starts to fade as the emergent code strengthens and becomes embedded. This is a continuous process of folding and unfolding as the life conditions, and our perceptions of those conditions, change.

A code which has served us well will cease to provide all the perceived answers and an awakening of something else being possible starts to emerge. It starts to take form, is tried, and tested and strengthens. This provides the impetus for the old code to fade back into a reservoir of skills and coping tools, to be drawn on in the future, as required.

There is a pattern in which the codes unfold; from sole survival to member of a tribe, from leaving the community of a tribe to the expression of personal gratification, to a group living with purpose and rules emerging into a self expressed sense of excellence then again returning to the bigger community of the common man. The journey flip-flops from self expression at the expense of the group to expression of the group at the expense of self. We alternate in our path of dominant codes between wanting to build our own sense of self and wanting to be part of a meaningful community. This is the reflection of the patterns seen in the research of Professor Clare Graves.

We allow one set of codes to drop away as the next emerges on our dynamic journey through our personal development, learning to deal with greater complexity at every level. Our reaction to our environment and the reaction of our environment to our presence fuels the unfolding of the double helix in a continuing path up to the Green code where, after much internal processing, the possibility starts to unfold; perhaps we can develop a sense of self without sacrificing the group or even to develop the group without eliminating our own sense of being. Note too, that your shift of Values may form a part of my life conditions. Eventually the boundaries are eroded as true holism develops.

We start to see two pathways on a parallel journey unfolding; as a self centred code starts to collapse, a group centred code gains in strength. The group code in turn will be replaced by a renewed, more appropriate, self expressive code as the complexity of life increases. This is the "emergent, oscillating, spiralling process" in action.
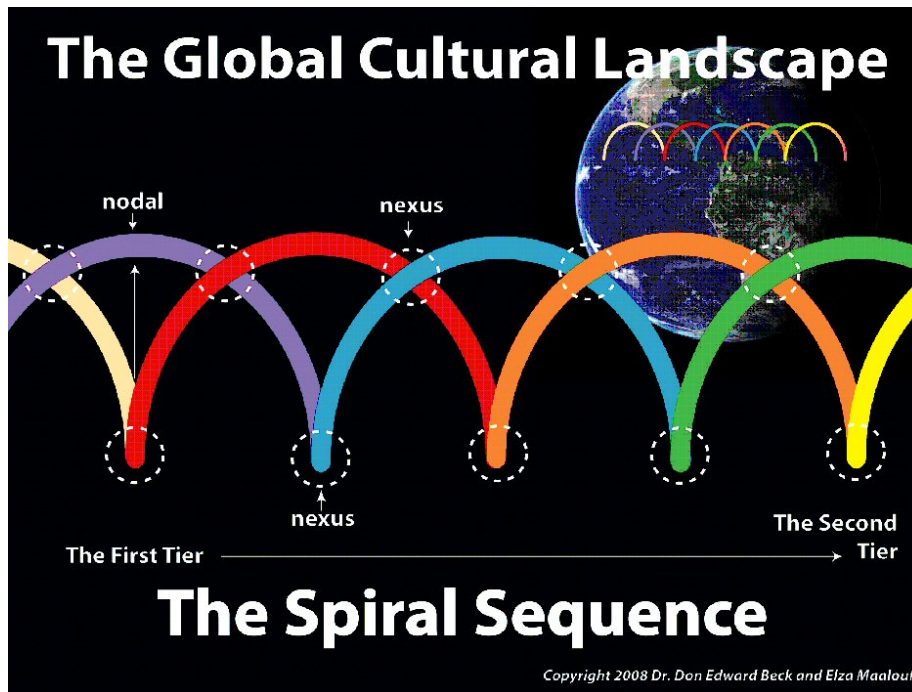
The Unfolding Double Helix.
(Reproduced with the permission of Don Beck and Elza Maalouf)

The Self Expressed codes are represented by the warm colours of Beige, Red, Orange and Yellow whilst the cooler colours represent the unfolding community codes in Purple, Blue, Green and subsequently, Turquoise.

Lives are full of dynamic change and so are our values systems or vMemes. We rarely spend any length of time with the peak modal clarity of a dominant code driving the centre of gravity of our behaviour. It is more likely that, at any given moment, we are in some form of transition, trying to balance the code that has served us well in the past but has been surpassed by a rising new code we are learning to balance and understand. Many of the problems in society come from the balance points where the hold of community is relaxing as we explore the emerging sense of self and Purple and Red are in balance or when guilt and a sense of purpose emerges and we leave the self power of Red behind and find our way amongst the rules and framework of Blue, healthy or dysfunctional; family and team or gang.

The transition from code to code is not always straightforward. The transition we require to cope may not be available to us or we may simply lose our capacity to adapt due to other circumstances. The transition can be blocked or closed resulting in frustration and a sense of being trapped. Examples of this can be seen where youngsters see material wealth and its associated possessions as a way of scoring personal value but they lack the opportunity to earn the money and turn in to feelings of low self-esteem, finally either becoming closed within depression or exploding out in anger, crime and rage, against an unfair society.

If we look at the lifecycle of organisations there is a decisive moment when the peak has been passed and there is a realisation of decline. In that moment of chaos or complexity the ability to be re-born is grasped or missed. The new organisation or the new code emerges from that area of complexity or the moment is lost and the development cycle becomes closed. In some circumstances life conditions are such development may be blocked by the action of others, in a physical or cultural way. Common examples of this are when emergent societies are ready to grow from Purple and healthy Red into Blue but the transition between codes may be blocked by the dysfunctional Red or heavy Blue of others. Tribalism becomes blocked because it serves the purpose of others creating situations which are evident in much of the Middle East and Asia.

7.0 Measuring the Path of the Spiral

The whole of Spiral Dynamics is built from data rather than from a theory so it is only natural that we continue to measure the dynamics of the ever changing flow of the active codes within individuals and within teams and organisations. We have seen in earlier sections that our vMemes are the Values equivalent of our DNA codes embedded in the depths of us as we are; not as we would like to be or how we were, but how we are. And that is part of the magic of understanding Spiral Dynamics.

If we ask a series of routine questions designed to elicit our instinctual responses then we can build a profile of the vMeme codes that are active at the time of the questioning. The National Values Center, in Denton, Texas has developed a series of tests which are founded on Clare Graves' original research and the tests have been developed for use with individuals and organisations across the world. They have been administered using paper and pencil and they have been used on-line. The results from the tests provide a profile of the active codes, split into acceptance and rejection scores for each of the eight codes.

We can see from the Values tests where the centre of gravity of the active codes is at the time of taking the test. Spiral Dynamics is called what it is. It is not Spiral Types or Spiral People; it is Spiral Dynamics because the codes, active within each and every one of us, are flexing and flowing in response to the life conditions around us. More accurately, the life conditions as we perceive them around us.
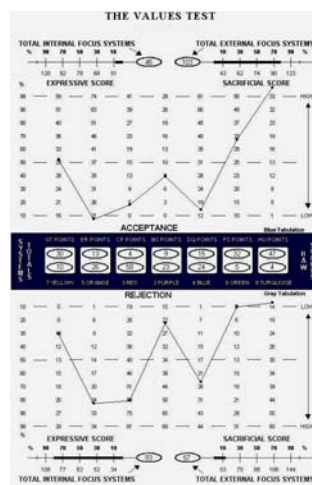
*A Typical Values Test Results Sheet*

The values test results can be broken down into a number of aspects including our World View, our Personal View and our Work view of life. This is again helpful in understanding where we are in our own pathway, and also we can then use our understanding of the codes, to communicate with others, if we know the codes active within them.
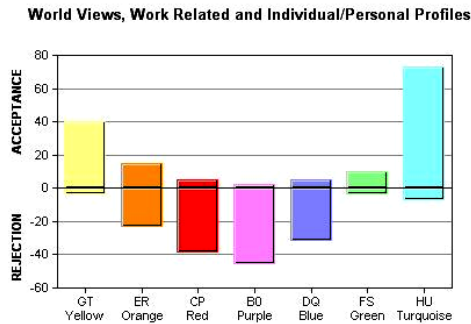
Values Test Results

We have seen that a Values test is a snapshot of the active codes at one moment in time. The other piece of information that is helpful to us, is to better understand how both we and how others are able to change. Once we know where we are, it is also good to know if we are happy to adapt and change as our life conditions adjust around us and to us. Nothing is stationery.

The second set of tests available to us allows us to see and better understand how we change. This is called a Change State Indicator and it gives us an indication as to how we perceive ourselves in relationship to our lives. Are we happy where we rest, right now, do we perceive something is wrong, do we feel stuck or are we celebrating a breakthrough? We can also see what type of change we like. Do we feel happier when changes are gentle or do we prefer to tear up the rule book? Do we enjoy sameness or do we thrive in chaos?
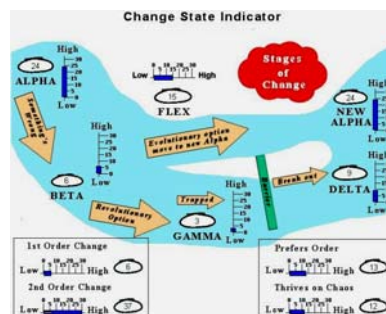
Change State Indicator Results

Analysis of the results from the above two basic tools gives us amazing insight in to how we are. Not who we are or what type we are but how we are responding to what is going on around us at this precise moment in time.

That insight enables us to design and develop organisations, communication tools and a whole raft of other aspects of life, to best serve the people that are going to use them. On an individual level, it may help us better understand our children, recognise what is needed within our community or simply understand why we get on better with some people rather than others.

We emerge into a new code when the life conditions are right for us. When the combination of all the factors come together to give the confidence to let go of what has served us well and explore what we sense is developing. This process is emergence. It is becoming something more than we have been. The next sections of this guide help us look at different forms of emergence.

As individuals we emerge into somebody capable of better responding to our life conditions; to hold more perspectives and to deal with greater complexity. This we refer to as Personal Emergence.

An organisation is made up of individuals but there is also an ethos or culture to each organisation which generates, if managed and led correctly, something more than the sum of its parts. An organisation, with insight and strong leadership can emerge into something far greater than existed before. It may be a company, a team or a multi-national corporation. This opening to the future is Organisational Emergence.

Children of all ages respond rapidly to the changing life conditions around them. The greatest single obstacle to this growth is the possibility of a change between active codes becoming closed or blocked. If a dominant individual, or group of individuals, stops us developing, frustrations and anxieties are born which halt the potential emergence of the adult human being. When we use the insights that Spiral Dynamics brings, to smooth the transitions between codes and to encourage exploration of what we may be capable of, children and individuals of all ages respond with enthusiasm and energy. This we refer to as Educational Emergence.

None of us lives in isolation. Our neighbours and peers are part of our life conditions. We have seen from Clare Graves' original research that not only do we respond to our life conditions but our life conditions themselves respond to our presence. We are enmeshed within our community and an integral part of it. Years ago it was said that "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem". More accurately, "If you don't recognise yourself as part of the problem, you will never be part of the solution".   Community Emergence is centred on the use of Spiral Dynamics to better understand the dynamics of the community that we are part of and using that insight to help a healthier community emerge to fully meet the life conditions of all who live within it.

Spiral Dynamics has no power. The insight that comes with understanding the ideas of Spiral Dynamics can change nations. The power is in people embracing what may be possible and using insight, support and experience to create it as reality within their own lives.

8.0 Personal Emergence

The introduction to this guide states that Spiral Dynamics "is not a personal development tool but it provides exceptional insights into personal development" and that remains true. If we start to understand the journey of the adult human being and gain some perspective on the codes that we develop and unfurl, like some latent DNA, and we understand the nature of change, we have given ourselves a very powerful tool kit. We have a map and a means of navigating that map. We can find out where we are and we have the knowledge of what is next. Spiral Dynamics is not however a series of exercises designed to speed us on that journey.

Professor Clare Graves was emphatic that everybody had the right to be who they are. The structure of Spiral Dynamics is not non-hierarchical but it is non-judgemental. There is no "better" place on the Spiral. The understanding is that we all have the potential to utilise all the vMeme codes embedded within us. As our life conditions become appropriate we enable the next code to emerge and replace the existing dominant code, giving us additional life skills to cope with life's complexity and to hold additional perspectives.

The knowledge that comes from the map perhaps means that we are better able to firstly understand our children, and secondly to communicate with them or, at the very least, understand why we have that difficulty. We can recognise that an activity such as membership of a marshal arts club is a natural expression of self within a framework of others supported by respect for elders and teachers. It forms a supportive framework for the healthy expression of the Red code emerging into the supportive framework of Blue whilst honouring healthy Purple. In future years it will provide a framework to explore the personal excellence of Orange.

The Spiral Dynamics map helps us make sense of what works and helps us understand what does not. We can perhaps start to understand that a dysfunctional expression of the Purple code, through difficult family circumstances, can launch individuals into a strongly independent Red which does not recognise the supportive nature of Blue but re-ignites a pack instinct fuelling a gang culture. The gang replaces the family and eventually the first encounters with Blue are a dysfunctional clash with the law.

An understanding of the codes helps us see the advantages of competitive games and necessity of boundaries and family support, providing a firm foundation for future development.

9.0 Organisational Emergence

Much of the description of Spiral Dynamics has been around the individual. The reason for this is simple. It is where the researched data, that is the foundation for Professor Clare Graves work, comes from. If we understand the idea of holons, then we know that atoms make molecules that make cells that make organs that make creatures that make families…..

Organisations are holons of the people within. People make organisations. They are held together by an ethos or culture and they live within a set of life conditions determined by that culture. The organisation becomes the life conditions for the individual as the culture within which an organisation operates becomes the life conditions for the organisation.

All the development stages of an organisation have their parallels within the codes of the individuals. The classical *"Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing"* of group theory can just as easily be written as expressions of the organisational codes at Purple, Red, Blue and Orange.

As the life conditions within which the organisation operates change, so will the organisation itself change. There is also the same flow towards embracing an ability to deal with greater complexity. If regular Values tests are taken by the key executives and managers within an organisation, at regular intervals, you will see the same development patterns as that of an individual. This happens regardless of individuals leaving or joining the company. Some codes become blocked or closed, some are fully developed and others are dysfunctional.

Organisations can use the Values and Change State Indicator tests for recruitment and ensure that individuals fit into the role and environment they are being recruited for. If a post is being filled for a financial compliance officer then it is probably important that the candidate has a healthy expression of the Blue vMeme with high Blue acceptance scores whereas a new salesman would probably be found from candidates with a strong Orange code together with healthy Blue.

In an ideal world we would use the insights of Spiral Dynamics to design our hospitals, schools and other service providers for the community. If we consider the active codes of the community to be served, we can better understand their needs and the skills necessary to provide them in an effective manner. We can ask the questions; who do I need to serve these people? And then who do I need to manage these service providers?

The structures of the organisations themselves change from simple command and control structures through multilayered establishments to a mesh of interconnected departments as the complexity of the organisation and its roles change.

With our understanding we can now develop organisations that provide both the individuals and the structures to fully match the complexity of the tasks they are being required to complete. We can design and develop organisational structures that are specific to the life conditions in which they operate and match the complexity of the problems they need to resolve.

10.0 Educational Emergence

The insights of Spiral Dynamics Integral give an understanding of the importance of the basic codes and we can see how these unfold in an educational setting, for both the pupils and the staff. For us to support a generation to become healthy mature adults we need to ensure that all the basic first tier codes have a healthy expression or we are building their future on foundations of sand.

We have seen the importance of the Purple code which normally comes from close family bonding and a feeling of being supported and part of something greater than ourselves. Early schooling is a part of this process but cannot be a substitute for it. In many cultures we see the maintenance of strong family ties with families eating as a group and supporting each other through the process of story telling and wisdom keeping. With rushed lives, cramped housing and a replacement of meal times by "grazing", these traditions have been eroded, and at some cost. The family "experience" has too often been replaced by overstretched teaching staff or, more commonly, gangs and groups of peers providing mutual support but without the input of perceived historical wisdom.

The chance to explore the strengths of Self are evidenced in the Red code which can find space to safely emerge within competitive games, outdoor activities, and other examples of energetic exploration. Restrictions imposed through excessive worries of "Health and Safety" and the often misguided views on competitive games have again seen the erosion of this safe environment for a code to develop; being replaced by less appropriate activities and frustrations. The Red code is too often seen in its dysfunctional expression of youth violence, knife crime and "Laddism". We should not be surprised as we have the knowledge as to why these things happen but steadfastly continue to try and treat the symptoms rather than address the causes.

An ethos of supportive regulation and societal rules provides a framework for Blue to generate with an associated sense of being supported and valued as part of a community. Working within a healthy expression of Blue promotes security and teaches the necessity of working by rules for society to develop and thrive. If the pupil does not receive that supportive element then the first encounter with Blue is a head on collision with either school discipline or the law producing a closed encounter and a dysfunctional experience of the Blue code.

Youngsters are exposed to both the technology and the materialistic values of a modern society at an early age. If a culture of instant gratification, without the discipline of saving or a strong work ethic being present then the Orange code is experienced on top of either weak or dysfunctional Blue with frustration being vented through anger supported by an inappropriate experience of the earlier Purple and Red codes that should teach more measured and self reliant responses.

Spiral Dynamics provides the understanding to handle these fundamental developments within our children in a way that is supportive and provides a healthy experience of the vMeme codes in the requisite order. It is part of the systemic nature of our society. We cannot change land prices, for instance, without that having an impact on the way houses are and schools are built, on the monies needed to finance the new "prosperity" and the resultant influence on our life conditions. A lack of dining facilities at both home and school takes away the supportive structure of a healthy Purple culture for many without providing an adequate replacement. Hurried lives lived under pressure means less support and genuine communication between children and parents.

We have the tools to understand the reasons for many of society's ills and the knowledge to replace them with appropriate solutions. Educational emergence is about understanding that process and using the knowledge to design cleverer ways of coping with modern life conditions as they are. This knowledge can support all those involved in Education and in Community Safety to find supportive solutions for the younger generations, ensuring that they put down healthy expressions of the first tier codes. It can help us find the right teachers to match the needs of specific communities and to lead young people through the development that they and our society require.

11.0 Community Emergence

The chapter above on Educational Emergence has shown how we have the means to support our children in their first experience of developing the first tier codes of the Spiral. That same understanding flows out into the community, not only as community safety, with issues of street crime and violence but in the subtler ways in which we interact with each other.

Organisations such as housing associations, the University of the Third Age and other groups are ways in which members of specific communities have self-organised, with the help of an imaginative framework, to transform their own life conditions.

If we understand the way in which the codes unfold, the processes of change and the interaction between us as individuals with both other members of the community and the conditions in which we live, we can be proactive in creating better lives for all involved. With the knowledge that Spiral Dynamics Integral brings, we can genuinely co-create our own life conditions and therefore improve our own lives.

Emergence is a bottom up, rather than top down, process. If we wait for government, national or local, to impose solutions and to respond to needs, we may well end up frustrated and ill served. If, on the other hand, we recognise what we have at this moment, both in terms of resources, people and opportunity, and initially just try and do the very best we can with what we have. We can then re-assess tomorrow if we can do something even better. It is in this way that a stronger community emerges, better serving its' people.

Community leaders and individuals who feel sufficiently motivated to make a difference can use the tools of Spiral Dynamics, its' insights, measurement tools and its community of practitioners to develop a more supportive environment so everyone within a community can enjoy a healthy experience of the different codes that make up our journey along the Spiral.

12.0   Leadership and Meshworking

There have been a lot of books written about leadership and about management and the relationship between them. It is perhaps useful to look at the sort of problems that any individual or organisation is asked to solve. We are aware from Professor Clare Graves work and from the follow up work by others such as Dr Don Beck that Spiral Dynamics Integral reflects the continual growing need to deal with greater complexity. Simply as life evolves, we are asked to resolve more complex issues.

Problems can be broadly split into three distinct areas. The first are sometimes known as Neat problems which are problems with specific logical solutions. These can be addressed without an undue degree of complex thinking. Processes or procedures can be complicated but ultimately they are solved as a series of discrete Neat problems, nested together. The complicated problems, like arranging air traffic control, or building a factory, are a large stack of neat problems which have specific logical outcomes. The solving of these problems can be regarded as management.

There is a second group of problems which arise out of an emergency and these require decisive decisions being made by one person who has the best view of the situation. These are known as Critical problems and require a command and control leadership for a safe and timely resolution. Problems such as a road traffic accident or even a natural disaster would be regarded as Critical problems. They are again a set of logical steps where somebody takes charge and leads others, who may not be able to see the entire problem, through what needs to be done. The leader is seen as a commander or as an heroic figure that takes charge of the problem and resolves it in the most timely and logical way.

There is a third group of problems which show increased complexity and all the elements of the problem are connected to all the other elements. There is no one logical outcome and the problem is seen as complex rather than complicated. In some instances attempts are made to break these problems down into different aspects and treat each element as a complicated problem. The difficulty is that the emerging solutions seldom reflect the interactive nature of the whole. If we look at the human body; it has traditionally been treated in the West as a series of systems; the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the endocrine system and so on. Traditional Western medicine has treated the symptoms of individual systems and seldom addresses the complexity of the human body as a whole natural system.

Organisations have tried to understand such complex systems and their future behaviour, by treating them in the same way and running "what if"

estimates in each system as if it was a Neat problem with a tidy solution. This is often known as scenario planning but it again denies the complexity of the whole and produces simplified solutions that do not reflect the non-linear, systemic nature of a complex problem.

As we appreciate the complexity of thinking that comes with the Yellow and Turquoise codes we can start to understand that complex questions need complex solutions. There are no Neat solutions, only solutions which reflect a snapshot in time, where the outcome itself may actually cause a different outcome at some other time. Problems of this complexity need multiple minds working on them simultaneously to derive a solution that is an optimum solution at the time it is produced.

Such problem solving calls for new techniques of leadership and this has been developed by Dr Don Beck and others as Meshworks Solutions. It is a way of connecting multiple minds on solving a singular complex problem, recognising and working with all its complexity for the best possible outcome and recognising that the outcome itself is only valid at that time.

As the increasing complexity of our thinking unfolds through the codes of the Spiral, so too does the way in which we interact with our world. Not only do we as individuals become able to cope with increasing complexity but so do our organisations. Techniques are currently being developed that enable individuals to use their increased capacity to deal with complexity in a way that helps us understand problems that were previously too complex to fully understand. It is the techniques such as Meshworking that will transform medicine, economics and the way in which we react to our environment. It is currently already in use to help with the greatest threat facing us today, climate change.

13.0 Case Studies

Below there are two case studies where the application of Spiral Dynamics has given insights into the way people behave and operate. The case studies are based on actual assignments but the presentation has been greatly simplified to illustrate the major learning in a simple and clear way.

Study1

The organisation in this case study is an educational trust whose annual income has remained effectively stationary at £1.5m per annum for six years. The organisation is managed by an in-house management team reporting to an external group of international trustees.

The trustees and management team wished to look at why the organisation had no growth and there appeared to be little development within the ethos of the management despite some personnel changes.

An external consultant was asked to look at the organisation and suggest changes that may result in the continuing fiscal and cultural development of the organisation. As part of that study the management team were interviewed and also asked to take a Values test and a Change State Indicator test on-line.

Analysis of the Value test results showed that all the management team showed similar profiles with a high acceptance of Purple and Green, high rejections of Orange and Red and low acceptance scores for Blue. The results showed that as personnel changed the individuals doing the recruiting employed people similar to them, without account of what the organisation actually needed. This resulted in a complete rejection of all the warm colours, so there was no evidence of anybody with personal drive or ambition. The whole organisation was community based with decision making being by consensus. This was further reinforced by the Change State Indicator results which showed that all the management team felt nothing was wrong and preferred only gentle change. Some members of management in the past had developed their acceptances of Red and Orange as the Yellow code emerged but had been so frustrated, they had taken posts elsewhere.

The recommendation was that the organisation change its' recruitment policy and engaged members of management with a strong acceptance of Orange and low rejection scores of Red to inject a sense of urgency and purpose into the team.

Study 2

A small manufacturing company working in the leisure industry produced products for hotels and sports centres. They had found that their project based workload produced large fluctuations in labour requirements and they asked for assistance in re-organising the company to reduce the pressures and frictions that the cyclic loading and unloading was causing on their manufacturing facility.

Spiral Dynamics analysis showed that the members working within the sales side of the business had low acceptances of Blue and were motivated by a dominant Orange code. Others who had high levels of experience on the manufacturing side and who had high Blue acceptance values were spending long periods away from the factory, interacting with clients.

A small amount of staff re-organisation resulted in a key individual with the higher Blue code and manufacturing experience scheduling the project manufacture and a member of the sales team being re-deployed to resolve customer issues. Some additional part time assistance was recruited into the sales team resulting in a strategic alliance being struck with an overseas sales organisation that lacked manufacturing capacity. The plant was finally expanded to operate at a greater capacity with additional work being drawn from the partner between domestic contracts.

The principles here are simple but can reflect into organisations of any size. People are at their most productive and feel the most job satisfaction when they are working to their individual strengths and feel supported by others who are doing the same.

RESOURCES

Spiral Dynamics Integral Training

You can find out more about Spiral Dynamics training and support within the UK including details of certificated training at www.humanemergence.org.uk

More Information

You can connect with more resources associated with Spiral Dynamics integral at www.spiraldynamics.net

"Spiral Dynamics, mastering values, leadership and change." Don Beck, Christopher Cowan. Blackwell Publishing 1996.

Additional Copies

Additional copies of this Introduction are available from:
www.humanemergence.org.uk

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Ian McDonald works as a coach, mentor and Integral psychologist in the field of leading edge personal development. He runs master-classes in Consciously Creating Miracles in which mental barriers are dissolved to re-establish boundaries beyond the undoable. An accomplished speaker and presenter, he promotes an Integral approach to thinking and has established the Integral Life Centre in Cheshire, as a training facility in this field.

Ian has been involved in using Spiral Dynamics Integral in organisational and personal emergence settings including work with educational trusts and professional organisations. He has written on the root causes of terrorism and believes that SDi offers a unique perspective on many of the ailments currently manifesting themselves within this country and throughout the world. Ian runs the Cheshire Leadership programme to promote the ideas of integral thinking within the leadership of local organisations.

Ian is currently working on developing models of leadership to cope with increased complexity and faster rates of change.

He has a Masters degree in Transpersonal Psychology, and has trained at the Integral Institute in Integral Psychotherapy. He is certified in Spiral Dynamics Integral and is an NLP Practitioner.

Ian has traveled widely in Asia and lives just outside Chester, with his wife Christine, at the Integral Life Centre.

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