

# Spiral Dynamics Integral

"The Theory that Explains Everything"



## Human Capacities in the Integral Age

### How Value Systems Shape Organizational Productivity, National Prosperity and Global Transformation

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The focus on the role of productivity in enhancing competitiveness, while generating wealth and cultural well-being, has shifted over time from the *micro* (personal, team and "circles") to the *meso* (organizational design and performance) and now the *macro* (large scale and complex systems). Likewise, the essential thinking around productivity matters has emerged through *systemic*, *strategic*, *humanistic* and now *integral* patterns and organizing paradigms. The "profound knowledge" as described by Dr. Edward Deming is just now becoming clear to many who applied only surface-level and tentative versions of his massive work. We now recognize that micro-scale solutions depend heavily on both meso-scale and macro-scale insights and that all three must be meshed in the *whole-scale* application.

This presentation will introduce the concept of Spiral Dynamics, a new, evolutionary framework that describes whole-systems thinking, details how value systems emerge in societies, and maps out a program for raising human capacities to deal with 21st Century complexities. The session will introduce the notion of Memetics, the scientific study of "DNA-like" codes and patterns that lie at the core of companies, cultures and countries. It will describe the role of Vital Signs Monitors in profiling human groupings, and a series of design formulas in crafting natural systems that align *focus*, *function*, *form*, *fit*, *flow* and *future*. Finally, it will demonstrate how to synchronize the spiral of technological complexity, business systems sophistication, and levels of human development.

#### THE AGE OF FRAGMENTATION

Never before has the planet earth carried such a rich tapestry of human differences in the form of individuals and groups. The end of the Cold War brought the thawing of the bi-polar ice sheet that covered the entire planet as the deep ethnic cores began to bubble and boil once again. Decades of deconstructionism and egalitarianism in academic and popular cultural circles released the bent-up entities and interests that had been subdued by European-Western hierarchies of power and control. The microchip places an immense amount of influence in the choice making of single individuals. DNA analyses now make possible the specific identity of every person on the planet. Mass customization efforts are able to target each person, and even specify names on the inside of weekly magazines. It is as if the entire psychological history of our species from Day One is being replayed in real time and carried live on CNN. What an amazing time!

Likewise, we have been witnessing a significant amount of fragmentation in the work place and around issues germane to productivity. Our work force, in most environments, is much more diverse than before. The shift toward a global view has, likewise, introduced more complexity, not just in terms of different cultures, but also in the form of a myriad of value systems that work side-by-side or, within a whole constellation of teams and alliances. Yet, many of our approaches to productivity still tend to be monolithic in design and applied like a generic "cash wash" over people and work units that are spreading apart as if they had been

purloined into space a Big Bang

## SIX BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

Most people know the story of the "Six Blind Men and the Elephant." One discovered the tail, another the trunk, while the others felt the leg, side, tusk, and ear. Each was totally convinced he had discovered the "truth" based on the direct experience. Of course, each observer was "right" about the elephant, but only about a part; none was able to sense the whole. This can also be said about the various political, economic, religious, educational, child-rearing, and technological theories of our own day. This also includes the various listings of worldviews or *Weltanschauungen*, or the numerous psychological packages, leadership initiatives, or managerial mandates that continue to be popular, or have been discarded in societal dust bins. The various and often heated debates heard at the United Nations, or in national assemblies, senates, and parliaments, will, likewise, reflect these different views of "the elephant." Rather than continue to pit the vast array of differences against one another in an adversarial manner, or suffer the consequences when the conflicts surface in the form of belligerence or warfare, might it not be useful to find a way to construct a synthesis that can explain why each emerged, where it is useful, and how it can contribute to the total Global Mesh?

Which of these views of the elephant-world best describe you?	
The World is. . .*	
beige	a natural milieu where humans rely on instincts to stay alive
purple	a magical place alive with spirit beings and mystical signs
red	a jungle where the strongest and most cunning survive
blue	an ordered existence under the control of the ultimate truth
orange	a market place full of possibilities and opportunities
green	a human habitat in which we share life's experiences
yellow	a chaotic organism forged by differences and change
turquoise	an elegantly balanced system of interlocking-forces

\*Question from The Values Test, NVC

This search for the cohesive elements that can hold so many fragmented parts together in a new, 21st Century alignment, and create the methodology and mechanisms for the continuation and enhancement of all human life on the planet as well as in corporate and work environments, will require an understanding of three essential components:

1. **The Evolution of Value Systems.** We will introduce here a new framework called Spiral Dynamics, a bio-psycho- social-spiritual conceptual system that describes how and when worldviews emerge, and how they form themselves into spirals of complexity. Each newly awakened Value System crafts its own unique work attitudes, organizational designs and specific perspectives on issues around productivity improvement
2. **Historical Approaches to Productivity.** Because Life Conditions change, new innovations are introduced into the workplace, and people themselves emerge into different priority "bottom-lines," we must rethink the whole matter of productivity itself, and what it will take to generate the high levels of behavior necessary to maintain the quality of our lives. We will track the shifts in thinking about productivity through a series of Value Systems, with an additional recognition that our own efforts have emerged through micro, meso, and now macro applications.
3. **Productivity in the Integral Age.** If, indeed, we are dealing with new levels of complexity and fragmentation, how should we conceptualize the role of productivity in enriching and enhancing the work place, or in educational systems, or in cultural and social domains, so that we meet the challenges that confront us in this newly emerging Integral Age?

## THE EVOLUTION OF VALUE SYSTEMS: SPIRAL DYNAMICS

Spiral Dynamics is based on the seminal work of the late Professor Clare W. Graves, Union College, New York. He described what he called "Levels of Psychological Existence" as an emerging pattern and priority of worldviews, value systems, and complex adaptive intelligences that arise in response to Life Conditions. Thus, human nature is not finite. We are not frozen into types or traits. Cultures are not static entities, forever trapped in Flatland. As Graves explained it:

Briefly, what I am proposing is that the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiraling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower- order behavior systems to newer, higher-order systems as man's existential problems change.

The human Spiral, then, consists of a coiled string of worldviews, each the product of its times and conditions. Yet, when a new worldview emerges, the older systems do not disappear. Rather, they remain subsumed in the total flow and not only add texture to the more complex ways of living, but remain "on call" in case the problems that awakened them to service reappear. So, there are systems within us, miniature worldviews each of which is calibrated for different problems of existence. Each new worldview is born out of chaos, in a nonlinear fashion, so there is no straight arrow of time back into history. Each worldview is a platform with its own unique paradigm and instructional codes for organizing society. Like a DNA script, the unique adaptive themes at each level will express themselves in terms of life-styles, economic, political, religious, and educational systems, and views of sex, marriage, working, the environment, and sports.

In our recent work we have fused the Graves Technology with the fledging science of memetics, noting that each of the worldviews is in fact a "valuesMEME", a coding mechanism that inculcates every aspect of society. Graves work identified eight distinct worldviews or **vMEMES**, with the ninth on the horizon. Yet, all of the previously awakened systems still exist. These deep level tectonic-like psychological plates create surface level tensions as we ratchet through time.

### QUICK SUMMARY STATEMENT OF WORLDVIEW (vMEME) CODES

THE LIVING STRATA IN OUR PSYCHO-CULTURAL ARCHEOLOGY				
Level	Color Code	Popular Name	Thinking	Cultural manifestations and personal displays
Level 8	Turquoise	WholeView	Holistic	collective individualism; cosmic spirituality; earth changes
Level 7	yellow	FlexFlow	Ecological	natural systems; self-principle; multiple realities; knowledge
Level 6	Green	HumanBond	Consensus	egalitarian; feelings; authentic; sharing; caring; community
Level 5	Orange	StriveDrive	Strategic	materialistic; consumerism; success; image; status; growth
Level 4	Blue	TruthForce	Authority	meaning; discipline; traditions; morality; rules; lives for later

Level 3	Red	PowerGods	Egocentric	gratification; glitz; conquest; action; impulsive; lives for now
Level 2	Purple	KinSpirits	Animistic	rites; rituals; taboos; superstitions; tribes; folk ways & lore
Level 1	Beige	SurvivalSense	Instinctive	food; water; procreation; warmth; protection; stays alive

Here's the key idea. Different societies, cultures and subcultures, as well as entire nations are at different levels of psycho-cultural emergence, as displayed within these evolutionary levels of complexity. They have different centers of gravity. The previously awakened levels do not disappear. Rather, they stay active within the worldview stacks, thus impacting the nature and form of the more complex systems. Like the Russian dolls, there are systems within systems within systems. So, many of the same issues we confront on the West Bank (**Red to Blue**) can be found in South Central Los Angeles. One can experience the animistic (**Purple**) worldview on Bourbon Street as well as in Zaire. Matters brought before city council in Minneapolis (**Orange to Green to Yellow**) are not unlike the debates in front of governing bodies in the Netherlands. Countries and cultures are mosaics of multiple vMEME codes.

**Third World** societies are dealing, for the most part, with issues within the Level 1 through Level 3 zone, thus higher rates of violence and poverty. Staying alive, finding safety, and dealing with feudal age conditions matter most. **Second World** societies are characterized by authoritarian (Blue) one-party states, whether from the right or the left. Makes no difference. So called **First World** nations and groupings have achieved high levels of affluence, with lower birth rates, and more expansive use of technology. While centered in the strategic, free-market driven, and individual liberty focused perspective -- all traits of the Level 5 (Orange) worldview -- new vMEMETICS (Green, Yellow, and Turquoise) are emerging in the "post-modern" age. Yet, we have no language for anything beyond First World, believing that is the final state, the "end of history." Further, there is a serious question as to whether the billions of people who are now exiting Second and Third World life styles can anticipate the same level of affluence as they see on First World (Orange) television screens. Now that expectations have been raised by visiting "Paree," how do we expect to "keep them down on the farm?"

Different worldviews or vMEMES fight wars or engage in conflict but for different reasons.		
Color	Political Form	Deepest motivation and "bottom line" justification for aggressive behavior
Beige	Survival Clans	to keep a place in the survival niche, as in the movie <i>The Quest for Fire</i>
Purple	Ethnic Tribes	to protect the myths, ancestral traditions, rights of kinship, and sacred places.
Red	Feudal Empires	to dominate, gain the spoils, and earn the right to rape, pillage, and plunder.
Blue	Ancient Nations	to protect borders, homelands, hearth, preserve way of life, defend "holy" cause.
Orange	Corporate States	to advance economic spheres of influence, or access to raw materials and markets.
Green	Value Communities	to punish those who commit "crimes against humanity" and protect the victims.

Many people who knew both Edward Deming and Clare W. Graves have remarked that the two men had a great deal in common, both in terms of their respective worldviews and their

approaches to social change and transformation. Deming spoke of "Profound Knowledge" while Graves' described what he called "The emergent, cyclical, double helix model of adult bio-psycho-social development." The two men were of similar age, stature, temperament, and style. Graves had the greatest respect for Deming's work and it is unfortunate that they never met. They were both "giants" in their own respective domains.

## **HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO PRODUCTIVITY**

If one were to engage some of the sophisticated data-mining technology with a colony of Web Crawlers to detect every use of the term "productivity" over the last fifty years, there would be a clear pattern to the clusters they would reveal. Productivity itself has gone through its very own evolutionary process as it passes through the micro, meso, and macro stages. One can also see how the various initiatives have moved along the vMemetic trajectory as we have sought, in each of the Value Systems, to construct what we thought at the time would be the major advance in job performance, efficiency and effectiveness, and the overall quality of our respective work styles.

### **BLUE-ZONE PRODUCTIVITY: *DOING THINGS THE RIGHT WAY***

Some of the initial attempts at productivity improvement focused specifically on logical thinking, statistical measurement, connecting-the-dots, and enhancing systems as they existed at the time. These efforts stayed within job functions, organizational groupings, and served to plan the work and work the plans within the established set of givens, authority, and responsibility. BLUE ZONE PRODUCTIVITY initiatives spawned such innovations as the early version of Quality Circles, Total Product Quality (TPG) projects, and other efforts. This emphasis also resulted in the creative contributions of Larry Miles at General Electric and what became known as Value Engineering. VE practitioners were asked to scan and monitor large capital contracts that had already been finalized to search for ways to cut costs, avoid duplication, and elaborate on designs which had already been set in concrete. It is ironic that the very first psychologist who Larry Miles sought out for advice was Professor Clare W. Graves, who was on the Union College faculty just a few miles from GE's headquarters

### **ORANGE ZONE PRODUCTIVITY: *STRATEGY AND BOTTOM-LINES***

As BLUE ZONE PRODUCTIVITY efforts matured, it occurred to many in the field that something was indeed missing. All of the intelligent and highly motivated efforts to make substantial improvements in the quality and flow of work were blocked by the nature of the organization itself. The Quality Circles groups lacked the mandate to cross over functional, departmental, and even geographic lines. Those people who participated were often rewarded by a pat on the back but little more. The improvements they designed and implemented benefited the pay-checks of top level executives but not their own. They were asked, even commanded, to "work harder and smarter," but soon discovered they would not benefit from the fruits of their labors.

ORANGE ZONE PRODUCTIVITY shifted in the direction of strategy with the massive re-engineering exercises, the entry of microchip technology that made possible instant communication across all of the barriers, and the onset of interest in aligning the entire enterprise to the "bottom-lines." Governmental entities shifted from seniority-based compensation to a preoccupation with merit awards and putting professions into competitive postures. The idea, of course, was that these innovations would enhance the capacity to squeeze costs, fine-tune efforts, and see to it that every expenditure of funds, every effort on the part of everybody, would all translated in one way or another to "the bottom-line." VE moved to what was called Value Management as scapulae were put to costs at the front end of contracts rather than be locked into the big decisions that impacted, often in a negative way, the little decisions. Unless the large flywheels were aligned to "strategy," the smaller flywheels would continue to spin whether they produced positive results or not.

### **GREEN ZONE PRODUCTIVITY: *SENSITIVITY TO PEOPLE***

Michael Hammer and his colleagues who were well known for the entire re-engineering movement, had to make the major confession after "down-sizing," brutalizing, and ripping

apart many traditional systems, that they had totally ignored the importance of people in their activities. Big surprise. Those with the Orange vMeme virus in their minds see nothing beyond profit, perks, and privilege. It became apparent to many that people, indeed, were critical to any long-term and effective effort that could sustain itself over time. A great amount of historical knowledge was lost in companies because of both the imposition of meritocracies and the assumption that systems – business, technological, and strategic – would, by themselves, produce the results that everybody designed. They did not. They could not.

At this stage a large segment of productivity thinking became focused on people – their competencies, feelings, experiences, Humanistic work site needs, and even personal preferences with regard to such "fringe benefits" as athletic facilities, nurseries for children, partner privileges, and similar sensitivities. Without question the enterprise became a happier and healthier place as diversity programs stressed the value in human differences, and community-based projects afforded an opportunity for everybody to participate in social responsibility schemes.

We also witnessed, in the GREEN ZONE, the emergence of self-managed work teams, fully capable of functioning virtually on their own. Trust-building exercises were introduced. Off-site meetings by the groups were encouraged. Expansive career development tracks were funded. Barriers in the organizational structure were lowered as rank system were discouraged, both in external displays and in personal relationships. Everybody was on a first name basis.

## **PRODUCTIVITY IN THE INTEGRAL AGE**

The celebrated and romantic Age of Aquarius ended forever with the crash of the World Trade Center towers in New York City on September 11, 2001. The Age of Fragmentation was at its high water mark, its zenith following the end of the Cold War. Many of these identical issues are, likewise, appearing in corporate suites, on shop floors, in trading centers, and in business schools – from Harvard, Stanford, and the London Business School to smaller educational/training programs literally around the world. Witness, now, the rise of The Integral Age. The intent here will be to discuss the ramifications of this new epoch to the general area of productivity, with a focus on redesign rather than fine-tuning, on transformation rather than reformation or renewal, and on open, flow-state dynamical systems rather than closed-in, boxed-in, and rigid, final-state models and methodologies. Here are several of the basic assumptions and processes that implement the Integral perspective.

## **THE DESIGN OF NATURAL SYSTEMS**

Actually, the Integral Age is based on the 7th and 8th Level Value Systems, the YELLOW and TURQUOISE ZONES in terms of the Spiral Dynamics' conceptual system. The approaches to productivity in these zones tend to favor the macro or whole-systems scale perspectives. If these are "set right" at the very beginning, many of the micro and meso issues and concerns will naturally follow suit. This will of necessity unblock the constraints that have prevented the productivity measures in the BLUE, ORANGE, and GREEN domains from actually producing the results they desired. I worked for a number of years with Middelburg Steel & Alloys company in the Eastern Transvaal in South Africa. This heavy-industry organization was light years ahead of others in that productivity efforts, and even safety-measures, were built into the design of the total system rather than imposed as separate items over the entire structure, operating codes, and output requirements. Everything connected to everything else. All the decision-makers were involved in all of the developmental programs. The requirements for productivity improvement, safety regulation, and even diversity development were featured on the evaluation forms for everybody. The company was saturated with innovative versions of Value Engineering/Value Management, and it extended from the executive suite to the shop floor, and across all functions. This company and its executives and staff played a major and defining role in the entire South African transformation out of apartheid, as these principles were applied in the Middelburg community and even into the National Peace Accord.

Natural Systems Designs have a number of distinguishing characteristics:

- They identify the underlying vMEME codes operating in the overall culture, the critical priority sets in key decision-structures and which are essential in different work flows, as well as the overarching set-points, flywheels, or deep cultural assumptions that

macromanage the whole. This is all mapped out as underground currents on which the enterprise must be constructed.

- They skillfully align the core elements – focus, function, form, fit, flow, fulfillment and future – in the design of the features that, when properly set in motion, generate high levels of productivity while, in addition, meeting the four essential "bottom-lines" that every enterprise should now pursue – purpose, profit, people and planet.
- They design the appropriate levels in, as reflected in the three Spirals: Degrees of Complexity in the Technology Spiral; Levels of Sophistication in the Business/Systems Spiral; and Levels of Emergence in the Individual and Cultural Spiral. Unless there is synchronization in the three Spirals, tension and stress will result. If the technology is too complicated for the business systems to handle, or the business (motivation, communication, compensation, information, etc) is either too complex or too simplistic for the work force, there is serious trouble ahead. There must be balance across all three Spirals, so that the "well-oiled machine" or the "finely-tuned" Flow-State can function with minimal energy lost and maximum productivity.
- They focus more on the codes, maps, equations, and scenarios than on prescriptions, patterns, and policies. For example, the following equation is repeated over and over again:

How should WHO lead/manage/motivate/inspire WHOM to do WHAT, with WHICH people living WHERE?

#### **4Q/8L – HITTING ON ALL CYLINDERS – HOLISM IN PRACTICE**

Ken Wilber has created a powerful, imaginative, and practical template to overlay on any situation to

1. identify the specific needs and capacities of individuals and groups, and
2. calibrate the precise developmental or growth-related packages that fit each unique situation.

The "All Levels" piece of his framework can be explained in terms of the eight vMEME or worldview layers and levels of complexity. The "All Quadrants" component consists of:

- **IT** - Individual Brain & Organism.
- **I** - Individual Self & Consciousness
- **ITS** - Collective Social System and Environment
- **WE** - Collective Culture and WorldView.

Efforts which select a single Q, or operate on a mismatched L, could make things worse. Large scale efforts, such as cultural upliftment, must be All Q and All L. The same holds for developmental schemes in organizations. Too often we rely on a single Quadrant, such as the Upper Left, in enhancing people's personal insights, skills and states of mind – but then send them back to their same former Lower Left webs of culture that are hostile to these new perspectives and behaviors. Or, we place people in jobs and functions but fail to align the compensation or management systems (Lower Right) that support the behaviors we expect. No doubt you can offer many examples of this problem.

The design and implementation of successful All Quadrants/All Levels initiatives requires a new generation of decision-making formulas and processes. While each of the vMEMES has evolved its own form of problem resolution, the Yellow-Integral and Turquoise-Holistic worldviews contain the intelligences to macromanage the whole human Spiral.

#### **PRODUCTIVITY IN THE FLOW-STATE (LIFE CYCLES)**

Ichak Adizes, in his corporate lifecycle framework, has devised what he calls CAPI – the Coalescing of Authority, Power, and Influence – so that all sit at the same table in sorting out complex issues. (See <http://www.adizes.com>. After studying thousands of companies from all over the world over decades, he has been able to identify the different managerial codes that are operative at different life-cycle stages as the entity deals with its problems of existence. The codes – P-production, A-administration, E-entrepreneurial and expansionist thinking, and I-integrative – vary at the different stages. The organization will always have problems; the only question is what kinds of problems will it have, what are their dimensions, and what will

be required to handle those specific circumstances.

Huge gaps in productivity occur whenever the entity is out-of-phase with its specific location on the corporate life cycle. Short-term, quick-fix, or cosmetic "solutions" only make things worse. The entire entity must be involved in creating trust, designing the appropriate structure, finding the right people, and implementing the congruent systems. The Adizes Methodology is, without question, the most powerful framework that I have come across for managing complex business and cultural streams.

### **VITAL SIGNS MONITORS: SENSING THE PATTERNS AND FLOWS**

As humans, we exist in a wash of bacteria, viruses, genes, and memes. All four appear to be impacted by nonlinear events, and possess the capacity to literally re-engineer their respective codes in order to adapt to changing conditions in the milieu. The Vital Signs Monitor is designed to track the life forces that influence our human experiences. Consider an operations-type room, with floor to ceiling video screens, where the critical indicators are displayed and overlaid on top of each other. Such a Monitor could register the pulse of aggregates of people, both at macro and micro levels, to search for the deepest trends, major vMEME conflicts in the making, serious sink-holes in development projects, and the general health and well-being of global people. This technology could provide globally focused decision-makers with the necessary information to translate into knowledge, then formulate actions.

Such a technology is being developed by John Petersen and his Arlington Institute, located in Arlington, Virginia. The intent of the Vital Signs Monitor, displayed within the Institute's Fusion Center, is to track vMEMETIC flows and Stages of Change within the American society. (See [www.arlingtoninstitute.org](http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org)). Likewise, a number of innovative companies are seeing the wisdom of creating their own internal VSM to collect all of the critical indicators, and display them at a single place and time so that everyone can see everything. Conoco, for example, a global energy company, has created what is called Dashboard, a company-wide project and initiative designed to craft such a data clearinghouse that takes and monitors the "pulse" of the company and its external world(s). They may well be writing the textbook for this technology.

Finally, we are now constructing a method for assessing the core Value Systems in entire cultures and societies so that we can detect major tension zones, stress points, and early evidence of major changes on the horizon.

Cometh the Time; Cometh the Thinking.