

# Working with Complexity to *Grow Spirited Organizations*

## Unleashing the Drive to Self-Organize

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# Building or Growing

- Spirited High Performing Organizations are Grown
- By Focusing and Unleashing the Drive to Self-Organize
  - Starfield Study on Successful Change Leadership
  - Some New “Theories” Maps
  - Large Group Methods
  - Open Space Technology Experience

# Some Theory: Higher Level “Maps”

- Complex Adaptive Systems Theory, Spiral Dynamics, Ken Wilber’s philosophy, Harrison Owen give some maps.
- Map is not the territory
- Self-Organization essential for living or lively systems



# Complex Change Crosses Boundaries

- **Complex**

- “Independent” entities interacting
- Crossing boundaries.
- No one person/team can be “in control”

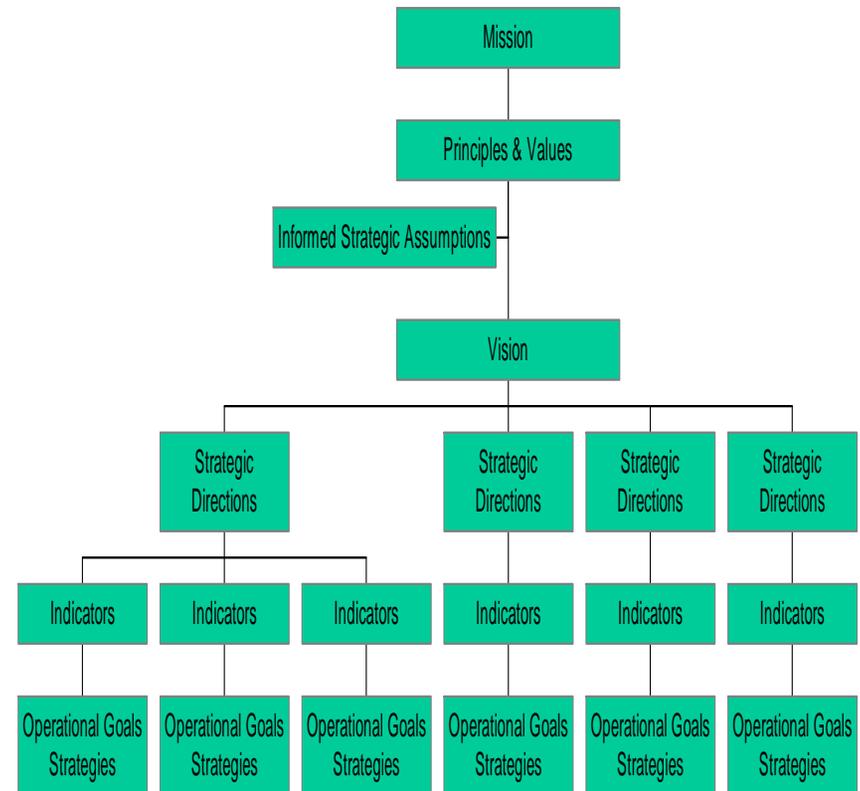
- **Human System Boundaries**

- Socially constructed “containers”



# Hierarchy Emerged: To deal with complicated world

- Organize our thinking and our organizations
- The dominant world view for managing
- Then other views emerged:
  - Science or evidence based modern world view
  - Relationship based worldview— post modern
  - Complexity worldview includes some of all of above



# Complexity Beyond Hierarchy

- When working across boundaries know that “management” is not enough
- Good project management skills included but transcended
- Leaders sense that a good initiative takes on a life of its own
- Unleashed self-organizing energy



# Human Systems are Complex & Adaptive

- Change happens in every moment
- Human organizations are living systems co-evolving with their environment
- Organizational change is a function of environmental impact, leadership intention and emergent processes
- Fitness in relation to environment is more important than vision in the long run



# Self-Organization Conditions

- **Within dynamic boundaries based on simple schemata/rules self-organization takes:**
  - A relatively safe “nutrient” environment,
  - Diversity and potential for complex interactions
  - Drive for “fit” with the environment
  - Relatively sparse prior connections (potential for new connections)
  - Functioning at the edge of chaos (Kauffman)
- **Container, Significant Differences, Transforming Exchanges (G. Eoyang)**
- **There are often long periods veering toward self-maintenance rather than adaptation**



# Paradigm Shifts:

## Part of the evidence for new worldviews

- Kuhn, 1970: “scientific paradigm” - a set of practices or an exemplar that leads to certain results
- It is practice or process that tests theory
- A shift in paradigm is required when the process does not give you the results that you expect (or “want”)
- E.G. – Re-engineering process forgot people



# Change Management

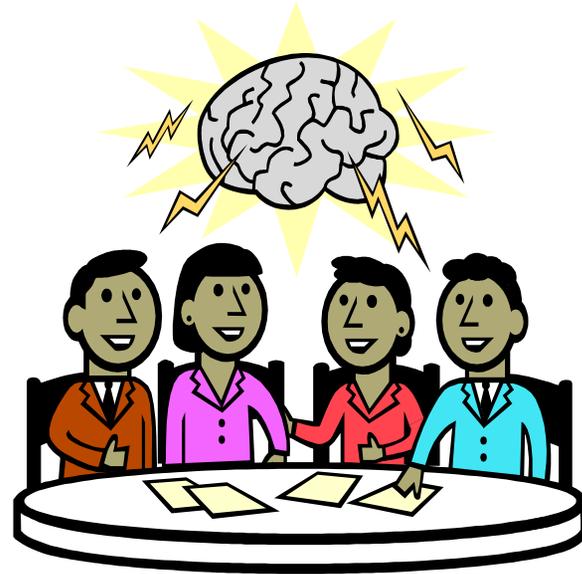
- Often effort to include “people” but manage (rather than lead) their involvement in change
- Often means establishing subcommittees, action groups and project teams to foster and control the human side of the “change”
- Story of emergent change in Australia

# Large Group Methods: Creating System Change....

- New “Technologies” emerged in mid 1980’s when realized that traditional OD or project methods not producing the results valued and wanted. (Emory, Trist)
- Bunker & Alban 2006 (The Handbook of Large Group Methods) gives case examples of the use of Appreciative Inquiry, Future Search, Open Space Technology, Participative Design, Scenario Planning, The World Café, Workout, Work Design, Combinations of various approaches.
- Shift toward: getting system in room, more conversation and decisions by participants, emphasizing stories (not just data), more engagement and ownership by whole organization, emergence of ideas/strategies

# Mememes: Rules for Self-Organization?

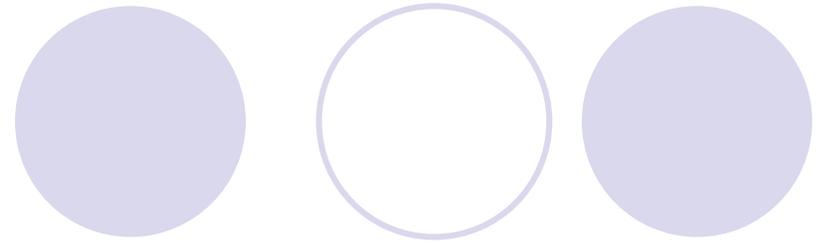
- Biological domain – schemata in gene
- Human systems – schemata/rules in “memes”
- “Self-replicating patterns of information that propagate themselves across the ecologies of mind(s)” (Clare Graves)
- Evolution of worldviews (Don Beck & Ken Wilbur)



# Perspectives and Worldviews/Paradigms

- Memes (worldviews) develop in relation to their context/environment e.g. agrarian, scientific, informational ages
- There are discernable, historical patterns of development of values and worldviews
- A healthy wave of worldview development *transcends and includes* the previous wave
- Individuals and organizations interpret all experiences in relation to their worldviews, especially the one at their “centre of gravity”.

# Spiral Dynamics



- A map for the development or evolution of values or worldviews by Clare Graves/Don Beck
- We all start at the beginning and follow our developmental journey
- Ken Wilber adds an integral perspective



# Spiral Dynamic Memes

## “Worldviews of People/Organizations”

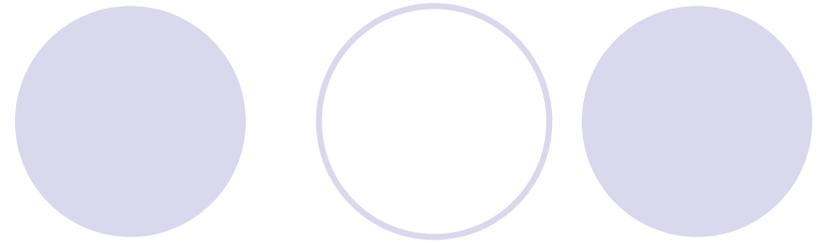
<b><u>Turquoise</u></b>	Emergent, Integral, Nested Holarchical, Universal, Deeply Connected
<b><u>Yellow</u></b>	Complexity, Systemic, Holistic, World Centric, Flow – Developmental View, CAS, Horizontal Initiatives, Chaordic
<b>Green</b>	Pluralistic, Post-Modern, Informational, Relational, Networks -- Rights, Personal Networks, Equal, Narcicistic
<b>Orange</b>	Rational, Modern, Industrial, Scientific – Corporate & Strategic Results, Vertical Integration, Entrepreneur
<b>Blue</b>	Traditional, Conformist, Agrarian, Ethnocentric – Anointed leader, Following Orders, sacrifice now for “later reward”
<b>Red</b>	Power, Predatory, Egocentric, Horticultural – Fiefdoms
<b>Purple</b>	Magical, Animistic, Foraging – Tribal
<b>Beige</b>	Instinctual, Archaic, Foraging – Pre-tribal Family units

# Unleashing Self-Organization Open Space Technology

- Principles and Law set a new “schemata” for self-organization
- Accelerates search for fit
- Practice creating the space for initiative
- Unleashes emergent breakthroughs, leadership, energy
- Other methods do some of this, but with much stronger guidance



# Growing Evidence



- CIHI shows what opening can do inside an organization with great follow-up
- Impact on morale, commitment and sense of participation in decisions
- Impact on the conversations: Social Network Analysis
- Over 100 countries: Mongolia most recent

# Responses to OST Experience

- We all have multiple responses to an event
- Tendency at the end or when we get back to our organizations is to perceive and “value” our experience from our current “centre of gravity”
- Can also have “peak experiences” of a perspective we are growing towards.
- Following are some responses to an OST event, both positive and negative, that I hunch are from different value perspectives

# Positive Perspectives on an OST Event

- (1) **Beige; Good food available all the time!**
- (2) **Purple; The circle was great. This is *magic*. How did they do that? I want my family to experience this.**
- (3) **Red; I organized a great work group session and it was voted number 1**
- (4) **Blue: The meeting format helped us work toward *our leader's vision and goals (and we need to take it back to our hierarchy and roles)***
- (5) **Orange: Some *good projects* emerged that I think will lead to *real results if we take the responsibility***
- (6) **Green: Good *dialogue and networking across boundaries* helped us take advantage of our *diversity***
- (7) **Yellow: I now have a new perspective on the *whole complex system* and understand it better. I saw *self-organization* happen.**
- (8) **Turquoise: This technology was *freeing and spirited*. I experienced *new and deeper connections* with others, ideas and systems. I experienced being connected to the collective whole, all the way up and down, and saw more being possible now. I felt the collective “space” and “flow”.**

# Individual Critiques of an OST Event

- (1) Beige: Too much talking and no real fighting
- (2) Purple: *Too much crossing of “tribal” boundaries*
- (3) Red: *The other ideas produced were really weak compared to what I know.*
- (4) Blue: There was no respect for our tradition. It was a waste of time because the boss will tell us what to do anyway. I am already overwhelmed with projects and ideas from up the system.
- (5) Orange: Not enough topics were posted to get results. The results were not clear enough at the end of the event and some people won't follow through. Some discussions were not evidence based.
- (6) Green: We were not all equal, some did not put up topics. They must have felt one down and we have to have everyone feel equally able to participate. *All of the ideas are of equal value anyway (except mine).*
- (7) Yellow: Chaos and self-organizing systems theory would predict the self-organizing process. Where does it go from here?
- (8) Turquoise: I want to operate like this all the time.

# Basic Requirements for Transformative Change in Existing Organizations

- Internal transformational leadership required
- Formal leadership/dominant coalition must become convinced
- Resources over and above what it takes to maintain the current organization required

# Some Implications for Growing

- Worldview of leadership yellow and beyond to include contributions at all levels
- Language reflecting worldviews at many levels.
- Recognize that “success” happens at many levels with OST events and learn from the results
- Peak experiences of a new way of meeting and functioning are relatively easy. Sustaining an individual or organization at that a high enough level of awareness requires practice.
- Remember, you cannot control it. Spirit emerges.

# Unleashing the Spirit for Self-Organization and Self-Organization for Spirit

- Open the Space over and over to practice individually and collectively discerning and living in spirited complexity
- Whoever comes: Grow positive energy of those willing to move forward
- Whatever happens: Understand current reality, learn and move forward
- Whenever it starts: You cannot control the timing
- Whenever its over, its over.
- If you are neither learning or contributing – move on

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