Building Your Leadership Team: Value Systems, Memetics, and Education — A Spiral Dynamics Approach

By Dr. Caleb Rosado

Education in this Third Millennium will face challenges far greater then the ones the operational models of the 20th century prepared its leaders to handle. Technological wizardry that connects everyone to everything, bypassing geopolitical boundaries and moral controls; demographic power shifts in the nation and global community; differing views on what constitutes "genuine" education; what values and norms are non-negotiable; what should and should not be included in the curriculum; the challenge of multiculturalism and racial diversity; a genuine inclusive curriculum; home schooling and vouchers vs. traditional public education; bio-technological engineering and ethics; confronting violence out of differing value systems; and the how-to of leading a school district with differing operational value systems among the faculty, students, parents, administration and community. These and many other issues will challenge the very foundations of what it means to be an educator in this new millennium.

In light of such challenges, and others to come, what kind of leaders—superintendents, principals, faculty, and board members—are needed now to address this cornucopia of pressing issues and diverse value systems? What kind of "team" does an educational leader put together to confront the future? Is "team-building" the best direction to take education in the years ahead? How do leaders answer the "design question" for leadership in the 21st century: "**How** should **Who** lead (teach, manage) **Whom** to do **What**?"

This article is an attempt to address these questions. It does so by providing a scaffolding for aligning educational systems along an evolving spiral of human development that pulls from an interdisciplinary approach to learning—a bio-psycho-social-spiritual framework. Spiral Dynamics, the practical theoretical framework presented here, is a broad synthesis as opposed to simply being another theory, package, or set of solutions. It explains *why what is next is next,* and how to get there.

The Challenge of Change

In order to address the future, people must be open to change. Yet, here lies the biggest hurdle to moving into the future proactively—*a reactive mindset!* Far too often leaders are engaged in "problem-solving" instead of "change-anticipating." These are two different approaches to thinking about the future. The first, by its very nature, emanates from a perspective oriented toward the past, toward a "we have always done it this way" mindset. The later is proactive and is oriented toward the future, toward a "how can we do things differently."

The question before every educator is: Do we dam up the ocean or do we teach our children how to swim? It is so easy to say, "Why change when we have never had it

so good?" That is only true if the world around us does not change. And those that refuse to change will find themselves in a unique position best described by Eric Hoffer (1902-1983), longshoreman and American social philosopher. "In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."[1]

Michael Fullan, from the University of Toronto, gives us a tongue-in-cheek definition of change that holds a lot of truth. "Change can be likened to a planned journey, through uncharted waters, in a leaky boat, with a mutinous crew, and the enemy shooting at you."[2] We must recognize that *change is inevitable; growth is optional.* Yet many an educator is being dragged into the future, kicking and screaming, totally unprepared for what lies ahead, while lamenting the good old fictional days of social stability. We need reminding that "yesterday's scores will not win tomorrow's ball games." Therefore, "if you are not part of the future, you're history!"[3]

Futurist Alvin Toffler is correct when he defines the new "illiterate" for the 21st century. "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot *learn, unlearn, and relearn.*"[4]

A Value Systems Framework

In order to develop an effective model of team building, one must first understand a dynamic theoretical framework from a human development perspective. Fifty years ago, Dr. Clare W. Graves, late professor of psychology at Union College in New York, introduced a most important theoretical model for understanding problems in education, the church, society, and the world today—the Levels of Existence Theory, or Spiral Dynamics—as it is now called.

Spiral Dynamics emerges from the seminal, original research of Dr. Clare W. Graves. A contemporary and close friend of Abraham Maslow, Graves disagreed with Maslow's hierarchy as being too limited. The same goes with the stages of development of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carl Rogers, Jane Loevinger, James Fowler, and Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi.[5] Graves saw their understanding of human development as limited and closed. Whether seeing human nature as going through 4, 5, 6, or 8 stages, the problem with all of these theorists is that they all speak of a "final stage" or "level" of human development. This is where Graves differed. For him human development was a open-ended process, with no end in sight but capable of continual growth. Realizing that the various psychological theories of human development differed and did not, to his satisfaction, totally explain all of human reality, Clare Graves in 1952 launched into a 30-year research career seeking answer to one question: "What are the conceptions of psychological health extant in the minds of biologically mature human beings?"[6] In other words, "What does the biologically mature adult human being look like?" Graves sought to get to the mind of the matter and explore why people are different, why some change but others don't, and how better to navigate through the emerging and often chaotic versions of human existence. After thousands of interviews worldwide, Graves' research resulted in a theory he called "The Theory of Levels of Human Existence."

Graves summarized his theory in this manner: "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 reason that most educators have never heard of Graves, nor are his ideas mainstream, is that he published very little. Thus, the axiom is true—"publish or perish." In fairness to Graves, however, other factors ensued. Since his research drew from biology, psychology, sociology, and even religion, he encountered much resistance for an interdisciplinary approach from colleagues who sought to protect their guild-like disciplinary boundaries. Graves died in 1986 before releasing his major work, a book he was going to title, "Levels of Human Existence." The heart of the theory, however, was published in an article titled: "Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap," in *The Futurist,* April 1974. Two of his students, Don E. Beck and Christopher C. Cowan, have published the essence of the Gravesian theory in their book, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change* (Blackwell, 1996).

Since the death of Graves, Beck and Cowan have enhanced the theory by drawing from the nascent science of memetics, the study of "memes." Coined by English biologist Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford 1976), what Dawkins was after was a concept similar to "genes," the biological code carriers of DNA that would show the same replicating influence culturally. The result was the term "meme" from the Greek word "mimeme," *imitation*. Memes (rhymes with "genes" or "themes") are cultural units of information, "viruses of the mind," cultural "DNA" that self-replicate by means of thought-contagion. Using the human mind as a host, memes attach themselves to individuals, organizations, entire cultures, and societies. Beck and Cowan added the term "^{v}MEMEs," for value-memes representing Value Systems. A "Value System" is a framework for the development of a worldview, a set of priorities, a paradigm, a mindset, an organizing mental framework for deep-level thinking at the bottom-line–the threshold of no negotiation.

Let me explain how Graves' "values" and Dawkins' "memes" are similar and yet different. Graves spoke and wrote of *surface* values, what people, groups, and societies usually quibble over: geopolitics, beliefs, education, crime, justice, religion, norms, racism, business practices, etc. This is similar to what Dawkins called "memes," self-replicating ideas or cultural DNA, beliefs, and actions that infect the human mind and are transmitted from mind to mind. Sometimes memes, like recessive genes, can be lethal. Throughout human history they have not only killed genes, but other memes as well. A case in point was what Hitler's memes of a "master race" did to the genes of 11.5 million people in the 20th century. And most recently, what the memes of Osama bin Laden did to almost 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001.

But Graves's contribution went further than Dawkins. What he discovered was that beneath these surface values or memes, there were deep undercurrents, or worldviews that served as the operational frameworks to guide all decision making and belief formation. These Value Systems, or ^{v}MEMEs, were "systems in" people, ways of

thinking that determined human behavior, not *types* of people or *personality traits,* or fixed categories. These emerged in an *open system* that oscillated from an express-self to a sacrifice-self, from a focus on "me" to one focused on "we," in what Csikszentmihalyi calls "a dialectical motion....between turning attention inward and then outward, between valuing the self and then the larger community. It is not a circular motion that returns to where one started, but rather, it resembles an ascending spiral."[7] It is an ever increasing and widening spiral of development as people move through the various levels of bio-psycho-social-spiritual complexity. Every time people move from one level to the next, they undergo a major paradigm shift, a different window through which to look out on the world, a transformation of their basic system of beliefs and values.

What is important to keep in mind here is that each level represents a different *context* for seeing the world, resulting in a different *content* to interpret that world. Thus, our context, the memetic level from which we operate, determines what we understand and what lies outside that understanding. When we expand our context, our content broadens to include that which we did not understand before. Thus, David R. Hawkins is correct when he says, "There is no greater lesson that needs to be learned to reduce human suffering and bring ignorance to an end," then the idea that, *"content is subject to context."* [8]

The model not only depicts the evolvement of individuals, but also of institutions, nations, and even the human race. People and nations, however, do not automatically move up the spiral from one level to the next. More often then not, people and societies remain at one level of development their whole existence, and even achieve "self-actualization" at that level.

Graves called these levels "deep-level Value Systems," or what Beck & Cowan termed as "ᵛMEMEs", the little "v" standing for "values" or "value-MEMEs" (pronounced "vee-meems"). These Value Systems or ᵛMEMEs are like magnetic fields that attract or repel surface values or little memes—ideas, beliefs, behaviors that may or may not be compatible with one's basic value system. Thus, memes are cultural replicators that cluster around specific ᵛMEMEs or Value Systems. Different Value Systems gather to themselves different memetic ways of life and beliefs. This latter point is most crucial for Christian education. More on this latter.

Values Systems are complex Coping Systems—decision-making motivators and ways of thinking—that emerge in response to Problems of Existence. Graves, in his article in *The Futurist,* said that these Value Systems or ᵛMEMEs, "alternate between focus upon the external world, and attempts to change it, and focus upon the inner world, and attempts to come to peace with it, with the means to each end changing in each alternately prognostic system. Thus, man tends, normally, to change his psychology as the conditions of his existence change. Each successive stage, or level of existence, is a state through which people pass on the way to other states of equilibrium. When a person is centralized in one state of existence [read "ᵛMEME"], he has a total psychology which is particular to that state. His feelings, motivations, ethics and values, biochemistry, degree of neurological activation, learning systems, belief systems, conception of mental health, ideas as to what mental illness is and how it should be treated, preference for and

conceptions of management, education, economic and political theory and practice, etc. [read "memes"], are all appropriate to that state." [9] Thus, your context (memetic level) determines the content (the thinking systems) that shapes your life view, actions, values, beliefs, leadership styles, attitudes, and treatment of others.

There are over 6 billion people in the world today, and though we all come from some 30,000 genes—ALL of us—we share only a few basic Value Systems; eight have been identified thus far. Though Graves initially used letters of the alphabet to identify the levels, his students, Don Beck and Chris Cowan, have color-coded these Value Systems for the sake of clarity and ease of understanding. Table 1 below identifies the eight systems.

Table 1: QUICK SUMMARY OF VALUE SYSTEMS CODES

STRATIFIED LEVELS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

ᵛMEMES	COLOR	THEME	THINKING	VALUE SYSTEMS	LIFESTYLE
Level 8	Turquoise	WholeView	Holistic	Harmony, holism, spirituality	Lives for Wisdom
Level 7	Yellow	FlexFlow	Integrative	Natural processes, mutual realities	Lives for Mutuality
Level 6	Green	HumanBond	Sociocentric	Egalitarian, caring for others, being authentic, creating community	Lives for Harmony
Level 5	Orange	StriveDrive	Strategic	Success, materialism, image, status consumerism, achievement	Lives for Gain
Level 4	Blue	TruthForce	Absolutistic	Authority, purpose, meaning, morality, rules, "one-right-way"	Lives for Later
Level 3	Red	PowerGods	Egocentric	Power, glory, glitz, gratification, exploitation, no boundaries	Lives for Now
Level 2	Purple	KinSpirits	Tribalistic	Traditions, rites, rituals, taboos, tribes, "our people"	Lives for Group
Level 1	Beige	SurvivalSense	Instinctive	Staying alive, physiological needs, safety, protection	Lives for survival

Graves' research showed that these stages or Value Systems are like themes or movements in a symphony, beginning with its simplest expression and working through ever-increasing levels of complexity. As humans evolve from one level to the next, as in a spiral, their world and their thinking becomes more complex. In a process that Ken Wilber calls "transcend and include", movement from one level to the next includes the values of the previous level while embracing new values and ways of seeing the world.

This is similar to the holon of an atom being transcended yet included in a molecule, which is transcended and included in a cell, which is transcended and included by an organism, and so forth up the spiral of holons.[10] The values of the previous levels do not disappear but slip into the background, and, though present and may re-emerge if a change in Life Conditions calls them up, they are no longer the dominant VMEME.

The significance of the colors is only to identify the systems and has no symbolism beyond that. Notice how the Focus alternates between dominance of ME-oriented *Express-the-self* (warm colors) and WE-oriented *Sacrifice-the-self* (cool colors) life focus. Note also the differences in what is valued in each system as they flow from survival (Beige), to safety and security (Purple), to raw power and instant gratification (Red), to purpose in life (Blue), to strategies for success (Orange), to community awareness (Green), to alternative forms (Yellow), to global connectedness (Turquoise). At each level there is a different Lifestyle, from living for survival to living for wisdom. The levels are open-ended; there is no final stage of development, as the ideal that God sets before us is higher than the highest human thought can reach.

Here's the essence of the idea. Not only different nations, societies, cultures, and subcultures, but different groups and entities within Christianity, are at different levels of bio-psycho-social-spiritual emergence as displayed within these evolving levels of complexity. What moves one from one level to the next is when old explanations and experiences (content) no longer adequately explain one's reality as a result of changes in one's Life Conditions (context), which now exceed the parameters of one's present worldview. Like Russian Matroshka Dolls that are "systems within," when one's cup overflows one then moves to the larger, more encompassing system. Previous Value Systems, however, do not go away; they just shift down the spiral, remaining active within the value system stacks, thus impacting the nature and content of the more complex systems. And, if changing Life Conditions warrant, we may return to these previous systems. It is this interaction between our "real life" experiences and our mind/brain capacities that causes these Value Systems to awaken, ebb, and flow. Life conditions *outside* interact with latent thinking capacities *inside* the mind to awaken the next VMEME level. Without our latent mental capacities, the *world outside* has nothing to trigger. This is the experience of the mentally ill and psychiatric patients. Without the stimuli from outside, *systems within* may not have cause to be awakened. Such is the situation of the Amish and people that live in "closed communities." Thus *both* nature and nurture are important.

Life is an ever increasing and widening spiral of development as people move through the various levels of bio-psycho-social-spiritual complexity, from one context to another. Every time people move from one level to the next, they undergo a major paradigm shift to the content of their thinking, a different window through which to look out on the world, a transformation of their basic value system. This is a key aspect of what makes each level different, for the complexity of the thinking must match or exceed the complexity of the problems of existence. In other words, when people's life experiences change, they need to *recontextualize,* resulting in another way of *seeing.* Yet, and here is a critical element—a person can be at more than one memetic level in

different areas of their life, even though one value system dominates their outlook. Thus, while their overarching [v]MEME may be a conservative Blue, especially in terms of religion and the church, in relation to their family they may be Purple (tradition-driven), at work they may be Orange (success-driven), in sports they may be Red (power-driven), and in relation to others they may be Green (people-driven), but their basic paradigm and way of seeing the world is still Blue (order-driven).

Implications for Education

Strain between these systems is the home of all human conflict and understanding. Here is where this theoretical yet practical approach to human development helps us to understand the challenges facing education in the years ahead. The challenges facing education stem from the fact that administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and constituencies may be at different levels of existence, each with conflicting and clashing Value Systems.

Current critical issues in education—from conservative versus liberal faculty, from a values-centered curriculum versus a state-mandated one, from a multicultural curriculum to a tradition-based one, from an authoritarian style of leadership (Blue) to a team building, consensus oriented style (Green)—are surface symptoms of deeper level decision systems out of which these surface differences emerge. All these issues can best be sorted out by defining the relationships between deep-level belief systems and the surface-level depiction of loyalty. Unfortunately educators, superintendents, and committee and board members at different levels of life are caught up with these surface manifestations of differences, while underneath at the memetic levels the conflict and struggle rages on without any hope of solution in sight. Yet any hope for effecting change can only come by learning to draw outside the traditional lines of a "flatlander" view of the world.

Edwin A. Abbott, in his fictional classic, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884), describes "Flatlanders" as persons unable to recognize the vertical, spiral structure of human development. In other words, they are "monomemetic"—centered on one memetic level as operational for all. Thus, they focus on superficial, horizontal differences, rigid categories, simplistic types, and on labels to put on people. They put everyone through the same car wash, paint only with broad horizontal brush strokes, as "flavor-of-the-month" educators who project their own values, fears, biases, and prejudices on others, due to a failure to see other dimensions and perspectives. The result is a Flatlander perspective—a one-size-fits-all approach—reflected in much of education today, which may also be a reason for a decline in enrollment. When other views, opinions, and positions are not respected, why should people continue to support a system that is closed and not open to alternative approaches to accomplish the same goal?

Jesus, the quintessential teacher, exposed the flatlander, monomemetic worldview. When He declared to His disciples, "love your neighbor as yourselves" (Matthew 22:39), He was moving His followers beyond a flatlander worldview, where people are only willing to love others who are just like themselves at their own memetic level. Thus, instead of seeing the meaning behind the text, that we are to love others at all

levels based on their respective needs—the way they deserve to be treated—flatlanders tend to only extend love to those who are just like them, thereby negating the demand of Jesus. The result is what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared that, "Eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour and Sunday School is still the most segregated school of the week."

Administrators and teachers need to grasp the realization that not everyone sees the world the same, since their context determines the content of what they see and understand. Different people at different levels or stages of human development have different operational Value Systems. These attract or repel different surface expressions of values, beliefs, actions, and behaviors, which will often conflict with those of others. Failure to recognize this vertical dimension of education, the memetic spiral of human development, results in surface conflicts and a concern with solutions that are at best superficial for they do not get to root of the problem, the deep-level decision systems within. These operative [v]MEMEs guide all our thinking and action. They determine not only *what* people say and believe, but more importantly *why* they say and believe as they do.

Spiral Dynamics has important implications for education globally as well. Most cultures in Latin America, Africa and Asia, as well as cultures in the South of the United States, are at PURPLE (tradition-oriented, group-focused, with a "culture of honor"[11] mindset). Most teachers and administrators in an international milieu, especially Euro-Americans, tend to reflect more BLUE, ORANGE, and GREEN Value Systems. Such encounters are bound to result in conflict, especially when the more tradition-focused groups tend not to understand where the administrators or teachers are coming from and feel that they are not being sensitive to the cultural expressions of the group. The result is that everyone sees RED, when open conflict breaks out. What Spiral Dynamics enables us to do is to get below the surface of human action and reaction to understand the migrating memetic tectonic plates of Value Systems beneath from which spews up the hot lava-like rhetoric of human conflict. Understanding *where* people are coming from and *why* is of greater value to conflict resolution than *what* they simply say or *do*.

A grasp of Spiral Dynamics also enables teachers to recognize the diversity of learning styles and thus the different approaches to teaching (see Table 2). Depending on their operative Value System different students respond to learning in different ways, and the "spiral educator" as a multimemetic person will recognize this and employ different methods of instruction suitable to the different learning styles at the level of existence of the student.

EDUCATION and ᵛMEMEs

Core ᵛMEME	Learning Styles	Teaching Style
PURPLE B-O Level 2	Classical (Imitation)	REASSURANCE (repetition; insure safety; honor customs & myths)
RED C-P Level 3	Conditioned (operant, thru reinforcements)	REINFORCEMENT (empower individuals; tough love; rewards)
BLUE D-Q Level 4	Avoidant (so as to not be punished)	AUTHORITARIAN (impose order & discipline; punish mistakes fairly)
ORANGE E-R Level 5	Expectancy (to succeed in objectives)	EXPERIMENTAL (build autonomy; use trial and error; competitive)
GREEN F-S Level 6	Observational (watch, feel and learn)	AFFILIATIVE (facilitate acceptance; foster belonging)
YELLOW G-T Level 7	Informational (freedom to be and discover)	INTEGRATIVE (access knowledge bases; seek connections; diverse)
TURQUOISE H-T Level 8	Experiential (participate with senses)	HOLISTIC (guide to become more complex; open doors)

Spiral Educators know there is no single right way to teach, no universal best way to learn; ideal classroom is possible.

Table by Don E. Beck and Chris. C. Cowan, of the National Values Center, Inc.

From the above table the Spiral Educator understands three things: (1) there is no single right way to teach; (2) there is no universal best way to learn; and (3) the ideal classroom is possible. The Flatland Educator, however, believes there is only "one right way" —their way.

Take also the burning issue of racism in schools and the need for diversity training in the US, as well as inter-ethnic conflict in other countries, all of which spew out more social lava than perhaps any other single factor. Because of the superficial, light-weight approaches often used in such training and education, focused on surface differences of skin color, ethnic origins, and cultural preferences rather than on the deep-level Value Systems within people and organizations, long-lasting change is not taking place. This is not to negate that these differences may not impact negatively one's life conditions, for more often then not they do. The point, however, is that focusing on them does little to resolve group conflicts. Of greater importance are Value Systems and ways of thinking from which emerge choices that impact what happens at the surface level of human interactions. A Spiral Dynamics (SD) approach does not just focus on diversity issues, or inter-ethnic differences, but seeks to do systems alignment, since diversity problems do not happen in some vacuum, but are symptoms of other problems, namely the whole system being out of balance. Rather than putting different perspectives or worldviews into conflict, SD provides a scaffolding for aligning systems along an evolving spiral of human development that pulls from an organization's vision, values, and mission statements. Rather than promoting ethnic, racial, class levels that stress differences, SD offers a way of dealing with the deeper Value Systems that create and sustain these conflicting identities, artificial boundaries, and development gaps in the curriculum. SD does not replace traditional diversity training; it simply goes beyond it to the next level of bringing about change.

What this new approach to education enables us to understand is that human diversity at the deep levels of cultural Value Systems and thinking systems may be *the greatest, most empowering, diversity of all,* for these determine *how* people think, not just *what* they say, value, or do. It exposes how thinking systems and the choices they lead people to make often result in different socioeconomic outcomes between groups. The key question for educators is: "What kind of *thinking* prompted that kind of behavior?" not just the behavior itself. The first approach gets to the root cause, the latter only addresses surface matters. Our struggle is not with human *types*, but with the *memes* within us that are at war. Since memes are deep decision systems *in* people, not types *of* people, they transcend race, gender, age, class, ethnicity, culture, societies, and time periods.

Spiral Dynamics and Team Building

What are the implications of Spiral Dynamics for team building? When a leader suggests that the organization needs "teams," people at the various memetic levels may all agree. But what each has in mind in terms of what constitutes a "team" may be another thing entirely, for where you stand determines what you see. Thus, a fundamental grasp of SD will enable any leader to understand that while everyone may come to the

table with sincerity, they come with diverse contexts and different contents depending on their operational value system. What is a "team" at one level may be perceived to be something completely different at another level.

The practice of "team building" basically emerges from a Green value system. Green is concerned with equality, fairness, justice, group harmony, the building of community, and every voice having equal say within a consensus approach to decision-making. Since Green leaders value such an approach, reflective of their operational level of consciousness, memetic values, and mode of thinking, they tend to think that this approach to leadership is the best one when it comes to working with a group, getting things done, and decision-making. They are most correct if this happens to be the operational value of the majority in the staff, the school, and the organization. Conflict is then reduced because there is consensus in approach.

Yet, what happens when not everyone in a school, as is often the case, is at the same memetic level in their thinking, understanding of leadership, and approach to authority and decision-making? To impose one mode of leadership on all—the Flatlander, monomemetic approach—can have some disastrous results. Thus, it is important to recognize that at each memetic level what constitutes a team differs, and so also differs the basis of authority for each level (See Table, Spiral Dynamics and Team Building).

SPIRAL DYNAMICS AND TEAM BUILDING

vMEMES	COLOR	FOCUS	TEAMS	BASIS OF AUTHORITY	EXAMPLE
Level 7	Yellow	Self	Connotative	Functionality, mutuality	Doctors Without Borders
Level 6	Green	Group	Sociocentric	Equality of every person, consensus building	Professional associations, faculty councils
Level 5	Orange	Self	Strategic	Appointed, but can be manipulated through competition	Golf, entrepreneurships
Level 4	Blue	Group	Denotative	Top-down, legitimate authority, "one-right-way", by the "book"	Football team, many K-12 schools, conservative churches
Level 3	Red	Self	Gang	Power, prowess, fear, coercion	Urban gangs, demagogues, power-grabbing leaders
Level 2	Purple	Group	Clan	Divine authority, based on tradition, little autonomy among "team"	Amish, Roman Catholic Church
Level 1	Beige	Self	Band	Need for survival	Homeless, survival bands

Thus, the team at Beige is a small band that sticks together against the dangers of the world. The focus is the survival of self. Example: Survival band.

Purple leadership has no use for independent team building. There is no such thing as equality within this mindset. The team is the family clan with traditions that respect leaders and value time-honored rituals. The value and weight of traditions, and a "we have always done it this way" mode of thinking is what counts. Respect for the elders, predominantly male, is what matters. Decision-making is top-down; roles are assigned; "do what you are told and do not ask questions!" The focus is on the group. Authority is divinely appointed and based on handed down traditions. Examples: the Amish, the traditional Roman Catholic Church.

Red also has no use for teams, other than my "gang" that will do what I, the unquestioned leader, orders them to do. There are no underlying principles, guiding procedures, or written rules; the leader is followed personally until someone else gains control of group. The focus is on the individual. Authority is based on power, prowess, fear, and coercion. It is not divinely appointed but grasped from the bottom up. Examples: Urban gangs, *el caudillo* (chief)*,* demagogues in Third World societies, power-grabbing leaders.

Blue on the surface appears to value team building. But this is a surface acceptance. The reality is that Blue values a "chain of command" based on legitimate authority. The "team" is lead by a directive, authoritative leader who bases authority on interpreted guiding principles, a book, mission statement, or written procedures; subordinates are inspired to contribute to the team with high performance to the agenda. This is a much more secure "team" than at Red, with a plan to carry out. Members know their place in the plan. And, while people are given an opportunity to express themselves and give their opinions, at the end of the day, what matters is not what they think, but what the appointed person in authority says. The style here is denotative—"letter of the law," rather than connotative—"spirit of the law." Instead of valuing a suggested sense of what was meant, or an additional meaning apart from the explicit meaning or decision, the Blue denotative leader assumes that his/her ideas *are* the ideas of the group/committee/ meeting. And once he or she designates, states, or makes the decision, it's held to be how the team voted and wanted it. At least this is how the denotative, Blue person in authority believes, though the committee/team/group may not even recognize their input in the final decision. There is no allowance for a connotative meaning or room for misunderstanding, as everything is "by the book," and they are the author. The focus is on the group. Authority is top-down and based on legitimate appointment. Examples: football teams, hierarchical corporations, conservative churches, most K-12 schools.

Orange is entrepreneurial, success-oriented, competition-based, with a "what's in it for me" attitude. Teams are strategic and competitive, not just inter but also intra. The leader sets goals for the "team" and is confident they can reach goals with little supervision (unlike Blue). The "team" MUST compete and win. The leader may or may not share credit with the "team". Decisions are based more on what is best for the individual; there is much competition within the organization. Jockeying for position is

very prevalent. The focus is on individual achievement. Authority is appointed, but can be manipulated through competition. Examples: entrepreneurial dot.coms, golf, independent ministries.

Green is the comfortable home of team building. Because Green regards every opinion of equal value, it is concerned with giving every voice an opportunity of being heard. One of the best ways of making sure every voice is heard is through team development. Teams make for a more equal playing field in the organization, again a Green value. Teams divide up the responsibility on a more equitable basis, again, another Green value. Team building tends to flatten the organizational pyramid; not as much as Yellow, but a lot more than Blue. Green opposes authoritative Blue "team" framework, or "stingy", unsharing Orange teams. Green teams, however, don't have much tolerance for colleagues that do not value an egalitarian perspective, everyone playing by the same rules, nor those who do not appreciate the value of teams. Green is the archetypal flatlander pushing a monomemetic worldview, and can thus be rather exclusive of others who are not inclusive. It values harmony and equity above everything else. Examples: Professional associations (lawyers and medical groups), faculty councils, ministerial groups.

Yellow represents the quintessential Value System of team building. While its focus is on the individual, it is not an individualism that is insensitive to the other memetic levels. It is sensitive to connotations: subtleties, implied meanings, indirect suggestions, alternative ways of proceeding and understanding the same idea. Yellow values ambiguities, meaning different contexts which require different solutions. All members of the team see big picture, long range strategies; creative, original solutions to problems are welcome: group does not respond to former toxic "team" ploys such as coercion (Red), authoritarian denotation (Blue), admiration-success (Orange), or time-wasting meetings with everyone speaking and no firm decisions (Green). Leadership of team is passed around to the most appropriate person for the task at hand according to their ability/knowledge/network; all team members can follow or lead, as needed. Hanging on to "control" leadership of "team" is a thing of the past. Everyone works for the overall good of those in the local "team" and *all other teams in the world.* In an unusual turn of events, Yellow with its multimemetic thinking system can perceive which "team style" is needed in a particular circumstance outside Yellow. In other words, Yellow understands that Red gangs need Blue authority to go up the spiral of development. To try to start touchy feely Green teams with gang member teams would be an error Yellow understands.

To use an analogy, lets say that each memetic level has a particular tool reflective of its mode of operation; one level has a hammer, another a saw, another a drill, another a shovel, and so forth. Each thinks its tool is the best one to do the job. Each, however, is limited by its particular context and falls prey to what Abraham Kaplan calls, "the law of the instrument"—the instrument determines both the problem and the solution.[12] It is based on the old adage: "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Yellow, on the other hand has the entire toolbox, and knows which "tool" to use at each particular level. Multimemetic Yellow recognizes the value and contribution of each level and knows when and how to intervene. This is because the concern of Yellow is with *the*

health of the entire spiral, the interconnectedness of *all* the levels, and not just with one separate level of existence, the monomemetic approach. Its authority is based on functionality and mutuality, with a high tolerance for ambiguity and connotation—"the spirit of the law." Individualism that safeguards the well being of the entire spiral is the essence of Yellow. Example: Doctors Without Borders.

The Value and Problem With Teams:

One of the important values of team building is that it values people's contribution. Blue organizations often do not value individual contribution as much as Orange and even less than Green. But in order for people to take "ownership" of any problem or of the mission of any organization, people's contribution needs to be sought and once obtained, valued. Green as a Sociocentric value system does this quite well, though not as well as Yellow. That is why teams find a natural home within a Green worldview.

Another value of team building is that it gives people a stake in the decision-making, which again generates a sense of "ownership." A third value is that it gives a sense of total involvement; after all it is a "team" effort, and not just the work of one person. A fourth value of teams is the sense of respect that one gains for belonging to a team. Team building values the person. In many organizations individuals do not feel valued or respected. This is a strength of teams, and is a strong Green operational value.

On the other hand, not everything is rosy with teams. There are some drawbacks. A problem with teams is that not every contribution *is* of equal worth. But since Green values equality, it is often not able to make the distinction, since its concern is more with equity than functional value.

Another problem is that even though consensus is a cherished value, it is detrimental for decision-making, since it prolongs to the point of ad infinitum the process of arriving at a decision. Team decision-making, based on consensus, can be an interminable marathon session. At some point the chair needs to make a Blue decision, and call for the vote. To listen to every opinion, if not handled right, can destroy the very purpose of team building.

A third problem with teams is that a lot of valuable time (beyond decision-making) can be wasted in a multiplicity of meetings. Effective leaders know that very little work is accomplished in meetings; managers do not always recognize this weakness. The real work takes place outside meetings. But the problem with Green managers is that they think work actually takes place in meetings, thus the proliferation of meetings. Orange detests such protracted meetings, as its mission is to get on with its own agenda.

A fourth problem with teams is the problem of the "free rider." Not everyone contributes to the worthwhile cause of the group. Teams, by their very nature, and depending on their size, can hide a free rider here and there. These are persons that want

all the advantages and privileges of belonging, without doing any of the work of maintaining. And because Green values the person (as opposed to Blue that values the system and Orange that values the self), it respects people's choice not to contribute, giving rise to the free rider.

Thus, team building for some is a positive approach to leadership. For others it is the worst and most inefficient way of getting things done. The point of leadership is not to impose from the top down, but to allow the right method of working together to emerge from within, reflecting of the operational values present in the organization. Flatlanders do not understand this vertical dimension of team building, since they operate exclusively from a horizontal perspective. The result is a one-size-fits-all or monomemetic approach to leadership and management, where the person is focused on one memetic level, usually their own, and believes that effective leadership is one where all persons are treated the same. Thus the need for "spiral leaders" and "spiral educators" who are multimemetic. More on this later.

Happily, most people tend to gravitate to those types of organizations with modes of leadership that reflect their own operational Value System. This is because we as humans are "naturally" drawn to work environments, relationships, lifestyles, behavior patterns, places and forms of worship, political positions and parties, belief systems, modes of entertainment, expressions of art, musical tastes, other people, worldviews, leadership styles, designs and places of residence, and spiritual rituals, etc., which resonate with our dominant (peak) Value System, thereby enabling us to experience a comfort zone that gives us a sense of being "at home."

When we encounter any entities that lie outside of the "comfort range" of our level of existence, we experience dissonance, discomfort, displeasure, disinterest and distance. The level of comfort is measured by the distance from one's nodal system (see bar graphic). The greater the distance, the greater the level of discomfort. Thus, if my comfort zone is centered on the Orange ^{v}MEME, then I will be most comfortable with Life Conditions at this level. The further I move from this level the greater the sense of discomfort.

Value Systems and Listening to the Other's Worldview

While each of these levels or ^{v}MEME system has an Entering, Peak, and Exiting phase, at the peak of the hypothetical curve each has a unique view of the world. However, since people are only able to understand up-to those systems which have become operational in their life, anything at a level higher than their own they will reinterpret so that it comes out the way their system of thinking understands it. This is because as Graves declared, "A person who is centralized at a lower level cannot even understand people who are at a higher level." "Higher" does not necessarily mean "superior," but "appropriate" to the milieu or Life Conditions of the person or group.

Thus, at each level a person can be at an Open state (one Value System dominates yet is open to any information that may enter the perceptual field of the individual); at an

Arrested state (only information up-to the Value System that is currently operating will be accepted into the perceptual field of the individual, information that is from any later Value System will not be accepted); or at a Closed state (no information is accepted that does not conform to the current Value Systems, generally only one Value System is operating). And, as Bill Lee, former student of Dr. Clare W. Graves, describes, at the "closed state" each Value System manifests a different attitude and behavior in listening to the other and in respecting the other's worldview.[13]

BEIGE and PURPLE value members of their own group. They live in a world of fear of strangers—of others who are different. They have no reason to listen to or to accept the experiences of any human being outside their own group—people who are different. PURPLE is a communal-collective system where listening to others within the system may be important, but not outsiders who are different. And for these two systems, almost anyone is an outsider. There is very little interest in team building here.

RED trusts no one but themselves. They are reluctant to listen to the signals from any source except from within themselves. They don't even begin to value the experiences of others and have no desire to listen or to accept what others have to say—unless it can increase their own power over others and/or enable them to survive in the had/have/have-not world in which they live. RED is an individual-elitist system where self is primary—at the expense of others. This is often the level where many students find themselves, especially those that come from dysfunctional (read "closed") families at RED (egocentric and exploitative with no boundaries). What these students need is tough love (BLUE responsibility, respect for authority, and order), with immediate consequences and sanctions. Make no threats, only promises. No real team building here for the group serves at the whims of the leader.

BLUE has a need to listen only to the right authority. Absolutistic thinking does not tolerate viewpoints other than those of the right authority. The worldviews of others that are different from the worldviews of BLUE are, at the most, tolerated but not accepted—even for others. When you already have the "truth" it is a waste of time to listen to another's "truth." BLUE is a communal-collective, denotative system in which there is only listening to and acceptance of those of the same "ism." This is often the case of administrators, teachers, and pastors who operate with a "flatland" perspective—one-size-fits-all approach. Everyone gets treated the same, no exceptions. Unfortunately, children do not come out of cookie -cutter environments, nor do they live in such a world, nor are all minds the same. As Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935), Supreme Court Justice, declared: "There is no greater inequality than the equal treatment of unequals." The results of such an approach can be nothing short of disaster. Teams may emerge here, but more in the sense of a "pseudo-team", one that gives the appearance of valuing the individual, while the real value is for the group—the organization.

ORANGE may listen to others, but primarily to gain any kind of information that will enable ORANGE to better manipulate the others in the "real" world of competition. ORANGE is Machiavellian. ORANGE teams are Machiavellian in nature. Machiavellians use their rational-calculating minds to manipulate, to win over

others . . . and they know that this cannot happen if they become involved with caring about others, allowing themselves to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others, to actually accept the worldviews of others. StriveDrive means to be driven to succeed—if necessary—over others. ORANGE knows that to become a caring person showing emotions is a waste of time . . . and time is money. ORANGE is an individual-elitist system where self is primary—not others. Thus, ORANGE teams are not really "teams", but competitive groups. Faculty, administrators, parents, and students at this level are only concerned with themselves and what is in their best interest. Image is indeed everything, as well as status.

GREEN is the first system that begins to accept others. One of the most important needs that GREEN has is to know the inner world of others and to share their own inner world with others. This is why teams emerge so naturally within a Green value system. GREEN must be successful in interpersonal relationships. To do so means that authenticity, congruence, honesty and trust must exist for self and others. Between individuals or within the group GREEN listens deeply to the experiences of others—to their worldviews. GREEN listens deeply to others because this is how the system operates. But even in this system there are only the beginning efforts to accept the worldviews of another. GREEN can accept the worldview of another as long as that worldview produces behavior which is acceptable within the group community. In this communal-collective system others are primary, but the other must accept the worldview that is the consensus of the community. Even a general definition of Empathy is inadequate. Empathy is the intellectual identification with or vicarious experience of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. It is one thing to be deeply empathetic, to know and to appreciate the thoughts and feelings of another . . . but it is an entirely different matter to accept those thoughts and feelings as right and good for the other person. This is why "political correctness" is such a big issue with GREEN. Here the concern is with equity and everyone being treated the same. It therefore strongly conflicts with closed BLUE. *While closed BLUE is often self-righteousness from the right, closed GREEN is self-righteousness from the left.*

From a quick examination of these first six Value Systems at the First Tier, it is easy to see where much of the conflict in society, in our churches, and in our schools is to be found. When systems clash, everyone sees RED! This is because these first six levels are based on dualistic, binary, either/or thinking. The solution to these conflicting worldviews does not come from these six "subsistence" levels, the First Tier, but from the next systems or levels that are now beginning to emerge in the world and among some in the church and in some schools. These are levels at the Second Tier, the "being" systems, levels 7 and 8.

YELLOW is an integrative, holistic system, the first to truly understand that people are at different levels and to accept that given reality. It thus listens to and accepts another human being's worldview simply because the other human being's worldview is important to the other human being. This constitutes a major shift in the way human beings interact with each other—a valuing of the other in a manner that we have not historically seen. YELLOW is not frustrated with ambiguity and can actually enjoy ambiguity. YELLOW is the first system to understand *interdependency*, and is thus the

beginning system of the 2nd Tier. YELLOW is the first system as Dr. Clare Graves has stated that not only values self but it also values others. Thus, YELLOW teams are strong for they are focused on competency and functionality. YELLOW listens to others because what the other is expressing is important to the other, not because there may be a power gain for self (RED) or because one must be kind to others even though there is no intention of accepting what the other is expressing (BLUE) or to enable self to win over others (ORANGE) or in order to determine whether or not the other is acceptable in the group community (GREEN).

These first six levels are based on dualistic, binary, either/or thinking that declares, "If you are not *with* me, you are against me." YELLOW on the other hand says, "if you are not *against* me, you are with me," an entirely different mode of thinking— holistic, integrative, inclusive. This is because YELLOW values *being*. And as Clare often said; "Damn it, a person has a right to *be!*" YELLOW also flattens the organizational pyramid to eliminate redundant levels in order to share power and decision-making with those who are closest to the problems. That makes for effective teams. The result is ownership at all levels because the focus is on competency and on who can best do the job irrespective of who they are, either by gender, age, race, ethnicity, or class.

The worldview of TURQUOISE is still in development, but its focus is on the "global village" and the interconnectedness of all life forms. Little can be said about Turquoise teams right now since there is not enough critical mass for analysis.

The Need for Spiral Leaders

As we head into the 21st century, it is becoming more and more plain that schools are in desperate need of teachers and leaders that know how to "draw outside the lines"—move outside their narrow frames of operation. What does this mean to "draw outside the lines?" It means that the solutions to the current problems our schools are experiencing cannot come from the same level of existence and operation where the problem is located. It means that the same way of thinking that created the problems we are experiencing cannot be the same thinking that solves those problems. *Today's problems are yesterday's solutions.* The solution must come from above, from the next level of development. This is because the present mode of thinking, worldview or coping system is too narrow or closed and cannot address the challenges posed by emerging problems of existence and social change. Albert Einstein recognized this dilemma and declared, "The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as they were created." This raises a question of leadership.

In light of these Value Systems reflective of different levels of existence in our schools, in the church, and in society, what kind of teachers, administrators, leaders per se do schools need in this new millennium? What kinds of teams are needed? The "design question" mentioned at the beginning of this article needs to be answered. "How should Who lead (teach, manage) Whom to do What?"

What we don't need are "flatlanders" or "monomemetic" leaders who approach life and decision-making with a one-dimensional mindset and practice, drawing from just one memetic level. We also do not want teachers/ leaders who are "closed"—ones who operate only on the basis of one Value System and are unable or unwilling to explore options other than those that conform to their own. The world has seen far too many leaders (read "tyrants") operating at this level.

What we need are "Spiral Leaders", persons at Yellow, who are multimemetic. A Spiral Leader or multimemetic person is one who values the entire array of memetic levels, is able to see the whole spiral of human differences, and knows how to speak the "psychological languages" of people at their respective levels of existence. She is a visionary, inclusive, and competence-oriented person, who understands the "natural flows" of human development. He enables people to see the next steps of human growth they need to take, while keeping the well being of the whole, the school or church, in mind. This is a level of leadership *rarely seen in history.*Yet, it is the best style of leadership suited to confront the challenges of educational change in the 21st century.

As we forge ahead in the Third Millennium, it is dawning on many thought leaders that there is no *single* future for the world, for America or for America's schools, just as there is no single level of existence at which all of humanity is located. Thus, what lies before us is a situation of *multiple futures* or *realities* rather than just one, depending on the operative Value Systems. Failure to grasp this vision of futures will result in a recycling of old problems and an implementing of trite and tired solutions. Only multimemetic "spiral leaders" will have this understanding of multiple systems and how to address their respective needs.

Welcome to the future, America!

[1] Eric Hoffer. 1973. *Reflections on the Human Condition*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, p. 32.

[2] Michael Fullan, University of Toronto. from keynote address, May 5-7, 1994, Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, CA. Symposium '94 on Restructuring Education, sponsored by the California Center for Restructuring Schools.

[3] The first line is by Gregory Allen Williams, actor and writer, from a speech given at Humboldt State University in 1994. The second a slogan from MSNBC television event, Summit in Silicon Valley, February 27, 2000, as advertised in *Business Week,* February 28, 2000, p. 27.

[4] Alvin Toffler, 1999. "Foreword." In Rowan Gibson, Editor. *Rethinking the Future*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing. First written in a slightly different form in *Future Shock.* New York: Bantum. 1984, p. 414.

[5] Abraham Maslow. 1954. *Motivation and Personality.* New York: Harper; E. H. Erikson. 1950. *Childhood and Society.* New York: W. W. Norton; Lawrence Kohlberg. 1984. *The Psychology of Moral Development: Essays on Moral Development,* Vol. 2. San Francisco: Harper & Row; Carl Rogers. 1951. *Client-Centered Therapy.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Jane Loevinger. 1976. *Ego Development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; James W. Fowler. 1995 [1981]. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning.* San Francisco: Harper Collins; Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. 1990.

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[6] Clare W. Graves. 1971. A SYSTEMS CONCEPTION OF PERSONALITY: Introductory Remarks by Clare W. Graves on his Levels of Existence Theory Presented at the National Institutes of Health, 1971. Based on a tape transcription by William Lee, Great Falls, VA. (Edited with Commentary by Christopher Cowan, 1988). Unpublished manuscript.

[7] Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. 1993. *The Evolving Self.* (New York: HarperCollins), p. 235.

[8] David R. Hawkins. 2003. *I—Reality and Subjectivity.* Sedona: Arizona. Veritas, p. 221.

[9] See Clare W. Graves. 1974. "Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap." *The Futurist,* April, p. 72; and Don E. Beck and Christopher C. Cowan. 1996. *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.

[10] Ken Wilber. 2000. *A Theory of Everything.* Boston: Shambhala, p. 11.

[11] For an understanding of "cultures of honor," see the research of Dov Cohen, "Culture, Social Organization, and Patterns of Violence." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.* 1998, Vol. No 2.408-419.

[12] Kaplan, Abraham. 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry.* New York: Harper.

[13] E-mail from Bill Lee to Caleb Rosado, November 2, 1998, explaining the various levels and their views of the other.