Knowing Me, Knowing You

‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ presents a structure of linked concepts that is at once radically new and yet oh-so familiar in a number of ways. Perhaps most importantly, the revelations this approach provides will enable you to…

- understand why you and others are the way you are;
- surmise what you might be able to do about it if you don’t like things the way they are;
- develop strategies to have more fulfilment in your own life and to improve relationships with others – partners, children, family, friends, work colleagues, etc.

By aligning and integrating previously uncoordinated works of reliable science, Integrated SocioPsychology provides the means to understand the causes of personal and interpersonal problems. From that understanding, you can then determine the best means of dealing with the issues.

In ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ the emphasis is very much on the personal – Knowing Me – and personal relationships – Knowing You.

“Integrated SocioPsychology explains how we and others interact. What is profound is that this psychological meta-approach can be used to help prevent problems occurring. Which is a useful skill to have in the 21st Century, with our accelerated pace of change combined with migrating and merging cultures. Be in it in work, education, community, politics or family arenas, there are increasing demands on humans to understand one another. But before we can understand others, we need to understand ourselves.

Are you prepared for the 21st Century or will you be residing on an isolated desert island? This book is written for those who are planning on remaining in the main stream and hoping to find peace, contentment and joy. Whilst you may not be taking a physical journey, reading this book will probably coincide with a journey of (self) discovery and understanding. Outcomes and conclusions will vary from reader to reader; it all depends where you are now and where you are going. This book will be your companion and guide as you work through the chapters and your journey unfolds.

So let’s find out where you are and start this journey now, by turning the page . . .”
- Andrew P Mills, Business Coach
Knowing Me, Knowing You

‘KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU: An Integrated SocioPsychology Guide to Personal Fulfilment & Better Relationships’

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Contents

INTRODUCTION: ..........................................................................................................................1

… and the Spirituality Stuff? ....................................................................................................3
What to get out of this Book......................................................................................................4

PART ONE: KNOWING ME.....................................................................................................7

1. DO I REALLY KNOW MYSELF? .........................................................................................8
What is ‘Self’...? ......................................................................................................................10
Spiritual Self or ‘Selfplex’? ....................................................................................................15

2. THE NATURE OF IDEAS .................................................................................................21
The Brain as a Battleground ..................................................................................................25
Overcoming Limiting Beliefs? ...............................................................................................28

3. WHAT ABOUT TEMPERAMENT? ......................................................................................32
Dimensions of Personality ....................................................................................................33
Psychoticism and Personality ...............................................................................................36
What if I’m an Unstable Introvert? ......................................................................................42
Avoiding the Lie ......................................................................................................................46

4. SELF AS IDENTITY ...........................................................................................................48
The Criticality of Identity and Values & Beliefs .....................................................................53
Aligning the Neurological Levels .........................................................................................56
Problems in Identity Formation ...........................................................................................58

5. DEVELOPING SELVES .....................................................................................................62
A Theory which explains Everything? ..................................................................................64
The Nature of vMEMES ..........................................................................................................70

6. SELVES OF THE 1ST TIER ..............................................................................................80
BEIGE ........................................................................................................................................80
PURPLE .................................................................................................................................80
RED ..........................................................................................................................................84
BLUE .........................................................................................................................................87
ORANGE ....................................................................................................................................90
GREEN ......................................................................................................................................92

7. SELVES OF THE 2ND TIER .............................................................................................95
YELLOW ...................................................................................................................................97
TURQUOISE ..........................................................................................................................100
CORAL? .................................................................................................................................103

8. ENVIRONMENT, IDENTITY & TRANSFORMATION ...................................................105
We change the Environment; the Environment changes Us..............................................109
Variations in the Formation of Identity ...............................................................................112

9. THE MECHANICS OF CHANGE .....................................................................................115
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Escaping the Gamma Trap!!............................................................. 123
10. TEMPERAMENT AND CHANGE .............................................. 128
    From the Horizontal to the Vertical ........................................ 131
    …and the Point is…? .............................................................. 137
    Getting to Grips with Temperament ....................................... 140
11. YET MORE SELVES…? ............................................................ 143
    Troubles in Transition ......................................................... 154
12. HARMONY, WARS, STACKS AND DEVASTATION .................... 156
    vMEME Wars ................................................................. 159
    vMEME Stacks .............................................................. 162
    vMEMES and Psychopathology .............................................. 165
13. HOW WE GET OUR SELVES INTO STATES ........................... 172
    How do You attribute? ......................................................... 175
    Handling Meta-States .......................................................... 182
14. TROUBLESHOOTING ME, ‘MY SELF’ AND MY STRESS ...... 186
    Understanding Stress ........................................................... 186
    Internal or External, Temperamental and Memetic? ................ 191
    13 Tips for Your Psychological Health .................................... 196

PART TWO: KNOWING YOU......................................................... 198

15. MAKING SENSE OF OTHER PEOPLE .................................... 200
    vMEMES, Meta-Modelling and Meta-Programmes .................... 204
    Observing vMEMES .............................................................. 212
16. STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ...................... 217
    Communicating the Message .................................................. 224
17. CONFLICT MODES ............................................................... 230
    PURPLE .......................................................... 231
    RED ............................................................... 234
    RED-BLUE Transition ......................................................... 235
    BLUE ............................................................ 236
    BLUE-ORANGE Transition .................................................... 237
    ORANGE ........................................................... 238
    ORANGE-GREEN Transition .................................................. 239
    GREEN ............................................................ 240
    2nd Tier ............................................................................ 241
18. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ....................................................... 243
    Relationship Values & Tensions ............................................. 245
    A Maslowian-rooted Approach to Conflict Management ............ 246
    Arguing from the same vMEME? ............................................ 252
    Understanding with the Meta-Mirror ..................................... 253
19. WOMEN, FOR MEN…AND MEN, FOR WOMEN .................... 257
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Sex & Social Differences between Men & Women ............. 258
Men, Women, Ambition and Caring .................................. 264
The Cycle ........................................................................ 267

20. SEX, FAITHFULNESS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS .... 272
Is Monogamy normal? ..................................................... 274
The Importance of Environmental Factors ......................... 279
So how do We foster Personal Sexual Fidelity? ............... 281

21. CONSUMMATE LOVE ........................................ 284
Rescuing Relationships ................................................... 288
Breaking the Break-Up Pattern ........................................ 290

22. YOUNGER CHILDREN, FOR PARENTS (AND TEACHERS!) .... 295
In and out of the Womb ................................................... 300
From Infancy to Puberty .................................................. 303
What about the Memes? ............................................... 306
How vMEMES learn – Part 1 ........................................... 307

23. TEENAGERS, FOR PARENTS (AND TEACHERS!) ............ 310
A vMEMETIC Transition ................................................ 312
Friends and Sex ............................................................ 315
Teenagers and the Higher vMEMES ................................ 318
Erica’s Story ................................................................. 319
How vMEMES learn – Part 2 ........................................... 321

24. THE WORKPLACE, FOR WORKERS .......................... 323
The Workplace is a Dangerous Place ............................... 327
Workplace Strategies ...................................................... 333

25. TROUBLESHOOTING MY RELATIONSHIPS .............. 335
21 Tips for Managing Relationship Disharmony ................. 337
The Value of Relationships .............................................. 342

CONCLUDING WORDS…? ................................................. 344
The Bigger Picture .......................................................... 345

WEB RESOURCES .......................................................... A
INDEX ........................................................................... B
ABOUT KEITH E RICE .................................................. Q
Introduction:

‘This Book will change Your Life!!!!’

Of course, it will!

That’s why you’re reading this right now – in the hope that something in this book will change your life.

It may be from an idle curiosity, of wanting to understand more about human nature - you and the world around you. Or it may be that you have very real, pressing issues which you need to resolve.

Either way, you’re looking to change something in your life.

But isn’t a ‘life-changing experience’ what every would-be ‘guru’ promises?

Let’s face it: there are thousands of ‘self-help’ books in the bookstores and increasingly available through internet web sites. Homespun philosophies and ‘pop psychology’ models to improve every aspect of your existence have found a real and growing niche in the market over the past 25-30 years. Retail bookstores are full of Chicken Soups and Stephen Covey’s multitudinous Habits.

Undoubtedly much of what is in these books will be of use to certain people in certain circumstances. So what is it makes ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ different?

Like almost all the authors in this field, I’m going to claim my approach is unique. (Hey, I’ve got to give you reason to buy this book!)

So, is my ‘unique’ different to all the ‘uniques’ propounded by all the other self-help writers?

Well, I’d like to think it is.

Firstly, much of what I write is based on science. Mostly ‘soft’, social science; but also some ‘hard’, biological science. (Hence a lot of scientific source references in the footnotes!)

Secondly, some of the material I use has never been applied before in this way in this market.

Thirdly, it’s not exclusive – either/or. You don’t have to ditch the other guys to come on board with me. The integrated approach means you can keep all the models and philosophies you have found which work for you. However, working at a deeper and more scientific level means you can use them with greater precision and, therefore, to greater
Effectiveness.

Integrated SocioPsychology is not a model or a single theory of human nature. It is an overarching ‘approach’ – a meta-approach, if you will – to incorporate and align all the other ‘approaches’. Put simply, it’s...

# Integrated - the aim is to learn how all the elements of the behavioural sciences and the complementary hard sciences of Biology and Neuroscience fit together to explain...

# Psychology - how and why people behave as they do...

# Socio - taking into account group dynamics and the influence of cultures and the societies people live in

The many different schools in the behavioural sciences tend often to be rather adversarial in their approach to each other. They each hold that they alone are ‘right’; therefore, other approaches are at best inadequate and at worst just plain ‘wrong’. The roots of this woeful state of affairs can be found in specifics such as the Behaviourist denunciations of the Freudians in the 1920s. However, these splits, groupings and demonisations of other camps are just reflections of certain aspects of human nature. As we shall see in ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’!

The integrated approach takes the view that, if a piece of research was valid in its context, then it is a part of ‘The Truth’. Accordingly, it should fit somewhere in our jigsaw understanding of the human psyche. To know where and how it fits depends on having a means of building the ‘bigger picture’.

The ‘scaffold’ I use to align and integrate all the different approaches, theories and models found in the behavioural sciences is constructed primarily on the design of the ‘Graves Model’ of Clare W Graves and its Spiral Dynamics ‘build’ developed by Don Beck & Chris Cowan.

Other key elements in the scaffold include the Neurological Levels model developed by Robert Dilts from the work of Gregory Bateson, the Meta-States construct of Michael Hall and the concept of Reciprocal Determinism defined by Albert Bandura.

At the ground level of the scaffold are Hans Eysenck’s Dimensions of Personality.

However, the intention of Integrated SocioPsychology is that all elements in the behavioural sciences can and should be able to fit somewhere within this all-encompassing framework.

Of necessity, then, Integrated SocioPsychology is not complete. As research into human behaviour is ongoing, so the key elements of Integrated SocioPsychology will mutate and change, meaning that the
Knowing Me, Knowing You

concept itself is a never-ending story.

Integrated SocioPsychology also incorporates the underpinning ethos of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) – ie: it must be practical and useful in enabling positive differences in people’s lives.

I have used both the psychological maps and the techniques described in this book to assist commercial companies and other organisations. We have enabled creative visions, resolved conflicts and created management strategies that engage all the stakeholders. I have also used the maps and techniques in ‘personal therapy’ to assist individuals to overcome emotional trauma and serious blockages to their personal development.

…and the Spirituality Stuff?

What you won’t find in this book are lots of references to ‘spirit’ and ‘soul’ – and certainly not ‘aura’, ‘chakra’, ‘kosmos’ and the like.

It’s not that I pooh-pooh that sort of thing because I certainly don’t. Religious and spiritual beliefs form a large part of reality for a great many people and can affect their psyche and their well-being considerably.

On a personal level, I do have what I might term ‘a superstitious conviction’ that there is ‘something bigger than me’ ‘out there’ (or possibly ‘deep inside’). I call this ‘God’ and I tend to think of it in God-the-Father/Allah-the-Compassionate type terms. I’ve had what might be considered ‘spiritual experiences’. I pray to ‘my God’ from time to time in a vaguely Christian manner; and occasionally some of my prayers do seem to be answered. (Then again, many more of my supplications seem not to be realised!)

But how do I explain what this ‘God’ thing is and what expectations I might have of it and of me and my fellow human beings? Do I use Christian frames of reference - and, if so, which version? Muslim – which version? Jewish – which version? Do I venture out from Western/Middle Eastern traditions and try Eastern concepts such as Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism…? What about ‘New Age’ paradigms or the old gods of Britain’s pagan past who have enjoyed a (very) minor revival in recent years? Or should I even develop my own doctrine?!

The problem is that science (of any description!) has yet to find a way to bring objectivity to spiritual experience. Science has got little further than cross-mapping the experiences of individuals and groups to other individuals and groups and observing some of the corresponding electrical activity in the brain.

So, as soon as I go beyond my own conviction and experiences and we enter discussion of the ‘Spiritual’ – from talking about the differences
between the organised religions through to differing personal experiences of the supernatural – of necessity, we are in the realms of interpretation, inconsistency and unverifiable beliefs.

Science has yet to come up with a credible approach to spirituality. So I tend to leave it alone.

That, of course, leaves a gap for many…and it’s a gap I’m not entirely comfortable with myself. It’s a very uncomfortable gap for some!

But I would prefer to acknowledge that and deal with what I know is tested and reliable, rather than propound on what for some might be ‘God’s truth’ – yet for others might be ‘the heretical doctrine of the Devil’.

If you do have a religious/spiritual belief, then you can still use the science in this book to gain greater insight into yourself and others. Just think of the psychological and the spiritual as complementary dimensions of understanding.

What to get out of this Book…

To a considerable extent what you get out of this book will depend on what you want to get out of it. Although I sincerely hope you and your preconceptions will be challenged by it!

It offers arguably the most advanced understanding available of how human beings are motivated, make sense of their world, and interact with other human beings.

In so doing, ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ challenges many of the ‘givens’ of what it is to be human. It offers the behavioural sciences a radical new basis on which to conduct our investigations of culture, thought, behaviour and experience.

To make best use of this book, I suggest you read it through sequentially so that you start with getting a greater understanding of yourself. That will also give you a basic theoretical underpinning of the key models of Integrated SocioPsychology.

There is a considerable amount of science in this book. If you’re not the kind of person who takes easily to ‘technical stuff’, do bear with it and please do work on understanding the concepts involved. I’ve made the science as accessible as I can; but you may find you have to read some paragraphs more than once!

On the other hand, you may already have some knowledge of Psychology and/or Sociology and/or Neurology and/or Neuro-Linguistic Programming and/or Spiral Dynamics, etc. In which case, please don’t
Knowing Me, Knowing You

‘cherrypick’! In many instances throughout this book, it is how the knowledge is gathered together and the links made that creates the greater understanding.

Once you have developed greater understanding about yourself, then you are in a position to decide what’s wrong with everyone else!

There are some exercises you can try in this book and there are suggestions for strategies to help you deal with certain types of issue.

However, you won’t find sets of instructions for zillions of exercises, each one of which (it is usually promised!) will transform your life and resolve all your problems instantly. This is a book aimed primarily at enabling you to understand yourself (‘Knowing Me’) and others (‘Knowing You’) more. The emphasis is firmly on the diagnostic.

The principal thrust of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ is to enable you, the reader, to have a greater appreciation of the sheer diversity in both your own thoughts and motivations and those of others with whom you have relationships. Therefore, to me, having a ready-made one-size-fits-all solution every other page seems rather to defeat the point!

Sigmund Freud, undoubtedly the single most influential psychologist ever, was of the view that understanding is the principal key. Often issues can be resolved just by insight. Understanding also will enable you to develop informed strategies – and I do provide some suggestions which it may suit your understanding to try.

Sometimes, though, the problem really is so great that external intervention is required. If so, then I do urge you to seek the help of a therapist or counsellor with the levels of understanding outlined in this book.

To learn more about Integrated SocioPsychology (especially in the application of the approach to different areas of life and society), please explore www.integratedsociopsychology.net – the Integrated SocioPsychology web site. I am the webmaster for the site which also contains contributions from several other key thinkers and researchers in these fields.

As said earlier, because Integrated SocioPsychology aims to align and integrate the behavioural sciences, of necessity it is an ongoing story. As science gives us new insights, so the theories have to mutate and change to accommodate new realities. If revised in five years time, ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ will not be the same book.

It is important to state that I am far from being the only one pursuing an integrated route.

Don Beck, co-developer of Spiral Dynamics and Ken Wilber,
arguably America’s leading philosopher in evolutionary consciousness, together and separately, have much of worth to say in considering how Graves/Spiral Dynamics can be used as a key foundation for integration. As has leading transpersonal psychologist Jenny Wade. Michael W Eysenck, son of Hans and one of the foremost writers in academic Psychology in the UK, is inching his way towards an ‘Integrated Psychology’ – the kind of thing David Elkind has been hinting at for years. These are just a notable few that spring to mind as I write!

Particularly worth checking out is ‘Integral Vision’ (Trafford, 2005), the first book by leading NLP trainer Peter McNab, In many ways this is a complementary piece to ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’

And, although he doesn’t overtly espouse the integrated route, Daniel Goleman’s bestselling ‘Emotional Intelligence’ (Bantam Books, 1995) is an excellent example of innovative, integrated thinking.
Part One: Knowing Me...

For some people, it’s often easier to find fault with others than it is to get to know yourself. What people find undesirable about someone else, though, is often actually a reflection of what subconsciously they don’t like about themselves. The great Dr Sigmund Freud termed this defence mechanism Projection.¹

For many other people, it’s all too easy to feel worthless and of low value and to blame yourself when things go wrong. Such people often underachieve and can be subject to anxiety disorders and Depression.

This first part of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ is about developing an understanding of what really makes human beings tick and applying that knowledge to yourself.

With such knowledge, you will be able to start addressing many of your own issues – issues you have about yourself and how you interact with the world around you.

It may indeed be that insight itself is enough to resolve at least some of your issues. For those you can’t resolve by developing greater understanding, then you are strongly encouraged to seek therapy or counselling from a practitioner with the levels of understanding outlined in this book.

In terms of relationship problems, sorting yourself out can often reveal what you have been contributing to the problem!

Of course, those who tend to project onto others – and tend to blame anyone but themselves when things go wrong! – are likely to have a harder time dealing with the first part of this book.

Persevere with it, anyway! The knowledge in the first part is essential for making more of your relationships with others.

¹ ‘The Ego & The Mechanisms of Defence’ – Anna Freud (Chatto & Windus, 1936). Freud’s ideas on defence mechanisms were set out most clearly by his daughter, Anna, in this key work.
1. Do I really know Myself?

Well, do you?

Do you really know *yourself*?

And, if you do know yourself, are you happy with your *self*? Do you like *you*?

If you do…great! If you don’t…not so great….

I’ve been a management consultant for some 16 years, working in both the public and private sectors. This has often involved close coaching and/or mentoring with senior people, leading sometimes to deeply personal conversations and periodically therapeutic interventions. For the last 6 years I have also worked as a practitioner in ‘personal change therapy’ for people from all walks of life.

And still, occasionally, it surprises me how many people who come to me on a professional basis either don’t know who they really are or what they’re about. Or they don’t understand why they behave in certain ways. In other words, they don’t understand themselves. Why they are like they are. In some cases, they can’t really see what they are like – and the impact what they are like has on others. Often the people they care for most!

These folks are confused. Sometimes they really hurt.

It’s even worse when they do recognise what they are like …and they really don’t like it.

So what are you like…?

Many people, when asked whether they know themselves, will give an answer that makes some kind of sense. They can give some description of ‘self’ – from the physical (eg: “I’m average-looking” or “I’m on the tall side”) to metaphysical personality traits (eg: “I’m quite shy” or “I’m kind and caring” or “I’m very ambitious”).

Some deeper thinkers may go ‘all philosophical’ and say things like: “*How can you ever know your true self?*”. This kind of thinking implies there is some deeper, almost mystical self – *spirit, soul*? – which is unknowable in cognitive terms that can be languaged.

Yet others may attach the issue of personal bias to the question and suggest you consult with others who know them well – family, friends, work colleagues, etc - to build a true picture of what they are really like. It’s almost as if they can’t trust their own perception of their *self*!

So, is there a deeper, unquantifiable *self*? And how much do we define ourselves in terms of how we perceive others around us to
perceive us?

Then there is the question of whether we always appear to be the same self.

Have you ever said: “I don’t feel like myself today”? or “That’s not like me”? Or have you had other people say to you: “That’s not in character” or “That’s not like you”?

Almost everyone has had some experience of not feeling like themselves or somehow acting ‘out of character’.

Have you ever found one part of you wanting to do something that another part of you disapproves of? (For example: I want to eat chocolate but I know it won’t do my diet any good.)

Perhaps worse, have you ever found one part of you, which says you should be doing something, castigating another part of you for finding reasons not to do it? (For example: My friend’s suggested we go walking this Saturday and Sunday; although that’s going to be another weekend I don’t start the decorating.)

Again, these are fairly common experiences.

But what exactly do we mean by all this talk of self and not myself?

If I am not myself on some occasion, then who on earth am I? Am I still my self… but somehow different?

Before we work on answering that question, let’s ask another. Can you identify circumstances or contexts when you act ‘out of character’?

If you were to examine your life in detail, would you find a number of circumstances or contexts where you seem to have different ‘characters’?

An example of someone exhibiting different characters might be a married man who is a doting father to his teenage daughter and a regular churchgoer but enjoys watching strippers and chasing lots of different women. Or, what about the female office manager who dominates her staff, men and women alike, but is a demure ‘little wife’ at home?

Margaret Thatcher, Britain’s famous ‘Iron Lady’ prime minister of the 1980s, was, in public, at least, a ruthless visionary.

She had strong and clear ideas on how she wanted political life and economic life in this country to change and appeared to care little about the huge social costs involved. She culled the moderates, the so-called ‘wets’, from her first Cabinet and replaced them with ‘yes men’ and equally hard-nosed right-wingers. She didn’t hesitate to go to war both abroad (the 1982 Falklands War) and at home (the 1984 Miners Strike).

Yet it was an open secret that husband Dennis ‘wore the trousers’ at home and that ‘Maggie’ mostly deferred to him on domestic and family matters. She was devoted to him right up to his death in 2003. In fact, in
Knowing Me, Knowing You

some private photographs and video footage which have leaked into the
public domain, she appears positively fawning – an impression largely
confirmed by various comments from family ‘insiders’.

Two quite different personalities in two different contexts, apparently. How come?

One of the few occasions the public and private Maggies collided
was when son Mark was lost in the desert for 6 days during the Paris-
Dakar Rally in 1982. The media had a field day filming a tearful and at
time clearly distressed mother trying to carry on with her work.

Thinking of your own life, could it be that you’re more assertive and
demanding with some people than you are with others? Or, maybe you’re
quiet and considered with some but lose your temper easily with others?

Differences in ‘character’ could be as simple and as trivial as not
swearing in front of your children but using unsavoury expletives
frequently in conversation near the end of a night with your friends in the
pub.

How is it that we can have these different ‘characters’? – some of
which seem closer to our ‘real self’ than others and some we’re not too
comfortable with at all?

Could it, in fact, be possible that we have multiple selves which
manifest themselves in different circumstances?

Perhaps the question which titles this chapter should really be: ‘Do I
really know my selves?’

What is ‘Self’...?

Before investigating the concept of multiple selves, we should try to
define what we mean by self.

If there are, indeed, multiple selves, possibly related to the
circumstances and contexts in which we operate, is there a deeper, or
integral, self to which all the multiple, arguably lesser, selves belong or,
at least, relate?

Much thought in Philosophy, Psychology and even Psychiatry
assumes that we have some kind of singular, integral self.

In their noted dictionary of Psychology, Arthur & Emily Reber offer
six related definitions of self:-

“1. Self as inner agent or force with commanding and directing
functions over motives, fears, needs, etc. Here the self is a hypothetical
entity.... 2. Self as inner witness to events.... This self presumably can

2 ‘The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology’ – Arthur S Reber & Emily Reber
scan and introspect upon the self expressed in meaning 1... 3. Self as the totality of personal experience and expression, self as living being... 4. Self as synthesis, self as an organised, personalised whole... 5. Self as consciousness, awareness, personal conception; self as identity... 6. Self as abstract goal or end point in some personalistic dimension...”

All of the Reber & Reber definitions reflect a singular, integral self – the ‘real me’, as it were.

But what hard evidence is there that a singular, integral self exists?

For starters, where is this ‘hypothetical entity’ (definition 1) located? Head? Heart? Left big toe? Where is it?

The neuroscientists now have the brain pretty well mapped; and they have at least some understanding of what most parts of it do. They know which bits seem to ‘think’ – in the frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex (the brain’s so-called ‘grey matter’) – see Fig 1. They also know that the amygdala in the sub-cortical limbic system – see Fig 2\(^3\) – is the principal instigator of emotional responses. But they’ve yet to find anything which could correspond even remotely to an ‘inner me’ as a distinct entity.

\(^3\)Brain graphics adapted with permission from ‘Brain Facts: a Primer on the Brain & Nervous System’ (p3, Society for Neuroscience, 2002).
For all the romantic notion of ‘heart’ down the centuries – “I love you with certain bits of my brain” doesn’t have quite the same resonance! – we know that the heart is just an organic pump. (And no, we’re not going to give any credence to the views of some women that men think only with their dicks!)

It would appear then that self doesn’t exist materially in our physical body. So could it exist immaterially – intangibly?

This pushes our investigation in the direction of the kind of Dualism propounded by the great $17^{th}$ Century French philosopher René Descartes.

Like many before and since, he considered there to be two categories of existence. Firstly, there is the material, which is made of matter, is physically present and can be felt. Then there is the immaterial, which is not made of matter and is intangible. The immaterial is beyond our understanding of the laws of physics.

According to Descartes, the thoughts and emotions of the mind are experienced in the ‘soul’ which is immaterial. This immaterial soul interacts with the material physical organism that is the body. The body...
influences the state of the soul/mind/self – eg: through physiological sensations such as sexual desire, hunger, heat and pain – and the soul/mind/self controls the voluntary (as opposed to involuntary) actions of the body. Descartes believed that the point of interaction was the pineal gland (which is located above the cerebellum – see Fig 2).  

Even though we now know thinking and feeling to be manifestations of brain activity, a great many well-informed people still insist there is some kind of ‘me’ that is more than (or beyond) activity in the cortex and the limbic system. So it seems we can’t escape Dualism and discussion of an immaterial self - perhaps Descartes’ ‘soul’?

Particularly towards the Philosophy end of the science-philosophy continuum that is modern Psychology, – see Fig 3 – the concept of ‘self as a hypothetical entity’ (definition 1) has been tied often to ‘soul’ and other spiritual concepts.

![Fig 3: Psychology as a continuum](image)

From such approaches, we not only infer that there is a deeper ‘me’ that is hard to define cognitively, beyond the personality traits and the shifts in personality. We infer a me that may be able to commune with the Divine, a me that may exist beyond my physical body, that may be eternal and experience the ‘afterlife’. If you believe in reincarnation, that me could even develop in other bodies in other times.

In modern Philosophy, arguably the foremost exponent of the notion of a spiritual self has been Ken Wilber⁵.

Wilber’s scope is massive, ranging far and wide to mesh eastern philosophies and concepts of spirituality with modern Western Psychology, to make his arguments so powerful as to be almost overwhelming. However, he makes one key presupposition: the existence of ‘spirit’.

His entire understanding of human nature and how human beings interact with each other and the world around them is based ultimately on

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⁴‘Les Passions de l’Ame’ – René Descartes (Jean Henault. 1650). Located deep within the brain, the pineal was the last of the endocrine glands to be discovered. It is associated with the brow chakra and the ‘third eye’ in Hindu and other Eastern traditions.

⁵Eg: ‘Integral Psychology’ – Ken Wilber (Shambhala, 2000).
this premise.

Unfortunately, science cannot evidence ‘spirit’.

Descartes’ claim that the soul interacted with the physical body in the pineal gland is just one of many attempts to rationalise or otherwise give scientific credibility to spiritual concepts – eg:-

- Colonel Henry Steel Olcott’s attempt to weigh the spirit manifestation of the squaw ‘Honto’ at the Eddy farmstead in Vermont;
- Hermann von Helmholtz’ examinations of life forces;
- J B Rhine’s ESP card-reading experiments;
- the filming of the Israeli psychic Uri Geller apparently formulating an act of deception;
- Virginia Tighe’s recollections of a previous life as ‘Bridey Murphy’ being compromised by the investigators’ realisation that her neighbour was one Bridie Murphy Corkell.

However, nothing presented so far has stood up to rigorous scrutiny.

Since ‘spirit’ cannot be observed empirically and objectively, it has to be said that Wilber’s grand construct, from a rational point of view, is vulnerable at its foundation. Wilber counters the rationalists and the reductionists by labelling them ‘flatlanders’, unable to understand or appreciate the intangible. Interestingly, Wilber does not consider himself a dualist but proposes instead that the immaterial and the material are one and the same but experienced in different ways at different levels of consciousness. He talks of the need for ‘postrational thought’ to understand this – and he may well be right!

However, he still can’t get around the need for faith in the intangible.

If you believe, then fine; if you don’t believe, then what compelling evidence is there that you should?

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7 ‘Über die Erhaltung der Kraft’ – Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (G Reimer, 1847). Helmholtz’ research led him to the principle of the conservation of energy, a key foundation in reductionism.
8 ‘Evidence of Precognition in the Covariation of Salience Ratios’ – J B Rhine in Journal of Parapsychology #6 (1942)
11 Ken Wilber’s presupposition of ‘spirit’ does underpin his grand concepts; but, even without the foundational spirituality themes, there is much of value in his work – elements of which can stand independent of the spirituality themes. His mapping of the unfolding of human consciousness – in part based on the work of
Spiritual Self or ‘Selfplex’?

Certainly there is huge circumstantial evidence for the spiritual self, in that belief in it exists, or has existed, in all preModern (pre-science-led) cultures around the globe and throughout history. Moreover, belief in a spiritual self persists in much of Western Modern society in spite of the pervasive influence of science and its demands for hard, reliable evidence.

How many people do you know in North America and/or Europe who believe their ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ will carry on in some way after the physical body has ceased to exist?

While still in decline in Europe, the traditional ‘organised religions’ have largely stabilised in North America. Eastern concepts of spirituality are continuing to spread; and around the globe Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise. Cults based on the old pagan religions are becoming increasingly recognised again in Europe; the Tarot is more popular than ever; and astrologers appear daily in all major forms of media right around the world. To top it all, the legal system in Iran is based openly on Sharia (Islamic) law – as is that of Saudi Arabia, to a lesser extent – and world leaders like Tony Blair and (especially!) George W Bush are open about the influence of their Christian faith.

Although opinion differs widely on just what the soul is and what the spirit is and what the differences between them are, one of the great strengths in Wilber’s argument is that he has found a number of key commonalities in spiritual themes around the globe and throughout history.

However, all this is still far from being solid compelling evidence that can stand up to scientific investigation.

Especially when concepts of spirituality can be reduced to ‘memeplexes’ (themed and cohesive clusters of memes), as indeed Dr Susan Blackmore has done.\footnote{The Meme Machine – Susan Blackmore (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Clare W Graves – has caught the attention of some of the world’s most prominent decision-makers (including former American Vice-President Al Gore).}

Blackmore is a leading world expert in the field of memetics – the study of memes and their cultural transmissions as ‘mind viruses’ – and her work has led her to some startling conclusions about the ‘self’. Namely that the self doesn’t really exist!

What Blackmore proposes instead is a ‘selfplex’, a confluence of memes – effectively a gigantic, fused schema – which controls our brains.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

to create an illusion of ‘I’ – the conscious awareness we call ‘self’.
No such thing as self?!!? I, as I, don’t exist?!!? Pretty radical stuff!

To make sense of Susan Blackmore’s ideas, we need to get to grips with some technical concepts and language – jargon!

Put very simply, memes are ideas which ‘infect’ our brains. They can be picked up from books, television, radio, movies and other human beings – either through speech or behaviour – see Fig 4. In short, any medium capable of containing and transmitting ideas. When ‘infections’ are successful, the memes are internalised as schemas. Schemas are cognitive constructs inside our heads – effectively any organised packet of information, whether recognised consciously or not.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13}The term ‘schema’ was probably first used by the great Eighteenth Century German philosopher Emmanuel Kant – see: ‘Critique de la Raison Pure’ – Emmanuel Kant/Norman Kemp Smith (trans) (St Martins Press, 1929; originally published 1781. Its meaning in modern Psychology was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by the likes of Frenchman Jean Piaget – see: ‘Sur Un Caractère Frappant du Langage Enfantin’ - Jean Piaget & Valentine Chatenay in L’éducateur: Organe de la Société Pédagogique de la Suisse Romande #59 (1923) and the Briton, Sir Frederick Bartlett – see: ‘Remembering: a Study in Experimental & Social Psychology’ (Cambridge University Press, 1932).

‘Meme’ was created by Richard Dawkins for his book, ‘The Selfish Gene’ (Oxford University Press, 1976), to postulate that ideas effectively use humans to replicate in the same way that genes do. (Hence, the gene-meme rhyme.) There is so much overlap in meaning between schema and meme that the terms can be – and frequently are! – used interchangeably. Blackmore, for example, never uses schema once in ‘The Meme Machine’ but talks about memes forming biologically-based structures in the brain. Some psychologists discount memes as merely ‘cultural schemas ’. However, others see subtle differences. One argument would see memes as being contained outside human brains in, for example, books and movies. If the books remain unread and the movies unseen, the memes – the ideas – are still there; they are just not able to replicate. (See: ‘The Evolving Self’ - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Harper Collins, 1993).) On the other hand, a cultural schema – a shared understanding – cannot exist without the same schema being based in more than one brain; hence, replication. Moreover, it would seem that human babies are born with certain innate schemas – for example, newborn babies just know to suck (a sucking schema); whereas memes have to be transmitted to us as ‘mind viruses’. (There is an argument that the so-called ‘innate schemas’ – such as the sucking schema are, in fact, instinctive reflexes without cognitive construct. However, this is getting into semantic differentiations beyond the intent of this book.)

To differentiate and allow me to use the terms to maximum effectiveness, I have chosen to treat the meme as the idea external to the recipient human and the schema as the internalised concept.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Critically – especially in light of our discussion of Dualism – schemas have a biological base in that they form part of the actual physical neural structure of our brains.

The experiments and observations of the early British neurologists Sir Henry Head & Gordon Morgan Holmes were critical in developing this line of investigation. They established that loss of sensory signalling from a body part such as an arm did not destroy belief (schema) that the body part was still there. (This, in part at least, explains Phantom Limb Syndrome\(^\text{14}\).) However, certain lesions in the cerebral cortex could result in non-recognition of a fully-functioning body part.\(^\text{15}\)

Memories, like beliefs, are schematic. In the 1930s the renowned brain surgeon Wilder Penfield applied small electrical jolts from electrodes on the outer surface of the exposed temporal lobes – see Fig 1. He discovered this resulted in his patients reliving distant memories in vibrant detail.\(^\text{16}\)

More recently neurobiologists like Peña de Ortiz are pursuing the promising hypothesis that long-term memories are incorporated into the DNA, stored in altered genes.\(^\text{17}\) If such altered genes are passed on, then that might go some way to validating the ‘race memory’ and ‘collective unconscious’ theories of the hugely influential Dr Carl Gustav Jung\(^\text{18}\).

The implications of the line of investigation Henry Head developed are huge. It means that schemas – the internalised concepts – are material. Coupled with our knowledge that thinking is associated with activity in the frontal lobe and emotional response with activity in the amygdala, it lends considerable weight to Blackmore’s concept of the selfplex.

\(^{14}\) Phantom Limb Syndrome is a long-recognised condition where amputees continue to experience sensation in a lost arm or leg. The effect can last years after the amputation has taken place.

\(^{15}\) See: ‘A Human Experiment in Nerve Division’ – William Halse Rivers & Henry Head in Brain #31 (1908) and ‘Sensory Disturbances from Cerebral Lesions’ – Henry Head & Gordon Morgan Holmes in Brain #34 (1911).

\(^{16}\) ‘Somatic Motor & Sensory Representation in the Cerebral Cortex of Man as Studied by Electrical Stimulation’ – Wilder Penfield & Edwin Boldrey in Brain #60/4 (1937).


Fig 4: memes in, new schemas formed or old schemas amended, memes out
Her argument about the illusion of ‘I’ is that we learn the concept of I, myself by being infected with the memes of others who are also carrying around selfplexes in their heads.

In other words, Blackmore contends there is no real self beyond a biological machine, with a ‘mind’ of physiologically-embedded concepts. The conscious awareness we call ‘I’ is really just a cohesive set of ideas and behaviour programmes – the selfplex. Amongst those ideas is the very idea of self and the idea that ‘I’ has choices in behaviour.

So, ‘you’ don’t exist and ‘I’ don’t exist. We are just (individually different) clumps of ideas that add up to a sense of ‘self’. The closest Blackmore gets to Reber & Reber is ‘self as synthesis, self as an organised, personalised whole’ (definition 4).

If all this sounds a little far fetched...well, stick with it. The concept has definite advantages!

After all ideas change and can be changed, as we shall see when we look more closely at schemas and memes in the next chapter.

We’ve said there is little compelling evidence for the likes of Ken Wilber at one extreme (self is related to the existence of intangible spirit); so is there compelling evidence for Blackmore at the other extreme (‘I’ is nothing more than the confluence of memes turned into the schemas of selfplex)?

The answer is that both arguments are scientifically unfalsifiable. Blackmore can no more disprove ‘self’ than Wilber can prove the existence of ‘spirit’. (In fairness, Wilber actually doesn’t try to evidence ‘spirit’; for him, it’s a taken-for-granted presupposition.) Lack of hard evidence for the existence of something doesn’t disprove its existence; it simply means its existence can’t be proved at that moment in time.

So there might indeed be an integral self - even a spiritual self!

However, as I have said, the concept of the ‘selfplex’ has distinct advantages over the concept of the ‘integral self’.

If it does exist, can the integral self, that deepest me, be changed? If someone is intrinsically ‘good’; can they go ‘bad’? If someone is intrinsically ‘evil’, is there a possibility they could become a saint? Since science can’t evidence an integral self, the answer has to be: we don’t really know. We can only surmise and try to draw conclusions from observations of people who do appear to have changed.

However, if we take the selfplex view, then change may well be possible.

So, if there are things about your attitudes and behaviours that you don’t like, if they are the results of memes internalised as schemas, then it is likely they can be altered for the better.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

For the purpose of enabling understanding and change, I will take the selfplex view in the rest of this book. I certainly don’t discount the possibility that there might be a ‘spiritual self’ underneath (behind?) all this. However, I will not consider it much, though, as we have nothing other than the most subjective reporting to understand it.

Working through the selfplex, we can deal with how people’s beliefs about the spiritual affect them. What this approach can’t do is to deal with spirit and soul directly other than as memes.
2. The Nature of Ideas

To further our understanding of our self – our selves? – and the concept of the selfplex – we need to understand more about the nature of schemas and memes.

Dr Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a leading thinker in memetics, has made the point that, for memes to be effective, they must be internalised.\(^{19}\)

So, let’s start with the internalisation process….

As an example, the meme (cultural idea) of one part of our species is male and the other female, each with distinctive sexual characteristics could be internalised into the schema (internal belief) of I am a man/woman with male/female sexual characteristics while members of the opposite sex have different female/male sexual characteristics. In other words, we hold schematic distinctions such as men have more body hair, greater upper body strength and a penis-testes set for reproduction while women have breasts, more pronounced hips and a vagina-womb-ovaries set for reproduction. These schematic distinctions come from being told (memes) what constitutes a man and what constitutes a woman.

Memes infecting our brains enable us to learn about our world. For example, the meme of a standard chair is an object with four legs holding up a flat seat and an angled support for the back. That contains some different information to the meme of a stool is an object with three or four legs holding up a flat seat. These become schemas which enable us to differentiate between different types of seats.

As well as information about tangible things such as biology and furniture, memes spread ideas about romance, family, parenting, politics, fashion, religious beliefs, mental health, diet, etc, etc. In short, memes influence just about every aspect of what it is to be human.

Love is a meme. The Beatles made great music is a meme. Smart clothes is a meme. Smart is a meme. Clothes is a meme. Depression, as description of a weather system, is a meme. Weather system is a meme. Weather is a meme. System is a meme. Depression, as a description of a mental state, is a meme. Mental state is a meme. Mental is a meme. State is a meme. Schema is a meme. Meme is a meme.

And, if you take this in and you believe it, then meme is a schema!

Our language is full of memes – as indeed are all languages. *Language* is a meme!

But what about behaviour and communication that doesn’t involve language?

In actual fact, we are absorbing memes even before we acquire language. Infants start imitating some behaviours from a fairly early age. Humans usually walk before they can talk!

The jump in our discussion from languageable ideas to non-language-dependent behaviour is important. Memes are in actions as well as words!

Nothing illustrates this more than the meaning (schemas) people make from the memes in each other’s body language. When it comes to communicating our state of mind and the way we feel, body language is estimated by Dr Ray Birdswhistell to account for up to 90% of what we communicate.\(^{20}\)

Look at the man and the woman in Fig 5…

What would you infer about their emotional state from their body language? Possibly that the woman is angry and defensive while the man is either genuinely carefree or making a show of it? (The left ankle crossed at the right knee is the giveaway that the man might be experiencing tension.)

The meaning you make from these two is not a 90% communication in body language; it is 100%; no words have been spoken!

What would you infer from the man in Fig 6? The memes in his body language would be internalised by most people as either *tired* or *troubled* or both.

Moreover, in processing terms, we tend to accept the memes we see more than the memes we hear much of the time.

Say you come home to find your partner slumped in the chair. Their head is lowered, arms are crossed on their chest and legs are crossed at

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the ankles, with the knees close together – a little like the woman in Fig 5. What does that tell you?

Rather than silently creep away, most people make the mistake of asking their partner: “What’s the matter?” According to renowned body language expert Allan Pease, if your partner is typical, then more than 80% of the time, they will answer: “Nothing!” – or words to that effect.21

What would you believe: what you heard or what you see? Most people tend to believe what they see more than what they hear.

Shades of that old proverb, actions speak louder than words!

Memes can also be found in tone of voice. The likes of Birdwhistell and Pease reckon up to 30% of emotional meaning can be inferred from vocal tones.

When memes containing instructions on how to behave become internalised, they are known as script schemas. Script schemas tell us what to do.

Stop reading for a few seconds and think about how you enter a restaurant and order food.

Your script will go something like this…

- Enter the restaurant and wait to be seated;
- Follow the waiter to your table and sit;
- Accept the menus the waiter offers you;

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

- Respond to the waiter’s invitation to order a drink while choosing your food;
- Examine the menu;
- Have your choices ready by the time the waiter returns;
- Act a little apologetically if you haven’t decided by the time the waiter returns;
- Ask the waiter any queries you have about dishes on the menu;
- Give the waiter your choices and any additional information required – such as how you want your steak cooking;
- Give the waiter back the menus.

How similar was the behaviour script in your head?²²

You weren’t born with that script in your head. It got there through memes that entered your head from you being told what to do by ‘important others’ – parents, teachers, teenage peers, etc. Memes that got into your head from you observing others – and whether they were rewarded or punished for their actions. Memetic behaviour that is rewarded is much more likely to be absorbed and imitated.

It was Dr Albert Bandura, greatest of the Social Learning Theorists, who identified the criticality of the value you place on someone who influences you. He also termed watching others being punished or rewarded for (memetic) behaviour you might imitate ‘Vicarious Reinforcement’.²³

How precise this schematic control can be is reflected in what we do in the restaurant when we want the waiter to come to our table – but they are carrying out other tasks. The eminently practical thing to do would be to call the waiter over in a voice loud enough to carry across the restaurant. However, the memes of polite behaviour in restaurants do not allow that – and we tend to fear the punishment that we would be meted out to us by others (disapproving looks and comments) if we transgressed that meme. Instead our script schemas have us making discreet signals (like a slight wave of the hand) in the waiter’s direction or trying to ‘catch’ their eye with our eye.

Script schemas inform much of our body language.

²² ‘Scripts in Memory for Text’ – G H Bower, J B Black & T J Turner in Cognitive Psychology #11 (1979) established that script schemas such as the one for ordering a meal are commonly shared.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

The Brain as a Battleground

Susan Blackmore views the human brain as a memetic battleground.\(^{24}\)

From birth to death our lives are full of memes competing to become our schemas. Memes are in what is said to us and in what we observe; they’re on television, the radio, the movies, books, on billboards in the streets and screensavers on our computers.

Some memes are obvious. Some are less overt. For example, my car has a CD player, genuine leather seats and is rather spacious while yours makes do with a cassette player, vinyl seats and people have to squeeze into it. On the face of it, a factual comparison. But there are memes of relativity of wealth and one-upmanship implied in the comparison. And what about the use of ‘makes do’?!?

The more memes are clustered together into themed and sequenced memeplexes that ‘add up’/make sense, the more powerful they are.

Also, the more the new memes we are exposed to relate to existing schemas we hold, the more likely they are to be accepted and internalised into schemas.

An example of this at a cultural level is The Sun newspaper’s character assassination of Labour’s Neil Kinnock in the last days of the 1992 general election and its encouragement to its readers to vote Conservative. The faithful readers of Britain’s most popular daily newspaper took on board those memes from the paper they read most days and duly retained John Major as Prime Minister. The power of the memes put out was reflected in the paper’s infamous post-election headline, “It was The Sun wot won it!”.\(^{25}\) No wonder New Labour worked so hard 1995-1997 to get Sun-owner Rupert Murdoch to change sides. And no wonder Tony Blair reputedly went into a funk in 2005 when he thought Murdoch might switch back to the Tories!

At a personal level the (often unconscious) acceptance of memes which fit existing schemas and rejection of memes which don’t is reflected, for example, in the way people who feel positive about life tend to absorb ideas and experiences that reinforce their positive views. Correspondingly, people who feel life is a struggle often do struggle to cope.

There is, in fact, a genetic element to people having positive or negative views of life – which we will consider in the next chapter – but memetic reinforcement is a very powerful factor.

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\(^{24}\) The Meme Machine’ – Susan Blackmore (Oxford University Press, 1999).

\(^{25}\) See: ‘Was it The Sun wot won it?’ – Martin Linton (Oxford University Press, 1995).
Different memes can and do get internalised, sometimes adjusting and occasionally destroying existing schemas. Otherwise we might never change!

However, the more different the new memes are from the existing schematic pattern, the more unlikely they are to be internalised without significant dissonance.

We will consider the process of change in detail in Chapters 8, 9 and 10.

So which memes will win on the battleground of your brain? - and how does that affect your sense of ‘self’?

If different memes do take hold as new schemas – particularly in relation to how I see myself - then something in the selfplex will change.

The great news, then, is that, if there is something schematic about myself that I don’t like, then ‘I’ can be changed. Perhaps not easily; but it is possible. New memes can change existing schemas.

For example, most very young children in the Western world believe in Father Christmas.

We infect them with the Santa meme at a very early age. After a few Christmases, the resulting schema is so strong that the Santa is a myth meme is then resisted vigorously. We usually try to infect them with Santa is a myth when they are in the pre-puberty stage, after 6-7 years of reinforcing their Santa brings me presents on Christmas Eve schema. Tears, tantrums and outright rejection – often of the messenger as well as the message! - frequently characterise first responses to the Santa-is-a-myth meme.

Yet hardly any teenagers believe in Father Christmas. The belief – the schema – to which there was once such emotional attachment, has been destroyed.

This raises the issue of whether all memes are ‘truthful’ and whether the schemas we form from them can be relied upon. After all, if the Father Christmas we believed in so strongly turns out not to be true…?

Dr Alfred Korzybski famously wrote: “The map is not the territory”26 – long adapted by Dr Richard Bandler & Dr John Grinder as a key presupposition in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)27. A map

is a graphical representation – a picture or drawing – of territory. In other words, it is not the territory itself. This is generally taken to mean that the schemas (maps) we form and hold in our heads are not reality (territory) but merely map-like representations of reality.

Consider this analogy: ITV and BBC both show the FA Cup Final\(^{28}\). The two programme directors will position their cameras in different places around the football ground. They will cut from camera to camera in different order at different times. If you were able to watch both channels at the same time, you would see two different versions (maps) of the same game (territory). From the angle shown on one channel, you might see one player definitely foul another; on the second channel, it looked like the two players were jostling for the ball – but without any ‘dirty play’.

If you were asked your opinion, it would depend on which version (map) you had had access to.

One of the great complaints of football referees is that the television commentators go over the footage taken from all the different angles and, with the benefit of multiple and superior maps, tear the referees’ decisions to pieces. Yet we can only assume that the poor referee makes the best decisions he can with the map in his head at the time.

The accuracy of any map is always open to question. Compare land maps of the Sixteenth Century to modern maps and it becomes clear how technology has enabled us to make better and more accurate maps. However, even though maps made from satellite photography and other highly-advanced imaging techniques are so much more accurate, their makers know they are still not fully 100% accurate.

Correspondingly, we can question the accuracy of any schematic map, particularly if it is leading us ‘astray’ and causing problems. Exposure to ‘psychological technology’ may enable us to form better and more accurate mental maps.

The more you recognise the influence of schemas and memes on your self and are able to question their accuracy, the more you are in a position to undergo change. That very insight opens you up to new memes!

\(^{28}\)For non-UK readers, ITV and BBC are the two leading television channels and the Football Association Cup Final is the leading ‘knockout competition’ in football (soccer) in England & Wales.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

**Overcoming Limiting Beliefs?**

We hurl memes about. Our language and our behaviour are full of memes.

So often we hurl memes about without thought of the consequences. Some of the memes we expose others to are rejected. Some turn into schemas that positively enable the recipient. Some turn into schemas that have debilitating and sometimes even traumatic effects.

We need, as much as humanly possible, to be more deliberate in what we say and do to others – especially to those who are more memetically vulnerable (suggestible). For example, younger children, teenagers, those of a melancholic disposition, those with mental health problems and those who are going through significant challenging experiences in their lives.

I have one client, ‘Janice’, who has low self-esteem and a strong tendency to filter for memes that reinforce her sense of worthlessness. Consequently, I have to weigh everything I say to her for fear it will be twisted into yet more ‘evidence’ of her failings.

We need to be careful not just about speech but also our behaviour in front of such people – especially those who are likely to use us as role models. We must ensure the memes we expose people to are ones that will help them progress positively through life.

As we shall see later, that doesn’t mean we have to be ‘nice’ to others all the time. Sometimes challenges are not only appropriate but outrightly necessary! It does mean that the memes we expose others to, at the very least, will not have a negative reinforcing effect.

We need to be aware and, if possible, to deliberate before we speak and do.

So, are all your schemas benign?

Or, do you hold schemas that work against you? For example: *I’m worthless. I’m not good enough. I’m ugly. I can’t do X – eg: speak in public. I’m no good at Y – eg: initiating conversations - so there’s no point in trying.*

Do you hold schemas that poison your relationships with others? For example: *You can’t trust people. Love doesn’t last. When it comes down to it, people are only out for number one.*

In NLP they are known as ‘limiting beliefs’. In *Cognitive Psychology*, Dr Aaron T Beck has labelled them ‘maladaptive schemas’.

Schemas which limit you. Which stop you doing what you want to

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29 *Depression: Clinical, Experimental & Theoretical Aspects* – Aaron T Beck (Hoeber, 1967).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

do. Which stop you being who you want to be. Which can, as Aaron Beck has shown, in certain circumstances, lead to Depression.

If your life and your relationships are hindered – blighted, even! – by such schemas, then be cheered – there is hope for you! As we noted a little earlier, it is likely you can have your schemas changed. Some schemas, you will be able to change yourself just by challenging them and exposing yourself to new memes.

To relate an incident from my own casebook….

Several years ago I was asked to counsel a company’s recently-appointed sales manager, ‘Joe’. His direction of his sales team was hampered by the unhelpful belief that he couldn’t speak in public. Joe was confident with them on a one-to-one basis but he wouldn’t address them as a group. He saw no point in training in any form of presentation skills because he was convinced he still wouldn’t be able to do it. (Or, to rephrase this, his selfplex contained the schema that he simply could not speak in public.)

To add to the pressure, Joe’s boss also wanted him to make presentations to customers.

I used an NLP technique called Meta-Modelling (developed by Bandler & Grinder; and which we will talk about more in Chapter 15) to explore Joe’s beliefs about himself and public speaking.

After learning that his belief meant he had never ever addressed a group before, I asked him: “So what evidence do you have that you actually can’t speak in public?” Joe blinked nervously in realisation and said: “None.”

I then challenged him with: “If you’ve no evidence that you can’t, then presumably you can. So what’s stopping you?” Joe said: “Nothing. Just fear? I suppose I should give it a go.”

I carried out Circle of Excellence\(^{30}\), an NLP resourcing tool, with Joe and he spoke to his sales team the following day. The last time I had contact with that company, Joe was getting better and better at presentations.

Unfortunately not all maladaptive schemas collapse so readily as Joe’s did.

Many, particularly if the schematic construction involves a deep-rooted emotional element, will require the use of some kind of therapeutic intervention. We’ll consider the role of emotions in

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\(^{30}\)The Circle of Excellence exercise was developed by Judith DeLozier & John Grinder and documented in ‘Turtles All the Way Down’ (Grinder DeLozier & Associates, 1987).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

schematic structure in Chapter 4.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has made the point that one of the key benefits of memetics – the study of memes – is that, by becoming consciously aware of how memes influence us, we are able to take action to shape that influence.

In this chapter we’ve established the criticality of schemas and that ‘memes’, as a metaphor for ideas spreading and replicating in gene-like fashion is a very workable meme (concept)! Memes – ideas – develop brains.31

We will talk more in Chapter 13 of how belief systems form and what you can do about those schemas which work against you leading a fulfilling life.

In the meantime I suggest you draw up a 2-column list. In the first column, write down the most unhelpful beliefs you have about yourself, ‘important others’ (partner, child, boss, etc) and the world around you.

Then explore each belief for evidence. Can you find any? How solid and reliable is what you discover? You just may find that some beliefs – like Joe’s! – simply melt away when you can’t substantiate them.

Next, in the second column, opposite each unhelpful belief – obviously excluding any which have ‘disappeared’! – write down a belief you would like to have in its place.

Simply by considering the replacement beliefs (new memes) you may find the old ones (existing schemas) weakening.

Don’t worry at this stage if you can’t fathom a replacement belief for every one you want to get rid of - and clearly there’s not a lot we can do

31Susan Blackmore’s postulation that the development of human intelligence has been driven by memetic replication is gaining more and more credence with Evolutionary theorists right around the world. Her theory is that the need to process and manipulate more complex ideas has driven the development of the brain, aided by females sexually selecting more intelligent males. (The concept of intelligence as a sexually-selected trait has been around for a few years now; eg: ‘The Red Queen’ – Matt Ridley (Penguin, 1993)). Blackmore’s ideas also develop the proposals of such Evolutionary psychologists as Steven Pinker, namely that the development of language was the key driver in the development of intelligence – see: ‘The Language Instinct’ (Morrow, 1994).” As Blackmore wrote in ‘The Meme Machine’, “Talking spreads memes. In other words, the reason we talk so much is…to spread our memes.” (p84, Oxford University Press, 1999).

The crux of Blackmore’s argument is that memetic replication drives genetic development: more complex ideas need bigger and better brains!
Knowing Me, Knowing You

about physical features. If you’re a woman who wants bigger breasts, then you need a plastic surgeon, not a psychologist! And even cosmetic surgery has yet to figure out how to make short people tall!!

However, we can give you keys to feeling better about your looks – along with many other aspects of your life.

Keep your list with you as you read through ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’. You’ll be asked to refer to it from time to time.
3. What about Temperament?

So, after all we discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, if we leave out discussion of the ‘spiritual self’, is there any element of me that isn’t just a selfplex of internalised concepts?

Personally I’d like to think there is somehow a real, integral me - whether it’s anything to do with the ‘Spiritual’ or not. A ‘self’ that fits with Arthur & Emily Reber’s ‘self as a hypothetical entity’\(^\text{32}\). Unfortunately, looked at objectively, as Susan Blackmore has done\(^\text{33}\), its existence can’t be proven – at least not by the science we have available to us in the first decade of the 21\(^\text{st}\) Century.

There is, however, a glimmer of there being something non-memetic in my makeup: temperament.

For more than 20 years Dr Jerome Kagan has been a major champion for the idea that, at the most basic level, temperament is innate. In other words, we are born cheery, moody, shy, outgoing, etc. Kagan infers this because these basic aspects of an infant’s personality are clearly distinguishable from a very, very early age. He also stresses that they can profoundly influence how well mother and baby attach to each other.\(^\text{34}\) (This is a key point we shall return to in Chapter 22.)

However, Kagan’s studies of very young infants, while critical in one sense, are merely providing observational validation to a substantial body of evidence supporting the view that temperament is largely innate.

For example, a key longitudinal study of 141 children from birth to 14 years by Drs Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess & Herbert Birch showed that temperamental categorisations – eg: ‘moody’, ‘outgoing’ – assigned shortly after birth sustained by and large throughout their childhoods.\(^\text{35}\) Basically, their temperaments stayed the same.

A number of twin studies – not least those by Dr Hans J Eysenck, of whom more very shortly – have tended to support the notion of genetic similarity leading to temperamental similarity.\(^\text{36}\) And, from a large


\(^{35}\) *The Origin of Personality* – Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess & Herbert G Birch in *Scientific American* #223 (1970).

Knowing Me, Knowing You

cross-cultural study, David Buss, the celebrated *Evolutionary* psychologist, has put forward the notion that, as temperamental types appear consistently in many different cultures, essentially temperament must be biologically based rather than learned.37

We certainly *know* some temperamental dispositions are influenced by biological abnormality. For example, males with a double Y on the 23rd pairing of (sex) chromosomes – ie: XYY – tend to be more aggressive than the ‘normal’ male (XY).38

However, the argument in modern science for temperament being essentially innate goes back at least to the 1920s when Carl Gustav Jung proposed that the tendency towards Introversion or Extroversion was biologically based39.

Extroverts tend to be outgoing, action-oriented seekers of stimulation and are often loud ‘life of the party’ types. In contrast, introverts tend to be contemplative and shy, dislike loud and noisy situations with lots of people, and can be perceived as aloof.

Jung based his proposition on the observation that extroverts and introverts arose in the same family, under the same mothering. Since the environmental conditions were pretty much the same for both introverted and extroverted children, he reasoned the cause of their temperamental differences was that they were born that way.

So think about yourself and perhaps others you know well across a variety of situations – eg: your partner or a work colleague you see socially. Introverted or extroverted? Consistent across the different situations? Are there variations – eg: more shy in one context than another – and, if so, how great are the variations?

**Dimensions of Personality**

Hans Eysenck was one of the towering figures in psychological thought during the second half of the 20th Century. He made Jung’s Introversion-Extroversion continuum one axis of his *Dimensions of Personality*.

R C Nichols (University of Texas Press, 1976). The critical importance of the twin studies lies in their consistently finding greater similarity between identical twins than between fraternal twins. (Identical – or monozygotic – twins are from the same egg and share 100% the same genes; fraternal– or dizygotic – twins are from different eggs and have only 50% of their genes in common.)

37 ‘Sex Differences in Human Mate Preferences: Evolutionary Hypotheses tested in 37 Cultures’ – David M Buss in *Behavioral & Brain Sciences* #12 (1989).

38 The first documented report of the XYY condition was ‘An XYY Human Male’ – Avery A Sandberg, G F Koepf, T Ishihara & T S Hauschka in *The Lancet* #2 (1961).

39 ‘Psychological Types’ – Carl Gustav Jung (Routledge, 1923).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

*Personality* – see Fig 7 for a basic version of the original 2 Dimensions.

The other original axis of what can be considered the most-advanced model of biologically-derived personality is the tendency towards Neuroticism – sometimes called the Stability-Instability axis. The Neuroticism axis measures the extent of someone’s nervous disposition, from being calm and collected at one extreme to highly reactive and nervous at the other.

![Diagram of the two-dimensional personality model](image)

*Fig 7: 2 Dimensions of Personality (basic version; from the work of Hans J Eysenck)*

The intersection of the two axes on Eysenck’s model provides a spectrum of temperamental characteristics – cycling from excitable and changeable in the upper right, through responsive and easygoing in the bottom right and peaceful and even-tempered in the bottom left to pessimistic and sober in the upper left.

Eysenck was a research psychologist of enormous standing in his

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own time and carried out a number of projects to develop his theories around the concept of personality being based essentially on an individual’s biology.41

To understand his construct, we need to get to grips with his applications of Biology. So, some hard science…!

Eysenck hypothesised that people high in Neuroticism have a more responsive sympathetic branch of the body’s autonomic nervous system than others. (The sympathetic branch is responsible for the physiological arousal of our body when we are excited, alarmed and/or stressed - eg: the liver releasing sugar for energy, the digestive system slowing down, the pupils enlarging to admit more light and the adrenal glands releasing adrenaline and noradrenaline to prepare the muscles for action. This is often termed the ‘fight or flight’ response.)

Some people remain very calm during emergencies; some people feel considerable fear or other strong emotions; and some are terrified by even very minor incidents.

Eysenck suggested that people tending towards the Unstable end of the Neuroticism axis had a problem of ‘sympathetic hyperactivity’ in the amygdala, the hypothalamus and the hippocampus – see Fig 2. These organs in the brain’s sub-cortical limbic system were originally identified by Dr James W Papez as the principal mediators of bodily arousal associated with emotion.42 More recently the pioneering work of Dr Joseph LeDoux has emphasised the critical responses of the amygdala to alarming sensory stimuli. It stimulates the hypothalamus to create the physiological syndrome we call ‘fight or flight’.43

From observations of timidity in domestic cats, Jerome Kagan has put forward the notion that this sympathetic hyperactivity is due to having higher levels of noradrenaline which arouse the amygdala,44 So, effectively people high in Neuroticism are born with a limbic vicious circle: the amygdala is easily aroused by an excess of noradrenaline; and, when aroused, it stimulates the hypothalamus to make more noradrenaline!

Having an over-responsive sympathetic branch would, Eysenck

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reasoned, make such people more liable to develop neurotic disorders such as panic attacks.

He also noted that stimulation of the cerebral cortex – see Fig 1 – by the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) – affected inhibition and, therefore, travel along the Neuroticism axis. (The ARAS is located in the core of the brain stem, between the medulla and the midbrain – see Fig 2.)

However, Eysenck focussed more on the ARAS’ effect on Introversion and Extroversion.

Eysenck found evidence that introverts tend to have higher levels of excitatory arousal in the brain and central nervous system than do extroverts. Consequently, introverts find additional arousal from sensory perception overstimulating. There is so much buzzing about inside their heads that they find that a lot of information from outside just too much – sensory overload, if you will! Consequently they tend to want to close down information from the outside by seeking quiet. That way they can deal just with what’s going on inside their heads.

By contrast strong extroverts are chronically understimulated inside their heads and tend to seek external stimulation as a means of raising the internal arousal level.

These differences Eysenck attributed primarily to activity of the ARAS which is associated with alertness, concentration and learning. So how much stimulation the cortex receives from inside will affect how much you want or don’t want external stimulation.

His work on twin studies suggested that the tendency towards Introversion or Extroversion was at the very least 50% inherited – and possibly much more!

**Psychoticism and Personality**

Eysenck did eventually introduce a third axis of ‘Psychoticism’ as an additive theory of neurosis. This measured an innate susceptibility to psychotic behaviour – which he linked both to creativity and criminality.45

By **psychotic behaviour**, Eysenck meant behaviours commonly found among psychotics. (Psychotics are people generally considered to be mentally disturbed to the degree of having lost contact with reality.) However, someone with high levels of Psychoticism is not necessarily a psychotic or going to become one. They are likely, though, to be characterised by an impersonal attitude, coldness, lack of empathy,

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inconsideration, egocentricity, impulsivity, recklessness, aggression, hostility, anger, antisocial behaviour, a tough-minded attitude and sometimes bizarre behaviours. Their sexual activities are more likely to be non-discriminatory, promiscuous, and perhaps forceful.

Those with low levels of Psychoticism are empathetic, unselfish, altruistic, warm, peaceful and pleasant, though they can be less decisive socially. Not the kind of people to take control of a situation!

In effect, the introduction of the third axis extracted some of the more extreme elements of the original 2 Dimensions model – see Fig 7 – principally from the Introvert/Stable (low Psychoticism) and Extravert/Unstable (high Psychoticism) quadrants. These then reappeared on the Psychoticism axis, giving us a 3 Dimensions model of temperamental personality – see Fig 846.

A key of Psychoticism, for Eysenck, was the ability – or lack of it – to control impulsivity. Thus, the bottom end of the Psychoticism scale is often termed ‘Impulse Control’.

Eysenck attributed high Psychoticism to elevated levels of androgens (male sex hormones) – particularly testosterone. Research has consistently found that, generally speaking, more men score higher on the Psychoticism axis than do women. Some commentators have labelled the extremes of this axis ‘Masculine’ (high Psychoticism) and ‘Feminine’ (low Psychoticism). There are clearly parallels with Carl Gustav Jung’s notion of everyone having a masculine and feminine side – ie: degrees of masculinity and femininity in their personality47.

The concept of Psychoticism can be considered to lend support to some later theories - such as the Group-Splitting Hypothesis48 – on the development of forms of Schizophrenia, a group of mental illnesses sharing a central feature of dissociation of thoughts and feelings and often accompanied by thought disturbances, delusions and bizarre

46 Graphic adapted with permission from http://www.a2zpsychology.com/psychology_guide/mpi.htm
48 See: ‘Evolutionary Psychiatry’ – A Stevens & J Price (Routledge, 1996). The Group-Splitting Hypothesis proposes that schizoid tendencies (usually involving creativity and innovation) often found in leaders would, in our distant evolutionary past, have enabled visionary/’crazy’ individuals to lead breakaway groups. Periodic breakaways were ‘adaptive’ as they would help keep tribes at sustainable levels in prehistoric hunter-gatherer Environments.
hallucinations.\textsuperscript{49}

\textbf{Fig 8: 3 Dimensions of Personality (adapted from the work of Hans J Eysenck; graphic copyright © 2002 a2zpsychology.com – all rights reserved)}

Perhaps more importantly substantial evidence has emerged over the years of some people having a genetic predisposition to develop psychotic illnesses\textsuperscript{50}. In other words, some people are born with a greater

\textsuperscript{49}For the layman: ‘Schizophrenia’ is not to be confused – as it commonly is! – with Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). Although, confusingly, \textit{Schizophrenia} comes from the Greek, meaning splitting in the mind, the splitting in question is between cognitive and emotional functions. More on Schizophrenia in Chapter 12.

\textsuperscript{50}The genetic factor is usually estimated through concordance rates – the percentage of related persons who share similar traits or diseases. The most telling concordance rates are for monozygotic twins. For example, Irving I Gottesman established a concordance rate of 48\% for Schizophrenia among monozygotic twins, compared with just 17\% among dizygotic twins – see ‘\textit{Schizophrenia Genesis: the Origins of Madness}’ (W H Freeman, 1991). M G
likelihood of developing a serious mental illness.

However, over the last 15-20 years there has been an increasing preference in Psychiatry to talk about specific disorders, rather than distinguish between neurosis (a distortion of reality) and psychosis (a break with reality)\textsuperscript{51}. Perhaps because of this, Eysenck’s Psychoticism axis has generally failed to achieve quite the same level of acceptance as much of his other work.

By contrast Eysenck’s original 2 Dimensions model still features in almost any learned discussion of personality theories; and psychometric questionnaires to measure tendencies along its axes are in regular use by many psychologists.

However, as we shall see, working our way through ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’, the Psychoticism concept explains a lot when it comes to certain extremes of behaviour.

In assessing the importance of Eysenck’s work, certainly the Introversion-Extroversion axis is reflected in Kagan’s Inhibited-Uninhibited continuum while the potential contribution of genetic factors to a number of mental disorders – from the ‘neurotic’ to the ‘psychotic’ – is now clearly established.

So, from Jung to Eysenck and beyond, the bit of self that is our basic temperament we can assume to be largely innate, biological and, therefore, ‘real me’.

To get a ‘measure’ of your real me, you may wish to take the ‘Eysenck Personality MiniTest’ – see Fig 9. This is adapted from a design by Dr C George Boeree of Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania\textsuperscript{52}. (Dr Boeree is a leading provider of online materials for students of academic Psychology.

How do your scores on the Stability-Instability and Introversion-Extroversion axes compare with your thoughts when you look at Fig 7?

However, a word of warning….

Allen found a concordance rate in monozygotics of 40% for Major (Unipolar) Depression and 72% for Manic (Bipolar) Depression; but in dizygotics only 11% for Major Depression and 14% for Manic Depression – see ‘Twin Studies of Affective Illness’ in Archives of General Psychiatry #33 (1976).

\textsuperscript{51}The terms ‘neurosis’ and ‘psychosis’ were dropped from ‘DSM-IV’, the 1994 edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s ‘Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders’, the world’s foremost handbook for psychiatric diagnosis. However, neurosis and psychosis have tended to remain in common parlance, even amongst professionals.

\textsuperscript{52}Adapted with permission from http://www.ship.edu/\%7Ecgboeree/eysenckminitest.html
**Knowing Me, Knowing You**

*Answer the following questions with 5 (very much), 4, 3, 2, or 1 (not at all), then add up the three columns:*

1. Do you have a number of different interests? ____  
2. Do you stop to consider the implications before taking action? ____  
3. Does your mood vary a lot? ____  
4. Do you enjoy talking to others a lot? ____  
5. Would having a lot of debt worry you? ____  
6. Do you sometimes feel really miserable for no apparent reason? ____  
7. Are you concerned with making sure you, yours and your possessions are safe? ____  
8. Are you the ‘life & soul of the party’ type? ____  
9. Does the suffering of children and/or animals upset you greatly? ____  
10. Do you worry much about what you’ve said or done? ____
Knowing Me, Knowing You

11. Are you able to be uninhibited and participate in a lively party?  ____

12. Do you get irritable easily and/or often?  ____

13. Do you like socialising with new people?  ____

14. Do you think taking out life assurance is sensible?  ____

15. Are you sensitive and easily hurt?  ____

TOTAL:  ____  ____  ____

E N P

Scoring:
E:  5 to 10, introverted
    20 to 25, extraverted
N:  15 to 25, neuroticistic
P:  5 to 15, psychoticistic

Fig 9: Eysenck Personality MiniTest (based on the work of Hans J Eysenck; adapted from a design copyright © 1998 C George Boeree, Shippensburg, PA USA – all rights reserved)
As with all questionnaires of this type, the results should not be taken as set in stone. They may not even be that representative of you, as all kinds of factors can lead to inaccurate results. Certainly Dr Boeree regards this version of Eysenck’s test as far too short to have any real significance. Personally I use such questionnaires simply to get people thinking about the application of the theory to their lives, rather than to provide ‘hard assessments’.

What if I’m an Unstable Introvert?

Let’s put together what we’ve discussed so far in Chapter 3 with what we learned in Chapters 1 and 2.

We may indeed have an ‘integral self’ – a spiritual self, even! – but this is unprovable in scientific terms and, therefore, beyond the scope of this book. What we can say is ‘self’ appears to be the schematic selfplex ‘sitting’ atop a basic set of temperamental dispositions – see Fig 10.

We know, from our discussion of schemas and memes in Chapter 2, that our brain is a memetic battleground and that the selfplex is changeable.

But what about our temperament?

If we are born with a tendency to be an introvert, could we ever become extraverted? If we’re born Unstable, are we doomed to be
neurotic?

For those of us who are born with what we might term ‘unpleasant’ or ‘uncomfortable’ dispositions, the notion that temperament is innate is perhaps not good news.

Worse still: is it a case of God help us! if we score highly on the Psychoticism axis?!!

Firstly, Eysenck argued strongly that a predisposition to either Neuroticism or Psychoticism did not predestine you to mental health problems. It created a vulnerability that made you more likely to develop such problems than those that didn’t have such a predisposition. (To support his argument, he produced significant statistical evidence of people with high scores on his Psychoticism scale who had not developed a full-blown psychosis.)

However, Eysenck was firmly of the view that his axes measured dispositions that were largely biologically-determined – ie: innate. Here we need to understand the word ‘disposition’. Reber & Reber offer the following definition: “...the regularity and consistency of behaviour (more or less) independently of variation and alteration in the environment”

The “more or less” is interesting here because both Eysenck and Jerome Kagan found variations, though relatively minor ones.

So it’s probably accurate to say that it seems temperament doesn’t change much. Even if we’re highly ‘changeable’, we’re likely to be changeable’ across all contexts and circumstances! However, the degree of changeability will vary.

The same possibilities of minor variation for shyness, sociability, moodiness, cheerfulness, etc, etc.

Let’s take shyness. Most people who would describe themselves as ‘shy’ will be a little more shy with certain people and a little less shy with certain other people. Both Eysenck and Kagan attribute these relatively minor variations to learning.

You may learn to act more outgoing if it is rewarding to be more outgoing; but, when not acting, you will have that natural tendency to be on the shy side.

In other words, any one of your temperamental dispositions is not necessarily fixed absolutely. It’s more or less fixed. You can learn to move more or less. It’s probably more helpful to think of temperamental disposition as a very strong predetermined tendency with some capacity for movement.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

So innate temperament can be shifted to some degree via interaction with the external Environment outside of you. Eysenck saw this as a purely behavioural response to conditions in the Environment – emphasising the external perhaps more than Reber & Reber might allow.

However, the work of William Moulton Marston – developer of the DISC concept – provides us with a cognitive take on this temperamental disposition-external Environment interaction.

Marston sees two perceptions – the favourability (what is happening, the ‘Life Conditions’) of the Environment and your power to cope with such an Environment – as influencing behaviours – see Fig 11. Those who see they can take on the Life Conditions and effectively subjugate them will behave actively. Those who see the Life Conditions as threatening will behave more reactively.

His behavioural types – Dominance, Inducement, Submission and Compliance – include both temperamental and schematic/memetic elements. As we shall see, when discussing DISC in more detail in Chapter 10, the line we have drawn between temperamental dispositions and the selfplex – Fig 10 – is perhaps not quite as sharply defined as I have indicated thus far.

From Marston’s work, it would appear that shifts in temperament occur due to interaction with the Environment at a memetic level. Perceptions of the Environment and perceptions of your capacity to cope necessarily involve exposure to external memes and an internal schematic evaluation. (Kagan’s work supports the idea of being influenced by the memes you are exposed to, especially as an infant.)

Thus, for example, shy people tend to be less shy (temperamental state) in an Environment where they feel they belong and are accepted (schematic perception). Boisterous people tend to be more boisterous in an ‘anything-goes’ indulgent atmosphere but will usually try at least to be quieter in a more constrained Environment such as a library or a

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54 ‘Environment’ is given a capital letter here as the lowest of the Neurological Levels – which we shall consider in Chapter 4.
56 Marston’s model was developed by Dr John Geier into the DiSC Inventory which is second only to the Myers-Briggs Typing Inventory (based on the work of Carl Gustav Jung) as the world’s most popular personality psychometric assessment.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Marston came to the conclusion that people adapt their behaviour, depending on their perception of the Environment, but that there is always a stress between their natural and their adapted behaviours. This stress creates a tendency to return to the natural position. Thus, movement is more or less.

Much more research is needed; but it seems that, by working at the level of memes with NLP therapies, Behavioural conditioning, Cognitive and other therapeutic interventions, we can at least help people to manage unhelpful dispositions.

Recently I worked with a lady who tended towards the neurotic. She was always worrying about something or other – the state of her relationship and whether her husband loved her…whether her (adult) daughter was enjoying her holiday…whether her mother would get ill…whether she would remember to get her mother’s medicines…whether she would remember to get everything ready for work in the morning…etc, etc, etc.

After exploring possible causes in her schematic structure – including events in her childhood – I had to come to the conclusion that this was just the way she was. So I gave her some Cognitive affirmation strategies (schematic level) which had a very positive reinforcing effect. That didn’t stop her worrying; but she spent less time worrying – and even less time worrying that she was worrying!

I had succeeded in getting her to nudge herself a bit more towards the centre of the Stability-Instability line.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Avoiding the Lie

Look again at Hans Eysenck’s *Dimensions of Personality* – Fig 7 and Fig 8 – and consider …

 which of the characteristics in the Dimensions describe your temperament(s)?
 how far from the central intersection would you put yourself on the Introversion-Extroversion, the Stability-Instability and the Impulse Control-Psychoticism axes? (You may wish to use your scores from the MiniTest to help you with this; but do remember the ‘health warning’ attached to it!)

Eysenck, with his scoring system for each axis, found that the majority of responses to his questionnaires tended statistically to cluster around the central intersection and to tail off towards the extremes. And it is people, whose temperaments are at the extremes who tend to have more problems in adjusting behaviourally.

So what if you’re out towards the extremes…?

If, as the likes of Eysenck and Jerome Kagan argue, basic temperamental disposition is innate, then it would appear that, short of some form of genetic engineering in the future, there’s not a huge amount we can do about that.

However, certain avenues of psychological growth do offer possibilities of freedom from temperamental dispositions, as we shall see in Chapters 10 and 12.

That said, ‘psychological growth’ is a much misused and abused term; and we need to be very careful in its application.

One of the great untruths put about by many in the world of NLP – including several leading figures who should know better – is that everything about the personality of someone who wants to grow psychologically can be changed. ‘Fixed’, in the vernacular of certain ‘gurus’. However, not everything can be ‘fixed’ in the way they mean. *NLP* does provide some very powerful therapeutic tools for restructuring (schematic) perceptions of experience; but they can’t change a moody disposition into a cheery one.

We can, through various *NLP* therapies, *Behavioural* conditioning, *Cognitive* strategies, etc, give someone more reasons to be cheery and fewer reasons to be moody. We can help them move a little more in a positive direction along one of Eysenck’s axes. But it is a lie to say we can change their basic disposition.

At this point, you might want to look at the list of unhelpful beliefs I suggested you drew up in Chapter 2. Which ones (if any!) describe your temperament – eg: *I am shy* or *I worry a lot*? Asterisk those beliefs which
are clearly grounded in temperament. They will be the most difficult to change. Indeed, it may be a case of managing, rather than changing.

Most of the time, through insight - which is what this book is all about! – you can grow to manage your temperament. Or you can be trained through Behavioural conditioning and Cognitive awareness strategies to manage your temperament. If you need help, don’t hesitate to use a therapist with the level of understanding outlined in these pages.

If, however, your temperamental disposition is threatening to your well-being – eg: you are regularly miserable to the point of suicidal feelings, without there being anything in your Life Conditions or the schematic structure of your selfplex to justify such thoughts and feelings – then you will undoubtedly need significant help to manage such a disposition. That help may well include medication.

We know now that all thought is associated with neuronal activity. What we are unsure of is how to square the fact that thinking causes further changes in chemical actions in our brains but ‘thinking’ is the result of chemical actions in the first place! What we know we can do is inhibit certain moods associated with types of thinking and feeling through the use of medication.

So perhaps some people will need to spend years on a Specific Seratonin Reuptake Inhibitor like fluoxetine (Prozac). So what? Yes, there may be side effects which, in themselves may need managing; but, if the overall benefit is greater than the cost…well, much of life is like that. If Cognitive or NLP-type therapies don’t work very well with self-threatening pre-cognitive dispositions, then better Prozac than misery (or worse) – until something better comes along.

That ‘something better’ may be to do with the kind of psychological growth that frees the individual to some degree from temperament – as we will discuss later.

Now, having considered the importance of schematic/memetic and temperamental influences, it is useful to step back to definition 5 of ‘self’ provided by Reber & Reber: ’self as identity’.
4. Self as Identity

In Chapter 1, we discussed briefly how your self could be different – even “not myself”! – especially in different circumstances and contexts. Self undergoes change.

So now we need to understand how that happens and what it means.

The Neurological Levels model enables us to explore ‘self as identity’ – perhaps put better as ‘selfplex as identity’ - in a particular circumstance or context. The model was developed by Robert Dilts from the work of Gregory Bateson, a leading anthropologist, philosopher and seminal figure in the early development of Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

From Bateson’s work – and especially his Levels of Learning concept, about which more in Chapter 9 – Dilts outlined a hierarchy of 6 levels the mind uses to order its relationship with the world. He then linked these Logical Levels to neurological functions and structures of the brain. Ascending the hierarchy, Dilts asserts that the “...different ‘logical levels’ are a function of different types of neurological organisation, and mobilise successively deeper commitments of neurological ‘circuitry’.”

In fact, some of Dilts’ use of neurology is open to criticism and the supposed ‘logicality’ of the model has been attacked by several influential figures in the world of NLP where it is taught as a key model. Of the critiques of the model, Peter McNab’s is arguably the most sophisticated. However, no one who has worked with the model seems

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60 ‘Steps to an Ecology of Mind’ – Gregory Bateson (Ballentine, 1972). In his concept of Levels of Learning, Bateson reputedly drew inspiration from the great British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell and his concept of Logical Typing.
62 ‘Realigning Neurological Levels – A Reassessment: Some Thoughts on Moving Towards an Integral NLP’ – Peter McNab in Rapport (1999). McNab uses the 4 Quadrants model of Ken Wilber to understand why the Dilts model works so
Knowing Me, Knowing You

to doubt – and most especially McNab – that it effectively describes how our minds relate to the world around us. Nor do any of its users seem to doubt the power of the therapeutic exercise Dilts based on it.

While Dilts sees *Neurological Levels* as describing the mental levels of individuals, some have successfully applied *Neurological Levels* to organisations. In addition to myself, Max Herold and Egbert Kinds, working separately, are just two I know who have enabled organisations to gain greater insight into themselves and the Environment in which they operate through application of the model. My friend and colleague, Steve Gorton, has had particular effect on team building projects using the *Neurological Levels*.

Before looking at the model as a whole, some comments about the three upper levels….

The attribution of a Spirituality level is, of course, contentious from a scientific point of view.

Bateson said of Spirituality: "*The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is immanent in the pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger Mind of which the individual mind is only a sub-system. This larger mind is comparable to God and is perhaps what people mean by 'God', but it is still immanent in the total interconnected social system and planetary ecology.*"

Hardly the presupposition of ‘spirit’ that Ken Wilber makes⁶³; but a sense of interconnectedness beyond simply a social culture or identity, perhaps. In any event something science still finds difficulty in verifying.

Many practitioners, like myself, feel it best to work around the Spirituality issue. If they use this level at all, they tend to refer to it in terms of ‘interconnectedness’. This can be done with questions like “Who else…in the bigger picture?” This, of course, then tends to loop back to the Environment level. However, as Peter McNab points out, there’s a sense in which all the levels above it effectively operate in the Environment and even in which we ourselves –and what happens to us both physiologically and psychologically – are part of the Environment⁶⁴. (An example of changes to the physiological Environment would be a woman’s menstrual cycle. The variations in the levels of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone cause changes in the body which often have well in spite of its structural flaws. *Realigning Neurological Levels*’ has been republished in the Articles section of www.integratedsociopsychology.net,

⁶³Eg: ‘*Integral Psychology*’ – Ken Wilber (Shambhala, 2000).
⁶⁴By ‘Environment’, strictly speaking, Dilts means the physiological and neurological mechanisms by which the external world is represented internally.
The Identity level is split by some – like Max Herold – into two: Identity (who am I?) and Mission (what am I here for?). By ‘Beliefs’ at the level of Values & Beliefs, we mean beliefs which support values – eg: the value of honesty might be supported by the belief that honest people always tell the truth. What might be thought of as ‘factual beliefs’ – eg: Paris is the capital of France – belong at the Skills & Knowledge level.

The key to a healthy psyche, according to Dilts, is to align the levels – see Fig 12 – from bottom to top and top to bottom. This ensures that the Identity has the Values & Beliefs to acquire the necessary Skills & Knowledge to carry out the appropriate Behaviour in the Environment.

So, using Arthur & Emily Reber’s fifth definition of ‘self’, self-(or, selfplex)-as-Identity, has to be aligned to the Environment for psychological health. Hence our sense of ‘self’ needs to change to adapt to the circumstances or context we find ourselves in. Which is why our self often changes to some degree when our Environment changes.

Erving Goffman, the influential sociologist, saw this in theatrical terms as acting out (Behaviour) roles (Identities) for different audiences.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

(Environments).\(^{65}\)

Two examples of how the Neurological Levels work in alignment….

- In the Environment of a school, the ideal for a 15-year-old boy might be that his Identity is ‘Student’, with Values of hard work and progress and Beliefs such as school is a place of learning and homework must be handed in on time. Such a student would crave Knowledge of his subjects and develop Skills such as listening, text analysis, statistical inference and source comparison. Behaviours would involve showing respect to the teacher as the fount of Knowledge and director of learning, completing assignments on time and complying with classroom discipline codes.

- In the Environment of a romantic/sexual relationship, the healthy Identity of a man might be Lover to his partner, with Values of love and faithfulness and the Belief that their love can sustain. Such an Identity would seek Knowledge of how to please his partner and develop the Skills to do so. Behaviour would act to meet the partner’s needs and desires.

It is important to point out that there can be complications in the model, depending on just what memes someone is exposed to and what schemas develop from those memes. For example, one Lover might have the Values of love and faithfulness but believe that, as long as he always returns to his partner after messing around, he is faithful; while another might believe that faithfulness means only enjoying that one special partner, no matter how great the temptation might be.

What about when the Neurological Levels aren’t aligned correctly and we don’t change – or don’t change appropriately - in alignment with our Environment? This, if we follow Dilts, creates psychologically unhealthy situations.

Working from the two examples above…

- Our hypothetical 15-year-old lives in the Environment of a deprived, ‘rough’ housing estate where unemployment is high and the ‘black market’, gangs, drugs and prostitution predominate. In such a ‘concrete jungle’ the appropriate Identity might be Street Tough, with Values of power and dominance and

\(^{65}\) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life – Erving Goffman (Penguin, 1969).*
Beliefs such as the *strongest survive* and *those who want something should take it*. Such a young person is likely to gain Knowledge of fighting, drug dealing and burglary and to learn the Skills to carry out those activities – appropriate Behaviour for the Environment.

While ‘polite society’ might not want to admit it, the 15-year-old is adapted to his Environment, with the Neurological Levels aligned. But what happens when the 15-year-old goes into school? Unless his Identity changes to match the different Environment, he will still be the Street Tough.

The Values & Beliefs associated with such an Identity will not be those of the Student. The Skills & Knowledge offered by the school will not be what a Street Tough needs. Consequently Behaviour is very unlikely to accord with the classroom discipline code.

As a part-time teacher in a school in a ‘rough’ area, I have come across students with this Identity-Environment mismatch frequently. Using the *Neurological Levels* model, we can see why there is so much disruption in so many classrooms.

- For argument’s sake, a man might have the Identity of Manager in his Environment of work.

  The Values he would hold ideally might include strategic thinking, responsibility, reliability and discipline; Beliefs might include *it’s important to adhere to deadlines* and *I must always be at work on time*. Knowledge would include the schedule of deadlines and the times of work while Skills acquired would be to do with enabling deadlines to be fulfilled – eg: reading production schedules – and ensuring he got to work on time – eg: driving his car fast but safely. Behaviour would encompass meeting his deadlines and actually getting to work on time.

  What happens if this man takes his Identity of Manager home to his partner? Will he have the Values & Beliefs to employ his Skills & Knowledge to please, care for, excite and enjoy (Behaviour) his partner? Or is he likely to resent the time his relationship demands because the Values linked to his Identity are more appropriate to the work Environment than the partner Environment?

  I knew the Managing Director of a small steelworks in Sheffield in the 1980s. He excelled in that Identity and his company did well. The problem was that he had difficulty changing to the Identity of Husband and the Identity of Father
when he went home to his wife and children. It wasn’t long before he no longer had that wife; and, for many years, he rarely saw those children.

The right-Environment/wrong Identity trap is an easy one to fall into. Goodness knows, I’ve fallen into it often enough!!

Although matching Identity and Environment is absolutely critical, it is important to note also that while, generally speaking, the hierarchical nature of the model holds and the more complex orders the less complex, seeing the Neurological Levels as a rigid top down model can be too simplistic. Any change or problem at any level can impact on the entire structure.

For example, let’s say our hypothetical 15-year-old has the Identity of Student in the school Environment but is never told what the classroom discipline code is (Knowledge). In such a situation, it would be easy to break the code inadvertently and receive external criticism (from, say, a teacher in the Environment) – putting Behaviour at odds with Values & Beliefs. That would cause stress and possibly even call into question the Identity.

*The Criticality of Identity and Values & Beliefs*

There’s a sense in which it wasn’t people who blew up the ‘twin towers’ of New York’s World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001; it was Values & Beliefs.

The Values of the hijackers were drawn from their particular brand of Islamic fundamentalism and perception of the United States of America as the ‘Great Satan’. From these Values flowed the Beliefs that they were all on a holy *Jihad* and that all ‘infidel’ Americans were legitimate targets.

And the Identity the hijackers had? We can’t possibly know for sure; but most likely they saw themselves as *holy warriors* and *martyrs* – buoyed up by Beliefs about the rewards a warrior killed in battle in the name of Allah will receive in Heaven.

People will fight – and sometimes even die! – for the Values & Beliefs their Identities hold. People will rarely fight over Skills & Knowledge per se.

Some of what Robert Dilts has written about neurology may be

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vulnerable to criticism; but his attribution of brain activity when talking about the levels of Values & Beliefs and Skills & Knowledge is very revealing.

When someone is functioning at the level of Skills & Knowledge, the primary area of electrical activity in the brain is in the cortex. Stimulation from the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS) is especially strong in the part of the frontal lobe associated with intelligence and planning — see Fig 1.

In other words, cognitive/intellectual processes are at work. We are thinking!

However, when it comes to Values & Beliefs, there is even stronger activity in the limbic system – especially the amygdala (associated with emotional memory) and the hypothalamus (associated, amongst other things, with involuntary physiological reactions to emotional arousal - such as increased heart rate, perspiration, blushing, larger pupils, etc) – see Fig 2.

In other words, we *feel* things – both emotionally and physically - at this level!

Hans Eysenck found that, when the limbic system is highly aroused, the normal separation of its activity and the activity of the ARAS in stimulating the cortex breaks down.\(^{67}\) Effectively, limbic system activity triggers ARAS activity. In other words, we can think without feeling; but we can’t feel without thinking.

Thus, Dilts finds that argument at a level of Values & Beliefs (limbic system and cortex) will produce a much stronger emotional reaction than debate at the level of Skills & Knowledge (cortex only).

Joseph LeDoux has shown that, if the amygdala is stimulated very strongly very quickly, it will initiate action before the cortex has even had time to think about it.\(^{68}\) Which is why, in extreme circumstances or under great provocation, people will ‘act without thinking’. Such is the power of Values & Beliefs!

So, to link this to the discussion of schemas and memes in Chapters 1 and 2, we are now differentiating levels of schemas. Schemas which are simply Skills & Knowledge have less influence than those schemas which are Values & Beliefs. Since Values & Beliefs relate to sense of Identity, the schemas of Identity – the selfplex – must be the strongest of

\(^{67}\)See ‘The Biological Basis of Personality’ – Hans J Eysenck (Charles C Thomas, 1967).

Knowing Me, Knowing You

all.

Whilst change at any of the Neurological Levels can impact on the whole, the Identity in the selfplex is the most powerful of all in this hierarchy of levels. Identity can cross Environments – sometimes with unwelcome results, as per our Street Tough in the classroom. It can also tie people to Environments which support it. Thus, the Senior Manager who has to work late at the office and, in part at least, the Son who finds it difficult to leave his parents’ home. (And the ‘Psychology Guru’ who can’t leave off writing his book to watch television or take his wife out!)

For us to adapt successfully to a changed or different Environment, we must feel – activity in the amygdala causing the hypothalamus to produce physiological reactions – as well as think different Values & Beliefs in a different Identity. Simply knowing the Skills & Knowledge for the appropriate Behaviour is usually not enough.

Which is why so often people don’t behave as they know they should. They may well have the Skills & Knowledge; but the Identity is not matched properly to the Environment. Consequently the Values & Beliefs do not produce the Behaviour which is appropriate.

Hence, our hypothetical 15-year Street Tough may well know how to behave in class. However, if he doesn’t feel like a Student, he is unlikely to be one. Likewise, if our Manager at work doesn’t feel like a Lover in the partner Environment, then his Values are not likely to be partner-focussed.

Thus, the unhelpful schemas most difficult to dislodge are at the levels of Values & Beliefs and, especially, Identity, with their emotional (limbic system) component.

Over the years I have had to deal with numerous students who believe they are ‘thick’ – Identity statement: ‘I am thick’. As a result, what’s important to them – Values – rarely involves the academic learning the school system offers them.

I remember in particular a discussion a couple of years ago with ‘Roberta’, a girl who told her teachers she was ‘thick’. This was put forward as an explanation for why she wouldn’t attempt work set. (In fact, she was of about average intelligence but had behavioural problems and a degree of Attention Deficit Disorder.) I arranged a meeting in which I explained to Roberta that, as both a teacher and a psychologist, I had assessed that she was most definitely not ‘thick’. I even managed to find a couple of past examples of reasonable work she had done to support my case.

My arguments at the level of Skills & Knowledge made no impact whatsoever. I eventually learned from Roberta that her older brother –
Knowing Me, Knowing You

whom she loved (a major Value) had long ago drilled into her the belief that she was ‘thick’. A schema he reinforced memetically on a regular basis with statements like: “No wonder you take ages to do your homework. You’re thick!” Consequently, her sense of Identity was not matched to the school Environment.

(Unfortunately the rigid structure of the school system meant I was not in a position to offer Roberta therapy.)

The fact that Identity needs to change to align with the Environment – the schemas of Values & Beliefs adjusting as new or different memes hit the consciousness – very much tends to support the selfplex argument of ‘I’ being a confluence of schemas.

**Aligning the Neurological Levels**

So, when you consider how your ‘character’ behaves in different circumstances or contexts, are the Neurological Levels aligned? If not, the chances are you will not like yourself, your Environment or both.

Robert Dilts has developed a powerful exercise for aligning the Neurological Levels by ‘walking’ (!!!) them – see Fig 13.

In Dilts’ exercise, you mark out the levels on the floor and walk from marker to marker, asking yourself questions related to the levels and then allowing your ‘Unconscious Mind’ to provide answers.

You might want to try this exercise with one of the unhelpful beliefs you identified in Chapter 2. For first use of this exercise, I suggest you use one of the less potent beliefs and one that is not obviously to do with temperament.

Start with:-
- Environment – choose the circumstance or context you wish to explore;

Then step onto:-
- Behaviour – ask yourself what is the appropriate Behaviour for this Environment;

After your answer(s) has (have) formed, move onto:-
- Skills & Knowledge – ask yourself what capabilities you have and what capabilities you still need to carry out the appropriate Behaviour for the Environment;

After your answer(s) has (have) formed, move onto:-
- Values & Beliefs – ask yourself what is important to you in this Environment and what do you believe about those things which

69In *Cognitive Psychology* and *NLP*, the term ‘Unconscious Mind’ is used for cognitive processing of which one is unaware.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

are important to you;
After your answer(s) has (have) formed, move onto:-
- Identity – ask yourself who you are and what you are here for (to accomplish);

At each level it is important you allow sufficient time for answers to form.

To complete the exercise…
- Step back from Identity to Values & Beliefs and take note of any enhancements to your original understanding;
- Step back from Values & Beliefs to Skills & Knowledge and take note of any new or enhanced capabilities;
- Step back from Skills & Knowledge to Behaviour and take note of any different behaviours you can now carry through;
- Finally step back into the Environment space and notice how different you now perceive that area of your life to be.

How has the belief you worked with changed? (If so, write it down! The kinaesthetic action will help to crystallise your new thinking.)

Insight can occur at every level; but almost always the greatest revelations occur at the levels of Identity and Values & Beliefs.

The exercise is very powerful indeed. However, it is often best worked through with a ‘guide’ who will ask you the questions at each level.

While the exercise tends to be most powerful when walked physically, some find benefit working up and down the levels on paper, sat at a table and writing the answers down.

A word of warning…
If you plan to help somebody resolve personal issues using this exercise, it is advisable to explain the model to them so that they have an
understanding of the levels. If they do not have the awareness – the complexity of thinking – to understand the levels, then it is better to take other action at the appropriate level(s) to assist them.

Years ago I made the mistake of doing the exercise with ‘Harry’, a man who had little or no sense of future. All went well until we reached the Identity level. When I asked him what his purpose was, Harry turned around in tears and wailed: “I don’t have any purpose. I’m like a dog – I just live day to day.”

As a counsellor, that was a very sobering experience!

Problems in Identity Formation

The Dilts exercise will almost always lead to a sense of Identity being identified relative to the Environment. Where it doesn’t, then that is indicative of Identity relative to that Environment having either been lost or never having been formed.

James Marcia has produced some key work relative to difficulties in the formation of Identity. The route to the achievement of Identity he outlines – illustrated in Fig 14 – provides a model for analysing where the problem might lie.

Marcia identifies 4 ‘statuses’ someone can be in at any given time. Movement is usually in the direction of Identity Achievement. However, it can be slow, stop and start, people get stuck and sometimes they even lose their sense of Identity and retreat to an earlier stage.

Marcia identifies 4 ‘statuses’ someone can be in at any given time. Movement is usually in the direction of Identity Achievement. However, it can be slow, stop and start, people get stuck and sometimes they even lose their sense of Identity and retreat to an earlier stage.

The 4 statuses are:

- ‘Identity Diffusion’: is where little or no thought has been given

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

to what ‘I’ should be in those circumstances or that context and no firm commitments have been made. In other words, there is little awareness of the circumstances or context and/or one’s role in it. Effectively you are just bumbling along in a rather clueless manner!

- ‘Foreclosure’: Identity issues – ie: what is involved – have not been considered properly but commitments to a nominal Identity have still been made. The Identity resulting from Foreclosure is likely to be weak, with the Values & Beliefs inconsistent and incapable of producing the appropriate Behaviour for the Environment. (For example, a man may have committed himself to be a husband without fully appreciating what being a husband involves. Without that Knowledge, he is unlikely to have the appropriate Beliefs about what a husband should do (Behaviour). And without full Knowledge, how can his Value of love possibly be fulfilled?)

- ‘Moratorium’: results from a thorough consideration of Identity issues and possible alternatives but no definite commitments have been made. Moratorium may result in shifting partial Identities relative to the Environment – some of which may be inappropriate – with the result that the Neurological Levels are likely to be unaligned. (For example, a man may think he is in love (Values & Beliefs) with one woman (Environment) and and understands what commitment means (Knowledge) but will not commit to being her full-time partner/husband because his Identity (perhaps Lothario!) is not aligned with the Environment.)

- Identity Achievement’: the Identity issues have been explored and understood, with firm commitments made on that basis.

So, if you can’t arrive at a clear Identity relative to the Environment you are concerned with using the Dilts exercise, see if, by using Marcia, you can spot where the problem lies.

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72 Moratorium corresponds in many ways to the notion of Identity Crisis first postulated by the noted psychologist Œrik Erikson in ‘Childhood & Society’ (Norton, 1950). However, Marcia’s view was that Moratorium was not necessarily a crisis experience; with the delayed commitment even being seen as a positive by some.
Marcia, like Dilts, is in no doubt that we undertake multiple Identities relative to our different Environments. In other words, the schemas of the selfplex mutate and change in relation to the memes our Environment exposes us to.

This fits with the description of the self given by the pioneering Humanistic psychologist, Dr Carl Rogers: “...an organised consistent gestalt, constantly in the process of forming and reforming.”73 This has echoes of Reber & Reber’s definition 4 but encapsulates the changeable nature of the selfplex.

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

Several years prior to Richard Dawkins coining the term\textsuperscript{74}, P L Berger effectively described the pervasive influence of the memes around us when he wrote: “Society...shapes our identity, our thought and our emotions. The structures of society become the structures of our own consciousness.”\textsuperscript{75}

So, having established that the selfplex-as-Identity changes – and, as Erving Goffman points out, needs to change – to function effectively in different Environments, we need to ask how well aligned are your Neurological Levels across your many Environments?

How many of the unhelpful beliefs you identified in Chapter 2 can be related to misalignment of the Neurological Levels?

Sometimes, though, to get to the source of problems, we need to look at a deeper level – actually at what it is that enables us to make such changes.

Understanding the mechanisms which enable Identity and Values & Beliefs to match to Environment will also enable us to understand more about how we create Identities and Values & Beliefs which are inappropriate to the Environment.


5. Developing Selves

Almost certainly you’ve seen the following scenario. You may well have been a participant in it!

Imagine a young mother and a two-year-old boy in a lengthy supermarket checkout queue. Both are tired and ratty after a couple of hours shopping. As they get closer to the checkout, the infant spies the inevitable rack of sweets and demands a chocolate bar.

“No,” the mother responds, “you’ll spoil your lunch.”

“But I want...” the infant insists.

“No,” the mother repeats.

“But I want...” the infant insists again.

“No!!”

“But I want, I want...”

This continues as they move up the queue, becoming louder and more bad-tempered with each exchange. Finally, embarrassed and irritated to the point of screaming rage, the mother slaps her son across the back of the legs. He bursts into tears.

The sobs quieten as they move up another couple of places. Then, as they actually get to the checkout itself, the infant takes one last chance. “Mummy, if you love me...” he pleads, making big round eyes at her.

According to Sigmund Freud, what we were seeing was the self-centred *Id* being reality-checked by a greater force and the *Ego* then making the *Id* express its desires in a less demanding and confrontational manner.

In the early 20th Century Freud, the most influential psychologist of them all, was in no doubt that we have distinct multiple selves – or parts to our mind76. He believed the mind had 3 parts:-

- ‘Id’ (Latin for ‘it’; original German: ‘das Es’ – ‘the It’): the self-expressive, instinctive self, composed of *eros*, the life or sex instinct, and *thanatos*, the death instinct, and dominated by the ‘Pleasure Principle’. According to Freud, we are born with the Id which demands instant gratification, without restraint, in terms of its two instincts. *Me! Me! Me!* is the cry of the Id.

- ‘Ego’ (Latin for ‘I’; original German: ‘das Ich’ – ‘the I’): the
Knowing Me, Knowing You

conscious, rational mind which takes note of the Environment being operated in. It works on the ‘Reality Principle’ and develops during the first two years of life. It seeks to limit the sheer impulsiveness of the Id so that the individual can function effectively within the constraints of the Environment.

- ‘Superego’ (Latin for ‘above-I’; original German: ‘das uber-Ich’ – ‘the over-I’): the sense of what’s right and wrong – the conscience – formed from about 4-5 years of age, usually from modelling the opposite sex parent. Conformity begins with the Ego as a means of practical survival but reaches its apex in the Superego which seeks to do ‘the right thing’.

Freud’s 3-part mind is at the centre of a web of linked concepts he termed Psychoanalytic Theory.

A key strand in Freud’s thinking is the ongoing conflict between the Id and the Ego, the Ego and the Superego, and the Id and the Superego. His view was that much of abnormal behaviour and mental illness is caused by these conflicts.

So how do the Id, Ego and Superego get along in your mind?

Are the conflicting pulls of the Id and the Superego balanced out by the Reality Principle of the Ego? – or does one of these parts of you dominate over the others?

Perhaps you’re self-centred, impulsive, do what you want to do and don’t think much about consequences (Id-dominated)?

Maybe you’d really like to indulge your passions but the thought of the consequences worries you (Ego-dominated)?

Or maybe you’re obsessed with doing ‘the right thing’ (Superego-dominated)?

I distinctly remember one of my A-Level Psychology students who, when we studied Freud, identified clearly that she had an overactive Superego which was repressing her Id. She was frustrated that so many times she wanted to do things that really appealed to her yet ‘couldn’t’. They just weren’t ‘right’. She was also concerned for the impact on others and/or what they might think of her if she did do those things. It was important to her not only to do ‘the right thing’ – but to be seen to be doing it!

Freud’s work has been mired in controversy and subjected to intense

For non-UK readers, A-Level is the pre-university examination level students take during the year they turn 18.
criticism over the years. However, while relatively few these days would support unreservedly the complete Psychoanalytic Theory, many elements of his work survive into current thought in Psychology and Psychiatry.

Outside of Psychoanalytic Theory the term ‘Ego’ has long been given a more generalised meaning. However, the conflict between the express-self Id and the conform-to-expectations Superego is clearly reflected in the models of several subsequent philosophers and developmental psychologists – none more so than in the remarkable work of Dr Clare W Graves.

**A Theory which explains Everything?**

In the first decade of the 21st Century Graves’ work is almost unknown outside of a small number of networks. Yet, back in 1967, it was hailed as *“the theory which explains everything”!*  

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78 Criticism of Freud tends to have two roots. One is a general distaste for the concept of the incestuous Oedipus Complex. Put very simply, this has the young child desiring the opposite sex parent sexually which brings him/her into conflict (usually at an unconscious level) with the same sex parent – ie: the young boy sees his father as a rival for his mother’s (sexual) affections; and vice versa for young girls. In a psychologically healthy individual, this conflict is resolved by modelling the same sex parent. Freud’s insistence that everyone goes through the Oedipus Complex does not sit well with many. (Would you like to acknowledge that, at 5 years old, you desired sex with your mother or father…?)

The second root of the criticisms of Freud is that most of Psychoanalytic Theory, based on case studies rather than empirical research, is unfalsifiable. There simply is no way of testing much of it by any kind of known scientific methodology. This strand of criticism is perhaps best exemplified by Karl Popper in *‘The Logic of Scientific Discovery’* (Hutchinson, 1959).

79 *‘The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology’* – Arthur S Reber & Emily Reber (p229-230, 3rd edition, Penguin, 2001) offers as its definition 1 of ‘Ego’: *“...the self conceptualised as the central core around which all psychic processes revolve. This is the foundational meaning and is neutral as regards evaluative connotations and theories of personality.”*

80 Quite why Graves is relatively unknown in modern academia is something which puzzles many upon discovering his work. Graves, after all, was himself a noted academic: Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Union College, Schenectady, New York. However, for all the considerable body of research he undertook, Graves had only a relatively small handful of articles appear during his lifetime. Apparently Graves witnessed Abraham Maslow being ‘torn to pieces’ at an American Psychological Association meeting in the 1950s and determined to ensure his theory was ‘watertight’ before subjecting it to that kind
Graves’ theory clearly doesn’t explain everything. However, it does provide the most complete description to date of how human motivational systems emerge and develop. The structure of Graves’ model also allows the mapping to it of many other psychological and behavioural concepts, providing contexts where they ‘fit’. By mapping where they fit onto the model, it also gives us insight into why such concepts work for some people in some circumstances but not others.

Thus, the ‘Graves Model’ provides a broad structure on which to start building an integrated approach to the behavioural sciences.

From over 30 years of research, commencing in 1952, Graves conceived a ‘Spiral’ of neurological systems which drive people either in the direction of self-expression (in line with the Id) or sacrificing self to expectations (Freud’s concept of the Ego through to the Superego) – see Fig 15.

However, in contrast to Freud’s 3 parts of the mind, Graves’ research led him to identify 8 systems which develop in people. These systems emerge in a hierarchical order, cycling back and forth between the express-self and sacrifice-self-for-conformity sides of an ascending Spiral of complexity.

The ‘warm-coloured systems’ shown on Fig 15 (BEIGE through to YELLOW) are reflective of the Id while the ‘cool-coloured systems’ (PURPLE through to TURQUOISE) are reflective of the growth of conformity (from the Ego through the Superego).

Each emergent system has a more complex way of thinking than the one which precedes it. There are transition stages as one system gives

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of criticism. He began work on a book in 1977; but the project was eventually abandoned due to ill health. It is the lack of published work which is considered to be one of the major obstacles to greater recognition of Graves.


82 ‘The Never Ending Quest’ – Clare W Graves/Christopher C Cowan & Natasha Todorovic (eds) (ECLET Publishing, 2005) most clearly sets out Graves’ theory – although the book is a composite of Graves’ unfinished manuscript and insertions from various other materials Graves created (articles and seminar handouts, etc).

83 The core of Graves’ research methods are described in some detail in ‘Levels of Human Existence’ – Clare W Graves/William R Lee (trans) (ECLET Publishing, 2002). This is a transcript of his seminar at the Washington Institute of Psychiatry on 16 October 1971.

84 Graphic adapted with permission from ‘The Cutting Edge of Tomorrow - Blueprint For Successful Organisation’ – Don E Beck & Keith H van Heerden (Value Management Group, 1982).
way to the next one; and, in addition to Freudian-style ‘wars’ between them, these systems can also work in harmony, depending on circumstances and context. (More about transitions in Chapter 11 and ‘wars’ and harmony in Chapter 12.

Graves perceived that the emergence and activity of a particular system would depend on the Life Conditions in the Environment people found themselves in. By ‘Life Conditions’ he meant what was actually going on. His concept was that, in a psychologically healthy person, the system which dominated their thinking would be the most appropriate one for coping with the Life Conditions.

Thus, Graves split the alphabet to match the neurological system and the type of Life Conditions in letter pairs - eg: the appropriate system for Life Conditions A would be N, Life Conditions B would require system O, P would be the system to match Life Conditions C, and so on.

These Life Conditions-internal system matches are shown colour-coded on Fig 15. Thus….
Purple = B-O (System O operating in Life Conditions B)
Red = C-P
Blue = D-Q
Orange = E-R
Green = F-S
Yellow = G-T
Turquoise = H-U

So when you think about the Environments in your life, which of the ‘Gravesian systems’ dominates in the way you hold your Values & Beliefs?

Fig 16 is a chart of statements for several areas of your life or Environments. In those areas which are applicable to you, tick the statement which is closest to your general attitude. If not entirely comfortable with any of the statements, choose the one which is least unlike you. (This is what the psychologists call a forced choice questionnaire!) This will give you some idea of the Gravesian system which dominates your thinking in that area of your life.

The G-T and H-U systems, which Graves believed represented a higher, second tier of thinking, aren’t represented on Fig 16 because they are less well understood and, therefore, more difficult to test for. (More about the 2nd Tier in Chapter 7….)

As with the Eysenck Personality MiniTest in Chapter 3, a word of warning…

The results of questionnaires of this type should not be taken as set in stone. They may not even be that representative of you, as all kinds of factors can lead to inaccurate results. Clare W Graves himself eventually became dismissive of ‘pen & paper tests’. Personally I use such questionnaires simply to get people thinking, rather than to provide ‘hard assessments’.

Having said that, if upon reflection, you do find one or more of the statements on Fig 16 to be an accurate reflection of your attitudes and you are uncomfortable with your answer, then you might want to ask yourself: what are the Life Conditions in that Environment – what’s going on in that area of my life to lead me to have that kind of attitude?

When you consider the list of unhelpful beliefs you drew up in Chapter 2, are there any matches between your results from the Fig 16 exercise? Which area of your life – Environment – does the unhelpful belief relate to? Could the belief come from one of the Gravesian systems?

Of course, you’ll probably need to know more about Graves’ work before you can make an accurate assessment. But keep this in mind as we explore Graves’ concepts further.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

For each area of your life, tick √ the statement which is closest to how you think. (You may only choose one statement for each area.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B-O</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Personal Relationship</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What’s important is being accepted by my colleagues</td>
<td>We’re just a big happy family - where we all have our place</td>
<td>We’re soulmates!</td>
<td>Our job is to provide a safe environment to nurture them</td>
<td>We’re loyal to each other. There are some deep attachments</td>
<td>Some neighbours are OK. Some are not OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-P</td>
<td>The Boss has to be in charge - unequivocally!</td>
<td>“A man’s home is his castle.” My home is my domain - it’s where I do what I want when I want.</td>
<td>My Partner is mine. Anyone who shows the slightest interest in him/her in any way is out to seduce him/her</td>
<td>My children are mine - they reflect on me. They do what I tell them - or else!</td>
<td>Friends are for having a bloody good time - letting your hair down and having some pure, unadulterated fun!</td>
<td>What’s in it for me? How’s the Community going to help me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Q</td>
<td>It’s important that we all follow the correct procedures and do our best for the Organisation</td>
<td>Home works fine when everybody follows the rules and does what they should</td>
<td>We have obligations and responsibilities to each other that it is important we fulfil</td>
<td>There are correct ways for children to behave. They must be taught right and wrong</td>
<td>I see my friends on a regular basis. It’s my duty to see them even when I don’t feel like it</td>
<td>I’m a responsible citizen. I obey the laws and pay my taxes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Personal Relationship</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-R</td>
<td>I want to get on in my career. I’m an achiever and I want to be recognised for my achievements</td>
<td>I don’t always have that much time for home - but I have a beautiful, well-furnished house in a nice part of town</td>
<td>My Partner must not only support my career but be suitable to take along to Organisation functions</td>
<td>My children must be top achievers at School and go on to University</td>
<td>I like the kind of friends who are appropriate to my status in life - especially if they can help me get on</td>
<td>I don’t have much time for community activities. If I do get involved, it’s only with the most important ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-S</td>
<td>It’s important to get consensus - to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get involved. We all then must support our collective decision</td>
<td>In our house we all have a say. We split the work fairly and equally</td>
<td>It’s important that my Partner has the freedom to express him/herself - even if that sometimes compromises what I want</td>
<td>Children are really “little people”. It’s important to respect their rights and to allow them to express themselves as people</td>
<td>My friends share my sense of social responsibility. Our conversations are concerned with the deeper issues</td>
<td>It’s so important that people understand their responsibility to the community and takes an active part in helping us make it a better place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 16: a chart for allocating the Gravesian systems to areas of your life*
The Nature of vMEMES

While Graves struggled to find acceptance in the academic mainstream, several ‘builds’ emerged during the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s from people who had studied and/or worked with him. The most popular, easy-to-use and potent of these ‘builds’ is Spiral Dynamics®, developed by Dr Don Beck & Chris Cowan.  

Fig 17 provides a brief and very basic summary of Spiral Dynamics, showing the relationship between the Life Conditions in the Environment and the Gravesian systems.

Since Graves held that the human brain is capable of developing new systems to cope with ever more complex Life Conditions, Spiral Dynamics proposes systems beyond the 8 he identified. The ninth system clearly would be I-V; and a nomenclature, CORAL, has been assigned tentatively to it by Beck & Cowan. No real attempt has been made to describe its potential characteristics other than putting forward the notion that it would be a 2nd Tier version of C-P RED.

Beck & Cowan worked with Graves from the mid-1970s until his death in 1986. It was Cowan who colour-coded the Gravesian systems to make them easier to remember in workshops and seminars. (The Spiral Dynamics® is a registered trademark of the National Values Center Inc, Texas, USA. The Beck & Cowan ‘build’ is detailed in ‘Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership & Change’ – Don Edward Beck & Christopher Cowan (Blackwell, 1996).

Beck now uses the term Spiral Dynamics-integral for meshing the concept with the 4 Quadrants model of Ken Wilber for macro applications.


Spiral ‘balloon’ graphic adapted with permission from www.spiraldynamics.com.

Though there are those who claim to think in CORAL, both Beck and Cowan, together and separately, are adamant that they know of no credible scientific evidence for any human being yet capable of thinking beyond H-U TURQUOISE. I-V CORAL in Spiral Dynamics is purely speculative.

Chris Cowan’s account of how he developed the colour scheme for the Gravesian systems is at www.spiraldynamics.org/learning/faq.htm#colors. Don
Knowing Me, Knowing You

colours are usually annotated in capitals.) Meanwhile Beck road-tested Graves’ concepts in South Africa and made significant contributions to the transitions of the early-mid 1990s.89

A key theoretical contribution Beck & Cowan made to Graves’ concepts after his death was to link them to memetics. Graves had conceived that each system – *thema*90, to use his term – would match with certain types of schema. Beck & Cowan, to give greater emphasise to the relationship between the Life Conditions in the Environment and the internal mental match, named the Gravesian system or *thema*, ‘vMEME’, for Value Meme.

Thus, in *Spiral Dynamics*, there is a relationship between the vMEME and the type of meme it takes in and the type of meme someone puts out when a particular vMEME is dominating their thinking.

For example, someone whose thinking is dominated by B-O PURPLE would likely to be susceptible to the meme of racism. However, someone with strong F-S GREEN would almost certainly find the very concept abhorrent. C-P RED would like the meme of party now! but D-Q BLUE would worry about people losing control – *control* being

Beck has claimed that he gave Cowan the initial idea of ‘colorising’ the systems – e-mail correspondence between Dr Beck and the author, November 2005.


By getting leading politicians to consider people in terms of (cross-race) thinking and value systems, Beck enabled many of them to move beyond racial stereotypes.

Television appearances Beck made and articles he had published in the South African newspapers helped set the public case for the National Party Government of F W DeKlerk to release Nelson Mandela from prison in early 1990. (Beck’s influence on DeKlerk was a subject of parliamentary debate at one stage!) Subsequently Beck used the Graves Model to help the teams of DeKlerk, Mandela and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi design the constitution which would take South Africa from an Apartheid state to a multi-cultural democracy.

Some of this and the strategies developed are described in *The Crucible: Forging South Africa’s Future* – Don Beck & Graham Linscott (New Paradigm Press, 1991). Beck was honoured by a joint resolution of both houses of the Texas Congress for his contributions to the transition in South Africa.

90 The concept of ‘thema’ was originated by Henry Murray, co-developer of the Thematic Apperception Test – see: ‘A Method for Investigating Fantasies: the Thematic Apperception Test’ – C D Morgan & Henry Murray in *Archives of Neurology & Psychiatry* #34 (1935). Murray’s *thema* was used to describe the activation and fulfilment of a need.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

a meme RED wants to escape! (Unless, of course, it is doing the controlling!) E-R ORANGE is only likely to go to a party which would help its achievement schematic goals.

Susan Blackmore has gone to great lengths to attempt to explain why some memes are more successful in replicating than others. She rightly draws upon the 3 qualities needed for successful genetic replication Richard Dawkins uses in his gene-meme analogy:-

- fidelity – the idea must be copied accurately;
- fecundity – there must be lots of copies;
- longevity – the copies must last a long time.

Yet the answer also lies in which vMEMES are active in the psyche to consider the incoming memes. To return to racism: for example, it tends to thrive in the pubs and working men’s clubs in the former mining villages of South Yorkshire where B-O PURPLE tribalism is strong. Yet it is usually disapproved of by F-S GREEN’s we are all equal meme at the dinner parties of the so-called ‘chattering classes’ in London.

Fig 18 shows a comparison between Spiral Dynamics and the stages or types of thinking and behaviour identified by several other developmental psychologists and philosophers. These include the work of Abraham Maslow, Jane Loevinger – whose stages most completely parallel Graves’ levels – and William Moulton Marston – whose work was referred to in Chapter 3 and will be discussed more completely in Chapter 10.

Graves originally tried to map the data from his research to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs but found over time that not all the data fit. This led to some considerable discussion between the two men, with Graves stating in 1971 that “Maslow came around to my point of view”.

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93 A much fuller comparison map of Spiral Dynamics with the work of other developmental psychologists is available at www.clarewgraves.com/research_content/CG&others/intro.html
94 Levels of Human Existence – Clare W Graves/William R Lee (trans) (p52, ECLET Publishing, 2002). How much Maslow and Graves influenced each other is a matter of conjecture; but it seems likely that it was Graves sharing his data with Maslow that led the latter, shortly before his death in 1970, to acknowledge that there was a level beyond Self-Actualisation – which he termed ‘Transcendence’.

72
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE CONDITION</th>
<th>vMEME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TURQUOISE</td>
<td>CORAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions fail to meet needs of individuals</td>
<td>Unknown - possibly 2nd Tier version of RED - will be strong and self-expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems too great for individuals - sense of order in the chaos</td>
<td>New collective grouping searching for broad spirituality to underpin working together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing man does works - nothing is guaranteed - chaos is natural</td>
<td>Fexi-flow around problems, use - and respect – all resources to survive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism does not produce satisfaction - humanity is what counts</td>
<td>Create equal opportunities - serve fellow man, build consensus - political correctness - egalitarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is full of opportunity and rewards the creative and talented</td>
<td>Be creative, work hard, compete, get bigger, better, more - improve - win!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is chaos without consistency and order</td>
<td>Procedures, rules, the right way of doing things - punish transgressors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is a jungle where the strongest thrive</td>
<td>Be strongest or ally with strongest - dominate!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening, unsafe, mysterious world</td>
<td>Tribes, family, rituals, placate spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-cognitive animal world</td>
<td>Survive - get drink, food, shelter, sex for procreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 17: the Life Conditions and the matching Gravesian system in Spiral Dynamics® (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan; Spiral ‘balloon’ graphic copyright © 1996 NVC Inc, Denton, TX USA – all rights reserved)
## Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graves/ Spiral Dynamics</th>
<th>Abraham Maslow</th>
<th>Gerald Heard</th>
<th>Jane Loevinger</th>
<th>Harvey Hunt &amp; Schroeder</th>
<th>Lawrence Kohlberg</th>
<th>Max Weber</th>
<th>William Moulton Marston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TURQUIOSE/ H-U (B’-O’)</td>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transcendental Morality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YELLOW/G-T (A’-N’)</td>
<td>Self-Actualisation</td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>Principled Conscience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREEN/F-S</td>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>Ecological Man</td>
<td>Conscientious Conformist</td>
<td>Social Contract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE/G-T</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Self-sufficient Man</td>
<td>Self-Protective</td>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>4.5 (4+/4B)</td>
<td>Technical-rational Action</td>
<td>Inducement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLUE/D-Q</td>
<td>Self-accusing Man</td>
<td>Conformist</td>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>Law &amp; Order</td>
<td>Good/Bad</td>
<td>Value-rational Action</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED/C-P</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Self-assertive Man</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Sub-Type 1 (Hunt only)</td>
<td>Instrumental Hedonism</td>
<td>Affective Action</td>
<td>Dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPLE/B-O</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Pre-individual Man</td>
<td>Symbiotic &amp; Obedience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEIGE/A-N</td>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>Pre-social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig 18: a comparison map of Graves/Spiral Dynamics with the work of several other developmental psychologists and systems thinkers
Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graves/</th>
<th>Abraham</th>
<th>Gerald</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Harvey</th>
<th>Lawrence</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>William</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiral</td>
<td>Maslow</td>
<td>Heard</td>
<td>Loevinger</td>
<td>Hunt &amp;</td>
<td>Kohlberg</td>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>Moulton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Schroeder</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Maslow took a philosophical approach to his psychological observations which he mainly based on case studies. Unlike Graves, Loevinger and Harvey Hunt & Schroeder, he did little scientific research and statistical analysis. As the full 8-level Hierarchy was published only after his death, there is little information about the Transcendence level.

There is some speculation that Cognitive could be mapped to be elements of YELLOW while Aesthetic could be mapped to both YELLOW and TURQUOISE. It is also worth noting that some of Maslow’s writings on self-esteem imply goal-oriented strategic thinking – which would mean an element of ORANGE. Maslow’s Safety and Belonging levels of need are absorbed into PURPLE’s safety-in-belonging motif.

The Five Ages of Man: The Psychology of Human History’ – Gerald Heard (Julian Press, 1963). Heard’s Ecological, or Leptoid Man, incorporates elements of integrated and advanced spiritual thinking which could be argued as being 2nd Tier.

‘Ego Development’ – Jane Loevinger (Jossey-Blass, 1976). Although hers is the model which most completely matches Graves, some of her work indicates that Impulsive may grow into Self-Protective then Conformist which grows into Conscientious Conformist. It should also be noted that Symbiotic could be argued as matching the transitional state of beige/PURPLE, rather than nodal PURPLE. Two Loevinger stages not shown on Fig 18 match transition stages: Malignant Conformist seems to equate to red/BLUE; and Individualistic would equate to ORANGE/green. See Chapter 11 for a discussion of the Spiral Dynamics transition stages.


Stage 1, Punishment & Obedience, seems to contain behavioural responses that contain elements of both PURPLE and RED. Kohlberg later introduced a stage 4.5 (or ‘4+’ or ‘4B’) to account for relativistic variations he was getting in responses at Stage 4. For example, respondents were saying they would adhere to absolutist law in principle but might break it under certain pressing circumstances. See: ‘Moral Stages & Moralisation’ – Lawrence Kohlberg in ‘Moral Development & Behaviour’ – T Lickona (ed) (Holt, 1976). Stage 4.5 appears to represent elements of ORANGE pragmatism undermining BLUE absolutism.

Reading across Kohlberg’s works, Stage 5 sometimes appears to incorporate 4.5. In some writings, it appears more GREEN. Stage 6 appears to share elements of both GREEN and YELLOW.

By the time of the posthumously-published ‘The Meaurement of Moral Judgement’ – Anne Colby & Lawrence Kohlberg (Cambridge University Press, 1987), Kohlberg was doubting he had enough statistically-significant evidence to justify his proposition of Stage 6, Principled Conscience. However, only shortly before, in ‘The Philosophy of Moral Development’ – Lawrence Kohlberg (Harper Row, 1986), he had been speculating that a seventh stage might exist which linked spirituality with moral reasoning.


Traditional Action appears to include elements of BEIGE survival-level behaviour.

‘Emotions of Normal People’ – William Molton Marston (Taylor & Francis Inc, 1928). Marston had no hierarchical order to his behavioural types.
While the Maslow’s Hierarchy, being based primarily on case studies, is a less solid construct than Graves’ Spiral, it nonetheless feeds in key information.

Maslow’s ‘needs’ can be seen as the outcomes of vMEME activity. Thus, A-N BEIGE is concerned with survival needs, B-O PURPLE seeks safety in belonging (Spiral Dynamics 2nd level collapses Maslow’s 2nd and 3rd into one); C-P RED wants esteem…and so on.

A key principle of Maslow’s Hierarchy is that each level of needs must be met before the individual can move onto a higher level. If a lower level of needs is no longer met sufficiently, then the individual will need to relinquish higher level needs to attend to the lower level ones.\(^\text{102}\)

For example, the A-N BEIGE vMEME of people whose survival needs are seriously compromised doesn’t allow them to worry about shelter and belonging. Hence, people who are starving simply crave food and refugees from battle zones just want to get away from the fighting. The B-O PURPLE vMEME kicks in later when the refugees go back to the battle zone after the fighting has ended to see who from their family is left.

In Britain, where something like 50% of marriages now end in divorce, it is common for the ex-partners to suffer low self-esteem and even Depression. Especially, if they are not moving straight into a new relationship and especially if they are men. In Spiral Dynamics-Maslow terms, PURPLE’s need for love and belonging has been devastated, undermining RED’s drive for self-esteem.

The gender aspect of this may be to do with the man’s loss of position as nominal head of the household – the PURPLE vMEME tends to promote roles by gender, age and other markers –thus, the loss of self-esteem suffered by RED at the loss of PURPLE position.

So just how exactly should we describe vMEMES? Yes, they are neurological systems, but there are many different types of system in our brains. A ‘state of mind’ is too rigid – though vMEMES often lead to states of mind!

I have heard them described as ‘coping systems’; but it strikes me that Chris Cowan’s description of vMEMES as ‘core intelligences’\(^\text{103}\) is perhaps the most potent description.

However, describing vMEMES as ‘core intelligence’ means, effectively, that we are talking about selves or distinctive parts of a


\(^{103}\)SD II training session run by NVC Inc in Mirfield, near Brighouse, UK, in December 1998.
greater self.

Linking this to Susan Blackmore’s concept of the selfplex, we can say that the selfplex mutates and changes as different vMEMES flow and ebb in their dominance of people’s thinking.

Putting this rather simplistically then, we could say we have eight ‘lesser selves’ or parts of our mind which change our sense of self – the selfplex.

So, to return to one of the questions we posed at the beginning of Chapter 1: that of whether we always appear to be the same self…

…leaving aside the issue of the ‘spiritual self’…

There is an innate basic temperamental self that appears to be relatively immutable. So we can say “I’m a bit on the moody side” or “So-and-so is an outgoing kind of person”.

We have a sense of self in the selfplex; but the selfplex changes according to the ebb and flow of vMEMES.

Therefore, at this level, we have no evidence as such of an integral self but we do have up to eight ‘mini-selves’.

Rather than talk of ‘I’/‘myself’ or ‘you’, it may be much more pertinent to talk about ‘my RED’ or ‘your ORANGE’ when attempting to explain why and how we and others think and behave differently in different circumstances.
6. Selves of the 1st Tier

Now let’s take a closer look at the vMEMES of what Clare W Graves considered to be the 1st Tier…

As we go through them, check with the list of unhelpful beliefs from Chapter 1 to see whether they indicate:

- a vMEME is not having its needs met – eg: you don’t belong to anybody and no one belongs to you – so PURPLE’s safety-in-belonging need is not being met;
- a vMEME’s needs are being met in an unhealthy way – eg: RED’s need to express self means you turn disagreements into arguments and always have to win;
- an unhelpful belief you have is related to one vMEME and the replacement belief is related to another.

**BEIGE**

The N match to the A Life Conditions. This vMEME is concerned with basic survival needs and is bottom of the Spiral. It is instinctive and does not lend itself to cognitive thought as such.

Air, food and water, shelter from the elements and sex for procreation (rather than pleasure) are the very basic drives which characterise this vMEME.

Much of what *Evolutionary Psychology* has to say about the essentials of human nature is centred at this animalistic level.

If the BEIGE driver ceases to function, then we will die because we simply will not do what we need to do to survive. BEIGE ceasing to function is almost certainly what is meant when we say that someone has lost the will to live.

**PURPLE**

As cognition develops, so the PURPLE vMEME emerges. The O match to the B Life Conditions.

This vMEME seeks safety in belonging. The belonging can be to a tribe, a family, a club, a gang or even a boy-girl relationship. The belonging can be informal – though PURPLE’s safety needs often lead it

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to desire formalisation and reinforcement of relationships through ritual – eg: the marriage ceremony, gang induction rites, etc.

In anthropological/historical terms, this is the formation of the tribe for protection. PURPLE’s needs are also manifest in the scenario of the young infant in the family. The more safe the infant is with their parents – or other caregiver(s) – the more likely he/she will develop a healthy psyche.

Dr Mary Ainsworth’s classic Strange Situation experiments of the 1960s and 1970s showed how critical having secure attachments is to a young child’s psychological development.

How the health of the PURPLE vMEME develops can affect our ability to form adult relationships – especially romantic ones – as has been illustrated by the famous ‘Love Quiz ’ experiments of Cindy Hazen & Phil Shaver.


Patterns of Attachment: a Psychological Study of the Strange Situation – Mary D S Ainsworth, M C Blehar, E Waters & S Wall (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc, 1978). The Strange Situation experiments have been replicated by other psychologists with considerable success in a variety of cultures around the globe. While there have been some significant variations, the Strange Situation as an attachment assessment process and what Ainsworth learned about infant attachments from her research have largely held up.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Using Ainsworth’s attachment types, they found a significant correlation between how people had been as infants – Secure, Ambivalent (anxious, jealous, insecure and punitive) and Avoidant (fearful and/or indifferent) and how they were in adult romantic relationships.

Those who had been Secure infants tended to have happy, stable relationships and were very accepting of their partners.

Those who had been Ambivalent tended to have unstable relationships characterised by obsession, demands for reciprocation, extremes of emotional highs and lows, jealousy and fear of their partner abandoning them.

Avoidant lovers typically feared intimacy and believed that they did not need ‘love’ to have a satisfying life.

The B Life Conditions comprise elements of uncertainty, insecurity and fear.

Back in the mists of time, the first humanoids, with the beginnings of cognition, had no idea why the sun set or things grew in the ground. Or why, for example, brilliant sunshine, pleasant for the first hour or so, burnt their skins horribly after three or four hours of exposure. Nor did they understand why some animals (herbivores) would avoid them while others (large carnivores) would hunt them.

In such Life Conditions, the O PURPLE response is to band together or otherwise belong to a grouping for safety. Preferably, the group should be led by or have the services of a shaman or witchdoctor who can intercede with the gods or spirits who cause these inexplicable things to happen.

In a similar fashion, parents are the shamanic figures who stand between the young infant and the mysterious, scary world they can’t understand.

So what happens when the parents aren’t very good at being protective shamanic figures?

A number of people who have been to me for therapy have had problems with their PURPLE vMEME.

One such case was ‘Shirley’. Unable to form lasting adult romantic relationships...

There have been many criticisms both of Hazen & Shaver’s study design and its methodologies. Nonetheless, the study is generally recognised as a major piece of work – especially as a repeat study had much the same results, if a slightly lower level of statistical significance – see: ‘Adult Romantic Attachment: Theory & Evidence’ – Cindy Hazen & Philip R Shaver in ‘Advances in Personal Relationships Vol 4’ – D Perlman & W Jones (ed) (Kingsley, 1993).
relationships, she was, underneath her RED’s *devil may care* mask, deeply unhappy. She fitted the Hazen & Shaver Avoidant lover style; yet it turned out that the damage to Shirley’s PURPLE had been done not so much as an infant but in her early teens. Previously very close to her divorced mother, Shirley rowed frequently and bitterly with her mother’s new husband. She felt devastated that her mother not only consistently backed him but also put an emotional distance between herself and her daughter to emphasise her support for the new husband.

Only after using Penny Parks’ *Trauma Resolution Experience*\(^\text{108}\) to enable Shirley to enjoy how her mother should have been was Shirley able to put aside the hurt and feel secure.

So, thinking of the vMEME as a living neurological system within you, how is your PURPLE? Are its needs being met? Are you a secure kind of person? Are there circumstances where you don’t feel secure…and, if so, what are the triggers for the insecurity? If you suffer from insecurity, then to what in your past does that insecurity relate?

Examples of unhelpful beliefs which might indicate damage at the PURPLE level might be: “I can’t love” or “I worry people don’t like me” or “I never feel safe” or “I’m a loner”.

From my experience as a therapist with cases like ‘Shirley’, I have become more and more convinced that PURPLE is the foundation of the human psyche. If PURPLE is damaged at a young age, it can throw the entire future development of the Spiral.

In the case of ‘Susan’, work with her damaged PURPLE and repressed RED resulted in RED righting itself and correcting the entire tilt of her Spiral. She had been manifesting a RED that was abusive to others but failed to assert her own needs over those of others. As for BLUE, it barely showed at all!

Within weeks of the work on her PURPLE and RED – using the *Mistaken Belief Visualisation* (another Penny Parks technique) Susan was spoiling herself like a teenager. Within months, she was introducing BLUE rules and procedures to her rather astonished family!

What often seems to happen when PURPLE’s safety needs are not met is that C-P RED emerges in a rather unhealthy fashion\(^\text{109}\).


\(^{109}\) This point, I must emphasise, does not fit with standard *Spiral Dynamics* teaching – from either Don Beck or Chris Cowan – but is based on my own observations. The *Spiral Dynamics* orthodoxy is that, in accordance with Maslowian concepts, one vMEME must have its needs met before the next one can emerge.
This vMEME is a return to the individualistic side of Clare Graves’ Spiral – and a breaking free from the cloying confines of the tribe or the close family. RED is an assertion of *me* and a drive for esteem of ‘*me*’, especially self-esteem.

Effectively a finding of ‘my own voice’.

In terms of *NLP* Meta-Programmes – observable distinctions in processing and thinking which we will talk about more in Chapter 15 – peak RED is highly Internally-Referenced. It usually *knows* what to do and often has difficulty accepting input from others into decision-making.

Inevitably, alone beyond the safety of the tribe or family, the Life Conditions can be scary and even dangerous – so having power to dominate and gain what is desired for ‘*self*’ is critical. Thus, the social world of RED is a competitive place, where people seek to advance up the ‘power pecking order’.

Power in this sense can be displayed through physical strength, fighting ability, intelligence, sexiness, mischievousness and just about any form of marking *I’m better at this than someone else*.

The social world of RED can often be characterised as the world of the teenager, breaking free from the family to do whatever is pleasing – whatever fulfils the dominant schemas in the selfplex. Effectively, the Id pursuing the Pleasure Principle! Critically, RED has difficulty recognising consequences. To do so would place restraints on self-expression.

Thus, the caricature of the teenager drinking to excess, taking dangerous drugs, mindlessly beating someone up and having unprotected sex with a passing stranger they took a fancy to.

Rather interestingly Graves had evidence that the RED system could

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However, Maslow himself – see ‘Motivation & Personality’ (2nd edition, Harper & Row, 1970) – allowed that the *Hierarchy* was not always scaled by everyone, in every instance, in strict hierarchical order. Jane Loevinger’s work – see ‘Ego Development’ (Jossey-Blass, 1976) – also indicates there may be variations in the order people access the levels.

From an *Evolutionary* point of view, it would be adaptive for whichever vMEME was most appropriate to the Life Conditions prevailing in the Environment to emerge next whatever its position in the Spiral hierarchy.

Perhaps the best we can say, until further research, is that, in a healthy Western societal context, it would be normal for the vMEMES to emerge in the Graves/Maslow hierarchical order. In a less healthy context, that order may be less sure.
be stimulated by patterns of light and/or sound.\textsuperscript{110} Considering how much RED-driven behaviour takes place in discos and clubs, there is undoubtedly a huge amount of anecdotal evidence to support the finding! (In contrast, the PURPLE system was found to respond to smooth gradations in light or sound.)

In anthropological/historical terms, Mediaeval England would be a good example of a RED culture, where the King owned the lords absolutely and the lords owned the serfs absolutely. The power in such ownership characterised by the Lord of the Manor taking the female serf to bed on her wedding night – without question! – if he chose to.

A modern example of a RED society was the terror-ruled Iraq of Saddam Hussein. Just as a Mediaeval King would turn his lords against each other to prevent them plotting against him, so Saddam divided his generals. As the Mediaeval kings wasted myriad serf lives in wars of personal aggrandisement, so Saddam thought nothing of sacrificing 100,000 Iraqi soldiers to American smart bombs in the Second Gulf War (1991).

It is the RED vMEME which truly enables us to be an independent self – or, at least, a selfplex with its own unique confluence of schemas creating a sense of unique Identity.

Earlier I mentioned unhealthy RED emerging as a consequence of PURPLE being unable to fulfil its security needs.

This can be seen more and more in British primary school classrooms with children from ‘problem families’. Where there is significant emotional and/or physical deprivation and the school is unsuccessful in compensating, then increasingly it is not uncommon to find a 7 or 8-year-old balling a fist at a teacher attempting discipline and screaming “Fuck off!” And they mean it!

With PURPLE’s security needs unfulfilled, RED has to assert itself in the unsafe ‘jungle’ environment in which it finds itself.

Dr Jerry Coursen, a neuroscientist at Arizona State University, has postulated informally\textsuperscript{111} that the PURPLE and RED systems emerge neurologically as a pair, related to the commencement of certain activity.

\textsuperscript{110} ‘A Systems Conception of Personality’ – Clare W Graves/William Lee (trans)/Christopher Cowan (ed) (NVC Inc, 1988). This is a transcript of Graves’ presentation at the National Institutes of Health on 16 March 1971, extracts of which were used in the NVC training manual from 1988 onwards.

\textsuperscript{111} E-mail correspondence between Dr Coursen and the author, 2004-2005.
in the amygdala\textsuperscript{112} – see Fig 2. If so, then it would seem that PURPLE is, by default, the dominant vMEME in a child’s early years. However, the RED vMEME is ‘lurking’, as it were, in the background, perhaps taking advantage of any Life Conditions in which it can express itself…?

In a situation then, where PURPLE’s needs are unmet, RED is ready to spring into action – but not from any satisfactory foundation.

This might account for the so-called ‘Terrible Two’s’ so many parents endure with their progeny. It might also explain the extreme selfishness young children so often demonstrate!

It would seem that the most appropriate time for RED to emerge as the dominant vMEME would be at or just after puberty. At this time a youngster is starting to make the journey to adulthood and a driver to assert an ‘independent self’, distinct from the ‘family-oriented self’ PURPLE underpinned, is desirable.\textsuperscript{113}

So, how is your RED? Do you look after yourself and make sure your needs are met?

Unhelpful beliefs which indicate RED is not functioning healthily often centre around the ‘I’m not good enough’ motif. In the aforementioned case of ‘Susan’, she wasn’t good enough to have a decent car, spend money on herself or even give birth to a healthy child – she didn’t deserve any of those things!

In another instance, I knew of a highly-successful headteacher who always attributed success to her staff’s efforts – and deflected their attempts to praise her. Her self-esteem was low enough that she couldn’t accept that she was a principal contributor to the school’s achievements,

\textsuperscript{112}Again, this is not orthodox \textit{Spiral Dynamics} teaching from either Beck or Cowan. Beyond stating that the systems emerged in hierarchical order, Graves never attempted to attach any age boundaries to them. As far as he was concerned, the next system would emerge when the Life Conditions were appropriate. Although ‘Life Conditions’ are often read as what’s going on in the external Environment, they can include what is going on internally – as, effectively, Peter McNab has pointed out – see: ‘Realigning Neurological Levels – A Reassessment: Some Thoughts on Moving Towards an Integral NLP’ in \textit{Rapport} (1999). Dr Coursen’s ideas strongly imply there may be a purely maturational element in the way systems emerge.

\textsuperscript{113}When one thinks of the bodily changes of puberty and how appropriate RED is to that time in life, one can but wonder how the emergence of this vMEME is related to the hormonal changes a youngster goes through. Again this is a hint at a maturational element to vMEME emergence. It also means the Life Conditions are inside us to some considerable degree – which reinforces Peter McNab’s point that we and what is happening to us are part of the Environment.
even though staff, students and many parents thought very highly of her. (We will discuss attribution more in Chapter 13.)

While peak RED can be really difficult for others to handle – just ask any secondary school teacher! – seriously-deficient RED will mean you are likely to be used and abused by others – the ‘doormat syndrome’.

I have found that most people who come to me for therapy have problems with their PURPLE or RED or both; and mostly the problems stem from their formative (pre-adult) years. Schematic patterns are often set by the late teens and tend to filter in memes which reinforce existing Values & Beliefs – helpful and unhelpful. New memes which present contrary evidence tend to be deleted or ignored unless a critical mass for change builds up. See Chapters 8, 9 and 10 for more about change.

### BLUE

Now, let’s think back to our imaginary 15-year-old Street Tough from Chapter 4.

After a period of wild RED-led indulgence, let’s imagine he has fallen in love – and in so doing along the way feeds his PURPLE need to belong! (In *Spiral Dynamics*, vMEMES working together in this way is referred to as a ‘vMEME harmonic’.)

Now there is a relationship – something that is bigger than either of the partners’ individual wants. Now there is an understanding – effectively a set of rules – which imposes certain expectations – eg: they don’t have sex with other people. (BLUE-related memes are often couched in negative *don’t* terms.) The old self-indulgent ways of RED and all the consequences they unwittingly spawned simply won’t do any more.

The Q BLUE vMEME has emerged to deal with the Life Conditions D which require the imposition of order.

In anthropological/historical terms, a major example of the large-scale emergence of the BLUE vMEME in the Western world was the coming of the mercantile trading laws in the Seventeenth Century. (These are embodied today in the work of the World Trade Organisation.) However, it’s possible to trace BLUE back at least as far as Moses and the writing of the *Pentateuch*.

BLUE is effectively the foundation of the modern Western state. In its imposition of order, consistency, reliability and the search for ‘The Truth’, BLUE has given us organised religion, the ‘scientific method’
and the judicial system. It regulates us to ‘correctness’. For example, most people stop at red traffic lights; and we all want the aeroplane pilot’s BLUE to ensure he goes through the pre-flight checklist before taking off.

The downside of BLUE’s activities usually involve paper chases, endless checking and pointless bureaucracy. In its more extreme unhealthy manifestations, BLUE focuses on punishing ‘sinners’ – ie: those who transgress its codes – sometimes to the point of extinction. The Spanish Inquisition, Joseph Stalin’s gulags and Pol Pot’s ‘killing fields’ are all examples of BLUE’s inhumanity in its drive for conformity in doing ‘the right thing’.

As BLUE often runs a Little Detail Meta-Programme, precise correctness matters to BLUE and minor deviations must be corrected or eradicated. After all, in the grand scheme of things, just how much difference is there in doctrine between Roman Catholicism and the more ‘high’ versions of Protestantism? From a Big Picture point of view, the differences are minimal but peak BLUE’s insistence on the ‘One True Way’ means that even the most minor deviations must be eradicated.

If RED is the most extreme manifestation of Freud’s Id on Graves’ Spiral, then BLUE is the most extreme manifestation of the Superego.

People whose BLUE dominates their thinking seek to conform to some set of expectations they have imposed upon themselves. When they fail to meet the standard, they become full of guilt and beat themselves up.

Remember the student with the over-active Superego I mentioned in Chapter 4?

If any of your unhelpful beliefs are to do with guilt, then it’s very likely BLUE is involved.

BLUE is the first vMEME to have a sense of future – PURPLE tending to look backwards to honour its traditions while RED lives just for the moment – see Fig 19. However, in its looking to the future, BLUE’s Move Away From Meta-Programme is primarily seeking to prevent things going wrong.

In workshops a check for BLUE I often make is to ask how long people would wait at a red traffic light that clearly is stuck. In the scenario I paint, the traffic light is at roadworks out on a deserted country road around 12:45 AM on a Monday morning. The driver can see through to the other end of the roadworks; there isn’t another vehicle at either end and there is no indication of any other presence. The question is: how long would you wait with the light stuck on red?
Those whose thinking tends to be on the self-expressive Id side of the Spiral say they would either go straight through or only wait a few minutes. Those who are more comfortable with the conformist side of the Spiral usually indicate they would wait much longer.

I once had a lady on a workshop whose BLUE was very, very strong. Even just in an imaginary scenario, she couldn’t bring herself to disobey the red light! She said she had no idea how she would resolve the situation but she knew she wouldn’t go past the red light.

So how is your BLUE? Are you able to understand and comply with procedures and rules that make sense? Or, like the lady in the workshop do you follow them slavishly to the detriment of your well-being?

One clue to just how much BLUE is dominating you is to ask yourself about your competence at something. If you have to ask others...
to know, then your BLUE vMEME is running an External Referencing Meta-Programme. (Remember, at the start of Chapter 1, we talked about people who would refer you to others to describe what they were like…?)

Once, while carrying out a human resources project for a commercial company, I asked the Office Manager if she was any good at her job. Her reply was: “Oh, I don’t know. I can’t evaluate it. You’ll have to ask the others.” External Referencing to the extreme!

The more I got to know this woman, the stronger I perceived her BLUE to be.

To return to the case study of ‘Harry’ in Chapter 4….

Dominated in his thinking by RED, it was all but impossible for him to have a sense of purpose that, by definition, implied a grand sense of future. No wonder he was frustrated. I was asking him to do something that conceptually was beyond him!

Robert Dilts’ Neurological Levels-walking exercise is unsuitable really for people whose thinking hasn’t got at least as far as BLUE.

**ORANGE**

Strict conformity stifles any form of invention – because, of course, invention necessarily means deviation. So what happens when simple conformity can’t deal with E Life Conditions which demand something new? This is when the R ORANGE vMEME tends to emerge.

We see this particularly in times of war. Technologies often advance at their fastest when entities – individuals, companies or countries – are at war (‘hot’ or ‘cold’). And it is often the entity with the technological advantage which wins.

However, it does seem sometimes ORANGE emerges because conformity and order, for all the benefits they bring, just aren’t enough for some. These individuals are driven to break off from the ‘railroad lines’ they have been following and find ways to make their lot in life better.114

ORANGE future paces in a far more complex way than BLUE. Running a Move Towards Meta-Programme, this vMEME employs strategic thinking to set goals to achieve for itself and others it uses. ‘Uses’ is the right term here, too, as ORANGE is on the express-self Id side of the Spiral. In working to achieve its goals, it will indeed use

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114As indicated earlier in this chapter, although this is not orthodox Spiral Dynamics, there may well be a purely maturational element in the way some vMEMES emerge.
whoever it can.

One of the caricatures of ORANGE in action is the ladder-climbing business executive who pals up with those they think can further their career, then drop them when they’re no longer of obvious use. One of Graves’ early nomenclatures for this system was ‘Manipulative’.

ORANGE may have this distinctly unpleasant manifestation in certain Life Conditions; but it is essential for autonomous, strategic thinking.

When I provide a basic introduction to Graves for my Psychology students, I emphasise that they will need E-R (ORANGE) to do well at A-Level. The kind of thinking required is much more complex than the BLUE directive processes of GCSE. They will need to set their own goals, design their own work patterns and evaluate their own progress – a complexity of thinking BLUE would struggle with.

At a cultural level, ORANGE is increasingly dominant in the Western world as cutting edge thinking, driving the inexorable rise of capitalism and the growth of globalisation. Such is the spread of this vMEME that even communist China, formerly staunch BLUE in national character, is increasingly becoming a major player in the global markets.

In many ways Bill Gates is the epitome of ORANGE thinking.

Individualistic, visionary and seemingly caught in an endless drive to achieve. How many more new versions of Microsoft Windows, for example, does the world really need? The latest Vista edition will truly enable Windows to drive home entertainment systems. That’s a long way in concept from the basic DOS Gates and his colleagues originally developed for running ‘personal computers’ in offices 20 years ago. But Bill is just driven to keep making ‘bigger ‘n’ better’ software – and himself richer in the process.

So how is your ORANGE doing? Can you actually think ahead and set goals? If any of your unhelpful beliefs involve an inability to see where you’re going, then it may well be that your ORANGE vMEME is not functioning as well as it could. It’s surprising how many people in fact have difficulty in getting a real future focus.

Their RED keeps them in the moment – ‘In Time’, as the ‘NLPers’ call it. Their BLUE may stretch into the future on occasion to try to predict problems; but the real strategic thinking of ORANGE has not

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115For non-UK readers, GCSE is the examination level students take during the year they turn 16. GCSE results are the prime performance results on which secondary (high) schools are judged.

116‘NLPers’ is a colloquial term for people who are trained in and use NLP.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

taken hold.

On occasions I’ve been asked to assist people who were struggling to visualise their futures. By using the NLP technique of Timelining\textsuperscript{117}, it has been possible to get them beyond their present state and into a state where their ORANGE has been activated. This has enabled their ‘Unconscious Mind’ to take them on a time trip into the future.

If your ORANGE is strong, do you find that friends sometimes turn off, feeling they’ve been used? If so, this could be an indication that ORANGE is running rampant in your psyche, to the detriment of your other vMEMES and your overall well-being.

If, as Jerry Coursen has postulated, the PURPLE and RED vMEMES are related to activity in the amygdala, then it seems likely the frontal lobes – see Fig 1 – are involved in the operation of the BLUE and ORANGE systems, as these are associated with consideration and planning.

Moreover, neuroscientists have identified that the frontal lobes can and do inhibit signals from the limbic system\textsuperscript{118} - BLUE taking over from RED?

\textbf{GREEN}

Loneliness is, in fact, one of the F Life Conditions that can bring about the emergence of the S GREEN vMEME.

GREEN is the great equaliser. It recovers from the endless striving for improvement of ORANGE by reconnecting to humankind and valuing all equally.

Thus, GREEN thinking has given birth to feminism, anti-racism, anti-ageism and just about every anti-discriminatory ‘ism’ there is. GREEN, in its ethic that all are equal, has also created the concept of ‘positive discrimination’ to enable the disadvantaged to have the same opportunities as those who are not disadvantaged.

GREEN will put in wheelchair ramps for the disabled, ringfence pots of money for mainstream schools to take in children with ‘special educational needs’ (SEN), send millions of pounds to feed the starving in the latest African famine and make it a prosecutable offence for a white

\textsuperscript{117}The concept of Timelining was developed by Tad James – see: ‘Time Line Therapy & the Basis of Personality’ – Tad James & Wyatt Woodsmall (Meta Publications, 1988).

\textsuperscript{118}Eg: ‘Affect Regulation & the Origin of Self’ – Allan Schore (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc, 1994).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

to call a black a ‘nigger’.

GREEN extends its care of all to non-human animals and the planet in general. Thus, this vMEME has created environmentalism and manifests itself in animal rights activism.

Earlier, I referred to Bill Gates as the *epitome* of ORANGE – and he still appears very much that. Yet, over the past few years, a more GREEN side has begun to emerge. Microsoft has become a significant donor of technology, particularly to education and particularly to education in Third World countries. Gates has even made statements to the effect that technology is not ‘the Answer’; people are.

It’s not uncommon for highly-successful business people to become charitable once their commercial success is established unassailably. The ORANGE drive to achieve being fulfilled paves the way for the emergence of GREEN. Sir Richard Branson and Sir Paul McCartney are just two other high profile examples.

So when you feel appalled by examples of racism or discrimination against the disabled, this is simply your GREEN reacting to those Life Conditions. If you find yourself unable to discriminate on grounds of, say, merit, then it’s most likely that it’s GREEN finding the very act of discrimination offensive. When you find yourself unable to say anything positive about a ‘racist’ or a ‘sexist’, then look to GREEN. If GREEN detects injustice and discrimination in the attitudes of others, that can blind it to other more positive aspects of the ‘offenders’.

GREEN can undermine ORANGE ambition. A not-uncommon example of this is the 18-year-old 6th Former studying hard for A-Levels and intent on going to university who loses impetus in proportion to a growing interest in green/environmental issues and/or civil rights/liberties matters.

Although it will use BLUE laws when it suits – eg: against discrimination on grounds of gender and race – GREEN despises and attacks the soulless and often inhumane rigid adherence of BLUE to its ‘One True Way’. It also attacks the greed and waste of ORANGE in its capitalist manifestation.

GREEN’s permissiveness frequently facilitates the expression of RED.

Probably the most notable example of this at a cultural level in recent times was the way the GREEN of the 1960s hippies undermined the BLUE morality structure of the Western world while disdaining the status symbols of corporate ORANGE. As a result RED had a field day indulging itself in ‘free love’ and mind-expanding drugs which GREEN
proclaimed enhanced the human spirit. The results included a partial collapse of the institution of marriage and a hard drugs pandemic in Europe and North America.

In its excesses, GREEN’s onslaught against BLUE and ORANGE tends to reduce the Life Conditions to chaos.

At a more interpersonal level, though, GREEN and RED do not always make such comfortable ‘bedfellows’.

As a counsellor, I have had to advise a number of people whose GREEN has had great difficulty in coping with their RED-led bosses. (We will look more at RED-led bosses in Chapter 18.) GREEN, particularly with a BLUE ‘do right’ harmonic, will treat its colleagues as valuable and to be respected. Thus, it will be appalled by the sniping, manipulation and sometimes outright brutality of RED’s management style. Especially when it is turned on them!

GREEN tends to carry on bleating for fairness and moaning about such unjust treatment while RED uses it as a punchbag. It can’t conceive that someone could be so horrible to it when it is so well intentioned.

Sometimes, the person just has to escape – physically (geographically) or by psychological breakdown. Sometimes the stress is enough to start the journey to the next level.
7. Selves of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier

So, GREEN’s undermining of BLUE and its demolition of ORANGE have reduced the Life Conditions to chaos and brought the entire forward momentum of the Spiral in the particular Environment to a stop….

This, according to Clare W Graves leads not only to the next level of thinking but a different (and far superior) quality of thinking. In writing of its emergence historically and culturally, he described it as “...the most dramatic change in human behaviour that has yet occurred in all of man’s history”.\textsuperscript{119} He wrote of it as a ‘momentous leap’.\textsuperscript{120}

As part of his research, Graves\textsuperscript{121} conducted batteries of tests on different groups, each characterised by a particular system being dominant in their thinking.

On tests to do with problem-solving, he found that those who thought in G-T (YELLOW) generally had 4x the problem-solving capability of those whose thinking was predominantly in F-S (GREEN).

Those who thinking was dominated by the C-P (RED) through to F-S systems\textsuperscript{122} tended to repeat the same solutions time and time again, even when they didn’t work. By contrast, G-T would abandon ‘solutions’ that failed and work instead on developing different ideas.

Graves considered there to be more ‘conceptual space’ in the 7\textsuperscript{th} level than in all the first 6 systems put together.

This and the overall character of G-T thinking – especially the effective loss of both fear and compulsion – led Graves to speculate that it was of a quite different quality to the first 6 systems. He equated it with Self-Actualisation\textsuperscript{123} on Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs\textsuperscript{124}.

\textsuperscript{120} ‘Human Nature prepares for a Momentous Leap’ – Clare W Graves in The Futurist (April 1974).
\textsuperscript{122} In his laboratory research Graves did not find anyone thinking in nodal B-O. He inferred this level of thinking from library studies and the work of other developmental psychologists and philosophers. Later, he found evidence of it in ‘real life’.
\textsuperscript{123} The term ‘Self-Actualisation’ was originated by Kurt Goldstein in ‘Der Aufbau des Organismus’ (Nijhoff, 1934) to describe the process of achieving the complete realisation of all one’s potentialities. Carl Rogers saw Self-
In 1959, however, Graves first discovered evidence of a system beyond G-T: H-U (TURQUOISE). As he later wrote: “What can it mean that, in order for these data to be conceptualised, I have to add another system beyond that which had been described by Maslow as the self-actualising man?”

What it meant was that the very concept of Self-Actualisation itself is, in some respects, flawed. The characteristics Maslow attributed to someone achieving their full potential as a human being merely described thinking at the 7th level. Nonetheless, ‘Self-Actualisation’ is a useful metaphor for describing YELLOW thinking, beyond the limited worldviews of the 1st Tier.

The qualities of the 8th level of thinking, beyond Self-Actualisation, Maslow dubbed ‘Transcendence’ shortly before his death in 1970.

With two systems of a different quality now identified, Graves began to speculate that they began a 2nd Tier of systems. He thought he saw the physiological survival motif of A-N (BEIGE) reflected in a far more complex way in G-T (YELLOW)’s survival in Life Conditions of chaos. Moreover, he thought he saw something of B-O (PURPLE)’s banding together motivations reflected in the interconnectedness of H-U (TURQUOISE).

From this Graves speculated that the 2nd Tier was a reflection of the 1st but at a far more complex level. Accordingly, he renumbered the letter pairs for G-T as A’N’ and H-U as B’O’ in his later writings.

Graves’ designation of the 7th and 8th levels to a 2nd Tier has proved Actualisation as the ultimate aim of the process to achieve ‘Full Function’ – see: ‘Client-centered Therapy – Its Current Practices, Implications & Theory’ (Houghton Mifflin, 1951). For Maslow, it was more a level of being. In his description of ‘Self-Realisation’ – see: ‘Psychological Types’ (Routledge, 1923) – Carl Gustav Jung was close to Maslow’s conceptualisation.

Graves went on to speculate whether tiers of systems develop in 6s. Naturally, given his presupposition that the ability of the human brain to develop new ways of thinking to deal with ever more complex Life Conditions is theoretically limitless, this could mean that in time there could be a 3rd Tier of 6 systems, a 4th Tier of 6 systems and so on. (The letter pairs for the 3rd Tier would be annotated “-” – eg:A”-N” – and the 4th “-” – eg: A”-N” – etc.) It must be stated clearly that this was purely philosophical speculation on Graves’ part. He had no evidence of any system beyond H-U.
more than a little controversial among Gravesians over the years. Those who are advocates of ‘2nd Tier thinking’ have sometimes found themselves accused of fostering ‘elitism’ by those who doubt the validity of the concept.\textsuperscript{128}

Whether there really is a ‘2nd Tier’ – or even tiers beyond that, as Graves speculated there might be in time and Ken Wilber claims insight into\textsuperscript{129}, only the future and further research will tell.

Personally, I take the view that ‘2nd Tier’ is a good-enough metaphor to symbolise the ‘momentous leap’ in quality from GREEN to YELLOW thinking.

Graves considered the 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier to be about subsistence and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} about ‘being’. In this he reflected Maslow who considered needs below Self-Actualisation to be Deficiency Needs and Self-Actualisation to be composed of various Being Needs.\textsuperscript{130}

So, now let’s take a closer look at the ‘2nd Tier’….

\textbf{YELLOW}

To survive in the chaos caused by GREEN’s undermining of BLUE and ORANGE requires extreme flexibility and great understanding. This is what the T YELLOW vMEME endeavours to achieve in the Life Conditions of G.

One nomenclature Don Beck & Chris Cowan have used for this vMEME is ‘Flexiflow’.\textsuperscript{131} This captures both the incredible flexibility in this level of thinking and the sense of peak performance Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi identifies athletes, musicians, etc, experience when

\textsuperscript{128}Leading lights like Don Beck strongly emphasise in workshops and e-lists the need for 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier thinking to understand and sort out the messes created by the 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier. See: various postings to the \textit{Spiral Dynamics-integral} e-mail list 2002-2005 – http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral. However, others like Jerry Coursen have moved completely away from the concept on the grounds that it fosters ORANGE elitism and the sense that 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier thinkers are better than those still ‘stuck’ in the 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier. Recently Chris Cowan seems to be more of the view that the gap between GREEN and YELLOW may not be quite as significant as Graves perceived it to be at the time of his research. See: various postings to the \textit{Spiral Dynamics} e-mail list 2002-2005 – http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics.

\textsuperscript{129}Eg: ‘A Theory of Everything’ – Ken Wilber (Shambhala, 2001).

\textsuperscript{130}‘Motivation & Personality’ – Abraham Maslow (Harper & Row, 1954).

they enter the state of ‘flow’.¹³²

Graves put significant emphasis on the differences between 1st and 2nd Tier thinking. However, it is perhaps in the work of Maslow that we find the most complete descriptions of thinking at the 7th level.

In 1956 he identified 14 characteristics of Self-Actualisation¹³³, 12 of which serve us well in describing YELLOW. What follows is paraphrased from Maslow, with comments lifted from Graves and Beck & Cowan in parentheses….

1. Self-actualising people have both a more efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it. This includes the detection of what is phoney and/or dishonest and the accurate perception of what really exists – rather than a distortion of perception by one's needs. (Graves saw 1st Tier levels as not having an accurate grip on reality. Only with G-T (YELLOW) is one able to see people as they really are.)

   Self-actualising people are more aware of their environment, both human and non-human. They are not afraid of the unknown and can tolerate the doubt, uncertainty, and tentativeness accompanying the perception of the new and unfamiliar. (The certainties about life held by the nodal vMEMES of the 1st Tier are revealed to be so much delusion. YELLOW can live with paradoxes and ‘conflicting truths’.)

2. Self-actualisers accept themselves, others and nature. They are not ashamed or guilty about being human, with its shortcomings, imperfections, frailties, and weaknesses. Nor are they critical of these aspects in other people. They respect and esteem themselves and others.

   Moreover, they tend to be honest, open and genuine; they will not put on a front just to impress. They are not, however, self-satisfied and smug. They tend to be concerned about discrepancies between what is and what should be in themselves, others, and society. (Since YELLOW never knows when it might need people or things, the inclination is to look after all resources.)

3. Self-actualisers are spontaneous. They are not hampered by convention, but they do not flout it either. They are not conformists; but neither are they non-conformist for the sake of it. (YELLOW has no need for status as such but accepts it is important to others.) They are not externally motivated or even goal-directed. Rather, their motivation is the internal one of growth and development, the actualisation of themselves and their potentialities. (YELLOW is not goal-oriented – as ORANGE is – in the sense of being driven to achieve. Rather it pursues what interests it.)

4. The self-actualising person enjoys solitude and privacy. They can also seem detached. It is possible for them to remain unruffled and undisturbed by what upsets others. (YELLOW will walk away from ‘lost causes’, however ‘noble’ they might be.) They may even appear to be asocial. This characteristic is related to a sense of security and self-sufficiency.

5. Self-actualising people have a continued freshness of appreciation. Repeatedly, though not continuously, they experience awe, pleasure, and wonder in their everyday world.

6. In varying degrees and with varying frequencies, self-actualising persons have experiences of ecstasy, awe, and wonder with feelings of limitless horizons opening up. These experiences are followed by the conviction that the experience was important and has a carry-over into everyday life.

7. Self-actualisers are autonomous and are independent of culture and environment. Though dependent on others for the satisfaction of the basic needs of love, belongingness, safety and respect, they get their principal satisfactions from their own development and continued growth. (The motif, in the Life Conditions GREEN has brought about, is to make the best for oneself – this vMEmE is very much on the self-expressive side of the Spiral!)

8. Self-actualising people tend to have deep interpersonal relations with others. They are selective, however, and their circle of friends may be small, usually consisting of others capable of self-actualising. In spite of their tendency to privacy, they often
attract others to them as admirers or disciples.

9. The self-actualising person does not discriminate on the basis of class, education, race, or colour. They are humble in their recognition of what they know in comparison with what they don’t know; and they are ready and willing to learn from anyone. They respect everyone as potential contributors to their knowledge, merely because they are human beings.

10. Self-actualisers are highly creative. It is a creativity potentially inherent in everyone but usually suffocated by acculturation. It is a fresh, naive, direct way of looking at things.

11. Self-actualisers are usually highly ethical. They clearly distinguish between means and ends and subordinate means to the ends. (YELLOW will be democratic when it is appropriate and authoritarian when it is necessary.)

12. The sense of humour of a self-actualiser is not of the ordinary (1st Tier) type. Their sense of humour is the spontaneous, thoughtful type, intrinsic to the situation. Their humour does not involve hostility, superiority, or sarcasm.

A characteristic of the 7th level which Maslow didn’t single out explicitly in his 1956 piece is that, to address the discrepancies between what is and what should be in itself, others and society – see Characteristic 2 – YELLOW has to understand the needs of all. To do that, it has to ‘go meta’ to itself – incorporating Maslow’s ‘peak experiences’. Thus, YELLOW can appear chameleon-like as it speaks to the values of whichever 1st Tier vMEMES it needs to engage. Don Beck calls this ‘surfing the Spiral’.\(^\text{134}\)

So, the BIG QUESTION: can you self-actualise to YELLOW thinking – or are you trapped in 1st Tier worldviews?

**TURQUOISE**

Beyond saying that the problems of existence (the Life Conditions) must become too great to for the individual efforts of YELLOW to solve them, how the transition to H-U TURQUOISE takes place is a decidedly

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\(^{134}\)SD II training session run by NVC Inc in Mirfield, near Brighouse, UK, in December 1998.
under-researched area.

According to Maslow, Graves, Beck & Cowan – and Lawrence Kohlberg too\(^{135}\), mapping his Stage 6 Principled Conscience to YELLOW – relatively few of the world’s population have reached the level of YELLOW/Self-Actualisation. Inevitably then, the whole area of what, for ease of use, we will call the ‘2\(^{nd}\) Tier’ is fairly unexplored.

One of the questions Chris Cowan has a tendency to put to those who claim to be TURQUOISE thinkers is: *what are the Life Conditions to produce that level of thinking?*\(^{136}\)

Since the publication of Beck & Cowan’s 1996 book and especially since Ken Wilber put *Spiral Dynamics* at the core of one of his key lines of development\(^{137}\), more and more philosophical thinkers have claimed to be operating at that level. However, up to 1977 Graves had encountered only 6 people whom he could categorise confidently as thinking in a more complex way than the 7\(^{th}\) level.

So what can we say about TURQUOISE, given many claims but little reliable evidence?

There are serious difficulties in describing this level. Even Chris Cowan has admitted that the description of TURQUOISE in the 1996 book “is largely FS”\(^{138}\).

Perhaps the best we can say is that it’s about interconnectedness and possibly some form of deeper or spiritual understanding – order from the chaos YELLOW contends with? That understanding is shared and enables TURQUOISE to work for the good of all and the needs of all – though it would appear TURQUOISE can be ruthless, in that it will sacrifice the needs of some for the good of all.

While Graves had his roots firmly in science, it is easy to see the appeal of the TURQUOISE concept to those interested in spiritual levels of consciousness. Graves himself, said: “*I find that the H-U person can turn off other levels of consciousness at will. He can go out of this world and go off into other levels of consciousness and come back at will. Instrumentally you have that....*”\(^{139}\)

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\(^{136}\) See: various postings to the *Spiral Dynamics* e-mail list 2002-2004 – http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics.

\(^{137}\) ‘Integral Psychology’ – Ken Wilber (Shambhala, 2000).

\(^{138}\) E-mail correspondence between Mr Cowan and the author, 26 October 1999.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

For those of a Buddhist-type orientation, TURQUOISE can seem to offer the promise of enlightenment.

The cosmic, mystical quality of TURQUOISE is reflected physiologically in the thinker’s galvanic skin response (GSR). Graves had found GSR varied according to which system was dominating – but it reached real extremes with the 8th system: “Oh, my God, it becomes so high you can’t hardly get it. I’m talking about something that is 2-3-4 standard deviations....The electrical resistance of the skin goes up incredibly.”

Of the little he wrote about the 8th level, Maslow, who had been exploring concepts of spirituality beyond the narrow definitions offered by conventional religions, saw something of being one with the cosmos and of God being within us.

Additionally, two of the qualities Maslow associated with Self-Actualisation in 1956 appear to me to be more to do with a higher level of thinking....

1. Such people are not ego-centered but focus on problems outside themselves. They are mission-oriented, often on the basis of a sense of responsibility, duty, or obligation rather than personal choice, including acceptance and respect.

2. These people have a deep feeling of empathy, sympathy and/or compassion for human beings in general. This feeling is, in a sense, unconditional in that it exists along with the recognition of the existence in others of negative qualities that provoke occasional anger, impatience, and disgust.

One thing that will have become clear as we have taken a closer look at the vMEMES in this chapter and the last is that, much to the chagrin of GREEN thinking, neither Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs nor Spiral Dynamics offers mankind a level playing field.

Theoretically every human with healthy neurology should be able to access all 8 levels. The fact is that most don’t.

I do not wish to be tarred with the ‘elitist’ tag that some critics of the

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

2nd Tier concept are fond of giving out; but some people simply do not ascend the Spiral as highly as others.

To be honest, we don’t always know why. Certainly, Graves’ theory that the neurological system (vMEME) should match the Life Conditions offers an explanation in many, many instances. If the Life Conditions predicate ORANGE thinking, then don’t surprised if there’s not much TURQUOISE around.

If the Life Conditions don’t require it, then why should I function at a more complex level than I need to?

**CORAL?**

Maslow considered Self-Actualisation to be the final level of development and only accepted the existence of Transcendence (as a level in his Hierarchy) shortly before his death. From this, it is reasonably safe to assume that Maslow did not conceive of the brain developing further levels.

Graves most certainly did – and this was a key point of difference between him and Maslow. However, Graves had no evidence for any level of thinking beyond H-U. As we noted in Chapter 5, Beck & Cowan assigned I-V CORAL in *Spiral Dynamics* purely to illustrate Graves’ concept of an ever-ascending Spiral.

There are those who claim to think in CORAL; and, according to some, Ken Wilber reputedly is now claiming that CORAL is the start of the 3rd Tier.\(^{143}\)

In fact, Wilber, a leading light in the foundation of Transpersonal Psychology, has been talking about levels beyond TURQUOISE and tiers beyond 2nd for several years now.

The problem comes in evidencing such claims and separating out philosophical speculation from reliable evidence.

As an example, Lawrence Kohlberg speculated that there might be a Stage 7 Transcendental Morality\(^{144}\) (which we can map to TURQUOISE) but admitted in his final (posthumous) work that, in retrospect he doubted he really had enough evidence to justify statistically his assertions of Stage 6 Principled Conscience.\(^{145}\)

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\(^{143}\) Various postings to the *Spiral Dynamics-integral* e-mail list, November 2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral.

\(^{144}\) *The Philosophy of Moral Development* – Lawrence Kohlberg (Harper Row, 1986). In this work, Kohlberg speculated that a seventh stage might exist which linked spirituality with moral reasoning.

\(^{145}\) See: *The Measurement of Moral Judgement* – Anne Colby & Lawrence Kohlberg (Cambridge University Press, 1987),
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Which puts Graves’ assertion of an 8th level, based on a sample of just 6, in a different perspective!

On the other hand, I have met people who claim to think in TURQUOISE – they seem very comfortable with the concepts, as far as these have been articulated – and I have met at least two people who seem to have demonstrated thinking in a ‘bigger picture’ way than YELLOW.

I have also met someone who claimed to think in CORAL. He described it as being able to think as God!

As we noted in Chapter 1 when discussing the concept of the spiritual self, it requires faith and/or Wilber’s ‘postrational thinking’ to deal with concepts for which there is no reliable evidence. That you can’t prove its existence doesn’t mean something doesn’t exist. On the other hand, it might not exist! Without faith and/or postrational thinking, we simply don’t know.

It may just be that Maslow was right and Graves wrong: the brain’s ability to develop new ways of thinking may be finite.

Such arguments are beyond the intent of this book.
Let’s consider what we’ve covered so far and use it to learn more about how human beings change and adapt to their circumstances.

First of all, leaving aside the issue of a ‘spiritual self’, we’ve learned that, on top of a very basic set of temperamental dispositions, sits the selfplex. This is a complex confluence of schemas which include the concept of ‘I, myself’.

The selfplex, which may mutate and change according to the memes of the Environment it finds itself in, forms the Neurological Levels of Identities and Values & Beliefs appropriate to the Environment.

Let’s call this ‘Nominal Level Adaptation’ – see Fig 20. We are adapting at a nominal level – taking on the role which fits the Environment.

![Fig 20: Nominal Level Adaptation](image)

Things can very easily go wrong at this Nominal Level - with disastrous consequences, as we outlined in Chapter 4. However, to understand how and why things go wrong at this level, we need to look deeper – below the Nominal Level.

*Spiral Dynamics* enables us to take a view I call ‘Deeper Level Adaptation’ – see Fig 21. Now we consider the Life Conditions within the Environment and how vMEMEs influence the schemas of Identity and Values & Beliefs to match to those Life Conditions.

Let’s consider the example of the man and his partner from Chapter
4. Let’s say he’s managed to adapt his Identities successfully to his Environments. At work, he’s a Manager; with his partner, he’s a Lover. Nominal Level Adaptation appears to be successful.

However, successful Nominal Level Adaptation depends on what is happening at the Deeper Level which can be much more complex.

If the man’s partner is loving and caring – B Life Conditions in the Environment of their relationship – which vMEME would match? O PURPLE would be the best fit and would strongly support the Identity of Lover, with Values of love, caring, belonging, etc.

However, if the partner is concerned with getting her own way and dominating him – C Life Conditions in the Environment – which vMEME will be the best match? Almost certainly P RED. The man has to know if he is more powerful than his partner and what his position is in the ‘power pecking order’ of the relationship. Who is in control?

Such a RED-led scenario will be quite different than the PURPLE-hued scenario we first envisioned.

The Values & Beliefs of the man’s RED fighting with his partner over her attempts to dominate him will be quite different to the Values & Beliefs PURPLE would have had. This may start to compromise the Identity of Lover, depending on what his prior beliefs about a lover’s role were. Behaviour, of course, is most likely to reflect the Values & Beliefs and may not be what one would normally associate with a Lover. This may further compromise that Identity.

In the RED-led scenario, the Neurological Levels will become misaligned unless the Identity starts to mutate into something more in keeping with the Values & Beliefs. (‘Lover’ is hardly a suitable Identity to win a war for power!)

Fig 22 shows how vMEMES shape Values & Beliefs and Identity and influence Behaviour to match the kind of Life Conditions in the
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Environment.

Thus, for example, the O PURPLE vMEME will use or acquire PURPLE-appropriate Skills & Knowledge to carry out PURPLE-appropriate Behaviour in what is perceived as B PURPLE Life Conditions in the Environment. In the scenario of the man and his partner we have been discussing, this might translate as cuddling Skills or empathetic listening Skills, Knowledge of her birthday and her favourite flowers. With this kind of Skills & Knowledge, he is able to carry out loving Behaviour to help her feel secure in their belonging to each other.

In the same way the P RED vMEME will lead to RED-appropriate Skills such as lying and RED-appropriate Knowledge such as shameful events from her past. Armed with such Skills & Knowledge, he is able to carry out RED-appropriate Behaviour which undermines and/or shames her in the perceived C RED Life Conditions.

So…

If you find yourself unhappy with your Behaviour in a certain context, explore:-

- the Life Conditions – what’s actually going on in the Environment?
- the Values & Beliefs you hold about you and others in those Life Conditions;
- the appropriateness of the vMEME which is matched to your perception of the Life Conditions.

In considering the Life Conditions, it can be useful to think of them from two angles: Environmental Structure and Environmental Culture – see Fig 22 again.

By the Structure, we mean the set-up in which we are behaving/meant to be behaving. So, in the case of the Environment of our hypothetical couple, structural questions to be considered might include, for example:-

- Is it a marriage, a non-marriage cohabitation, or are they even living in the same property – and, if so, whose property?
- Are there children, step-children, pets, parents and others to consider?

By Environmental Culture, we mean the way our hypothetical couple and others who impact upon the Environmental Structure behave. For example, who tends to do the shopping, the cooking, etc? Who tends to initiate sex? What do the in-laws say and do? Do the couple spend a lot of time with friends?
Fig 22: vMEMES shaping Values & Beliefs and Identity and influencing Behaviour to match the type of Life Conditions in the Environment (from the work of Clare W Graves, Albert Bandura, Robert Dilts and Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
So, when you look at your list of unhelpful beliefs from Chapter 2, can you relate them to specific Environments? And if so, just what is going on in those Environments – ie: the Life Conditions?

If you’re not happy with the way things are, can you go meta – self-actualise from YELLOW thinking – to look beyond your own reactions to the Life Conditions? If you can – and we’re taking fully-functioning brain chemistry (the hormones and neurology) for granted here - then, by looking at things in this kind of abstracted way, you will probably be able to work things out for yourself.

There are several kinds of NLP dissociation exercise to help this process of Self-Actualisation. One I use with clients is to imagine you are looking down from above the scenario and seeing the participants, including yourself, acting out their Behaviours – a fly on the wall, if you will. For many, this enables them to see themselves as just one of the players in the scene. (Robert Dilts takes this type of idea into a full process with his Meta-Mirror exercise which we will examine in detail in Chapter 18.)

If you can’t see beyond your own reactions and the situation is important to you, then you are probably well advised to seek help from a therapist or counsellor.

A key word here is, of course, perception. We know that we are bombarded with memes in the Environment. We know that the internal schematic maps, by which we evaluate incoming memes, are inaccurate to some degree or other. So getting a handle on what the real Life Conditions are may present quite a challenge.

Getting the view of others can be critical to escaping schematic traps. Gregory Bateson reputedly once said: “Knowledge comes from but a single perspective. Wisdom comes from multiple perspectives.”

However, be aware that exposure to more memes can also mean exposure to more harmful concepts!

**We change the Environment; the Environment changes Us**

As hinted at, when discussing Environmental Culture and impact on Environmental Structure, we have to acknowledge that we ourselves, by our Behaviour – what we do, who we interact with – also change the Life Conditions in the Environment. The changed Life Conditions may then challenge us at the level of Values & Beliefs or even Identity – see Fig

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146 Told to me by Ian Lavan, Hidden Resources (Change Management) Ltd NLP Master Practitioner course in Mirfield, near Brighouse, UK, in Spring 2000.
22 again: the arrow from Behaviour to Environment and the arrow from Environment to Values & Beliefs.

Taking the what-we-do aspect: if I suddenly accelerate a car at high speed down a residential side street, I change the Structure of the Environment, making it dangerous. The sensory perceptions I receive – the external environmental feedback of noise and fast-moving sights – will reinforce my existing schematic belief that high speeds are more dangerous than slow ones. My amygdala will be alarmed by the sensory input. This will lead to my hypothalamus triggering a high speed release of noradrenaline, first as a neurotransmitter and then as a hormone, to enable me to cope. In other words, my fight-or-flight mechanism has been triggered by the danger I have put myself in. My fast-beating heart and sweaty palms would give me internal environmental feedback. As a result, when I brake at the end of the street, I might say to myself, “That was a bit foolish” – a challenge at the Beliefs level.

If I knock down a young child in the street, that would almost certainly lead to a challenge to my Identity of Responsible Driver.

As to the who-you-interact-with aspect: if, for example, you involve yourself with people who are sporty and athletic (Environmental Structure), the experiences you have are likely to involve sport in some way (Environmental Culture). They may also pose questions about your own attitudes to health and exercise (Values & Beliefs). Similarly, if you involve yourself with politically active people (Environmental Structure), you are likely to find yourself in debates (Environmental Culture) which challenge some of your political views (Values & Beliefs). This principle has long been understood by religious leaders in their attempts to stop ‘true believers’ being led astray by non-believers – eg: “Be not unequally yoked.” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

This do-feedback-feel relationship between Behaviour, the Environment and Values & Beliefs/Identity is, according to Albert Bandura, Reciprocal Determinism. Bandura identified that how we behave in the Environment can alter the Environment – in other words we change the Life Conditions by our Behaviour. That then gives us feedback for our Behaviour – either positive or negative reinforcement – see Fig 23. This may or may not lead to a change in the Person (Identity and Values & Beliefs) which

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may or may not be at a vMEMETIC level and may or may not produce a change in Behaviour.

Let’s say, for example, my RED tells a dirty joke to someone I’ve just met whose thinking is dominated by Q BLUE. The disapproving feedback I receive – D Life Conditions – may well trigger my BLUE to ensure I behave correctly and don’t cause any further offence.

However, depending on just how my vMEMES are ordered – dominant, subordinate, sublimated (my ‘vMEME Stack’, in the parlance of Spiral Dynamics) – and what memes have been internalised as schemas, my reaction might be quite different. My RED might simply disdain the environmental feedback and create the belief that the other person lacks a sense of fun.

As well as learning from direct experience, Bandura also emphasises the importance of Social Learning. In other words, we observe what happens to others – the consequences of their actions – and whether they are rewarded or punished.

If we can see that others find the consequences of their Behaviour rewarding, we are likely to internalise that as a good thing and to try it ourselves.

If we can see that others find the consequences of their behaviour unpleasant, then that is likely to have a deterrent effect to us trying that behaviour.

Say my RED was on the verge of telling a dirty joke and my BLUE saw someone else get a dressing down for it, then my BLUE might sublimate my RED to prevent me receiving similar disapproval.

To briefly sum up Reciprocal Determinism, our Behaviour impacts upon the Environment; but the impacted Environment will impact upon

Fig 23: Reciprocal Determinism (from the work of Albert Bandura; graphic copyright © 1986 Pearson Education Inc, Upper Saddle River, NJ USA – all rights reserved)
our Person because we live in the Environment. The impacted Person may then display different Behaviour. And so on….

So, to return to our example of the hypothetical couple where the partner is trying to dominate the man…

Her RED vMEME is seeking to establish her power over him. In this way her vMEME creates the C Life Conditions in the Environment to which his P RED will match. There’s a sense in which she has brought his Behaviour upon herself!

Variations in the Formation of Identity

Referring back to James Marcia’s route to Identity formation\(^{149}\) – which we considered briefly in Chapter 4 – vMEMES clearly will influence both the route to Identity and the type of Identity taken.

Let’s take the hypothetical case of Moratorium we looked at. A man thought he was in love (Values & Beliefs) with one woman (Environment) and understood what commitment meant (Knowledge). However, he would not commit to being her full-time partner/husband because his Identity (perhaps Lothario!) was not aligned with the Environment….

PURPLE would be most unlikely to get in the situation of not committing but could well Foreclose from an unthinking need to belong.

However, such new belonging would have to be on the proviso that it did not compromise previously-established belonging. For example, a man’s PURPLE could well decline to belong to a woman whose family were hated by his family.

Unless it was agreed that there was no expectation to commit, BLUE would find itself obliged to do ‘the right thing’. However, that agreement would have to be shared by all with recognised authority in the Environment – from the woman’s parents to the company he kept and the company he worked for.

However, RED might well support a ‘Lothario’ Identity at odds with being the woman’s full-time partner/husband. Its hatred of restraints would enable its Id-like drive to self-indulge itself with whatever other woman might be/become available. Plus, RED would lack foresight into the damage that lack of commitment might do to the relationship.

ORANGE would be unlikely to commit unless it had all the

Knowledge it considered it needed and commitment suited its strategic game plan. The Identity of Partner or Husband would simply be part of a strive to achieve, rather than an end in itself.

Perhaps surprisingly, GREEN might hesitate to commit. In spite of its concern for the well-being of all, the meme of *freedom-of-the-human-spirit* might form a stronger schema, for example. Such a schema would most likely facilitate the indulgence of RED – producing a RED/GREEN alliance of motivations in the way of a vMEME harmonic. (As we discussed in Chapter 6, hippie GREEN in the 1960s let loose RED in a so-called ‘cultural revolution’ of ‘free love’ and widescale drug abuses.)

vMEME harmonics – of which more in Chapter 12 – make the whole understanding of vMEMES more complex than we have considered so far. For example, RED might give enough muscle to BEIGE’s sex drive, for a man to disallow his PURPLE attachment to his family and form a new PURPLE attachment with a woman whose family his family hated.

Shades of ‘*Romeo & Juliet*’!

Identity Diffusion, where there is little or no sense of ‘I’ in the particular context or circumstances, was of great concern to both Marcia and Erik Erikson\(^{150}\). In terms of *Spiral Dynamics*, this can be attributed to an under-development of the RED vMEME, particularly in the teenage years when it acts as a driver to enable breakaway from the B PURPLE-turning-C RED restricting structural confines of the family. Without strong RED, there is likely to be a failure to develop a truly independent ‘I’ selfplex as opposed to the schema of I-as-part-of-We-the-Family.

A major stereotype of this failure is the adult son who never leaves his mother.

‘Bert’ was one such man I knew reasonably well over a period of some 30 years. In his late teens, Bert fell in love with ‘Moira’. His RED was adventuresome enough for them not only to indulge in a passionate love affair but to drive all over Europe in the days when Continental travel was still a rarity for Brits. However, his RED wasn’t strong enough to break him away from his widowed mother.

Moira and Bert broke up several times because he wouldn’t leave his mother for her. Finally, after 20 years, the PURPLE bonds between Bert and Moira were strong enough to nurture his RED to break away. They married.

When Bert’s mother died a year or so later, his PURPLE loss kicked off a bout of BLUE guilt and he suffered a minor nervous breakdown.

However, Moira stuck it out with him, feeding his RED self-esteem and gradually he emerged from his depression to become his own man, stronger than ever.

‘Tom’, whose street I lived on for a year or so, had no ‘Moira’ in his life. *His life* effectively was his mother. After she died, he lost touch with reality and was institutionalised within 6 months.

While the emergence of strong RED is often difficult for those in its Environment, it is essential for the development of a strong independent ‘I’ in the selfplex.

The PURPLE of parents, whose children leave home in their late teens, often finds their departures quite traumatic. They can comfort themselves with the thought that, by ‘letting go’, they are performing a vital service to their offspring’s psychological health.

Without the emergence of a strong, robust RED, they will never become their own person.
9. The Mechanics of Change

We’ve looked at how vMEMES match the Life Conditions at the Deeper Level to service the fitting of Identity and Values & Beliefs to the Environment at the Nominal Level. We’ve also considered how Reciprocal Determinism can create an ongoing loop of change. Now we need to consider what actually happens when change is instigated. In other words, the process.

Spiral Dynamics embodies arguably the most advanced model yet developed for the dynamic of change – personal or organisational.\textsuperscript{151} However, in working through, the model, it is highly useful to tie it in with the Gestalt Cycle developed by Fritz Perls\textsuperscript{152}.

Gestalt Therapy shows us that we are programmed to sense for change in the Environment (external, in the outside world, or internal, within us) – see Fig 24.

Any change we sense requires us to consider a response, even if the result of that consideration is that no response is required. (Consideration, it should be noted, can happen incredibly fast, depending on just what is sensed and which vMEME is dominating. For example, if someone punches me hard unexpectedly, expect my BEIGE to trigger fight-or-flight!)

Any result, other than no response necessary, causes us dissonance.

For any change to take place, there has to be dissonance – dissatisfaction with the present mode of existence. Moreover, the dissonance has to be greater than the individual’s – or the organisation’s – natural resistance to change.

The degree of resistance to change, it needs to be stated, will be influenced by which vMEMES are dominant in the psyche. The conformist/self-sacrificial side of the Spiral tends to be naturally resistant to change – this resistance being at its most extreme in PURPLE. Unless, of course, the change brings greater security and/or conformity. The express-self side of the Spiral tends to be more welcoming to change – providing that change will advance the agenda of the individual.

The willingness to take on change can also be influenced at the temperamental level, particularly if someone is high in Psychoticism.


Knowing Me, Knowing You

I sense!

I become aware of something different!

I become motivated!

I invent what to do!

I take action!

Block?

I feel gratified

I’m available to sense again!

Fig 24: the Gestalt Cycle (basic version; from the work of Fritz Perls; graphic courtesy of Christopher Cooke)
Dissonance is essentially of two types. Firstly, we can be threatened – so that we employ a Move Away From Meta-Programme to change from what is attracting the threat. Alternatively, we can become aware we want something we don’t have so badly it causes real dissatisfaction, stimulating a Move Towards Meta-Programme.

I have had people come to me for therapy who thought they were unhappy enough to embrace change. However, when they were faced with just what the issues were and just what they would have to do to resolve them, they backed out. Their dissonance at that point in time simply wasn’t great enough to overcome their resistance to change.

In most instances those people reappeared a few months later, much more distressed but now ready to do something about it. Shades of that old saying, “The darkest hour is just before dawn.”

Without dissonance, there will be no change. Why should someone change if there is no reason to…? - if their life works for them as it is?

As an example…

I used to know an office manager who was loathed by his staff because of the way he treated them. When I looked into their complaints, I found that:-

- he did treat his staff rather poorly;
- they always did what he told them to do;
- they moaned about him behind his back – so he rarely had to actually listen to their whingeing.

“He treats us like shit!” several of them moaned to me on a number of occasions. “Why shouldn’t he?" was my eventual considered response. “You let him treat you like shit and he gets everything he wants. He has no reason to change."

How much dissonance is required will vary enormously, very much depending on what the Life Conditions are, what the individual or organisation (as a collective culture) values and believes about the situation, what vMEMES are dominating and how strong they are.

Many people live with minor to moderate levels of dissonance in several areas of their life, perhaps for years. Some will live with such dissonance to the day they die; troubled and not truly happy, but not motivated enough to do something about it.

What happens then when the dissonance is bad enough to motivate us to want to change? Then we have gone from the Alpha state of comfortable existence on the Spiral Dynamics model of change – see Fig 25 – into the Beta state of being troubled. Life is no longer working
anything like so smoothly for us. We are suffering dissonance to the point of wanting to change.

Then we have to find a way out of the growing mess. We have to know what to do. *Spiral Dynamics* identifies two tracks.

If changes, which take place within the existing vMEME structure, can resolve the issue(s) causing the dissonance and take us to the comfort zone of the New Alpha, then that is considered to be 1st Order Change. The operating paradigm has stayed extant.

For example, if my RED leads me blatantly to flout BLUE’s anti-speeding laws and I receive a fine and points on my driving licence, then my own BLUE might kick in enough to create a harmonic with my RED. From this, I develop an eagle eye for police cars and traffic cameras. However, I only slow down when I think I need to. The basic paradigm of RED enjoying speeding hasn’t really changed. (Strictly speaking, in *Spiral Dynamics*, this would be called a ‘Stretch-Up’ because RED has taken on just enough of the higher vMEME to adapt to the changed Life Conditions.)

When they’re under pressure, people usually try the existing paradigm – the old ways – first. However, if 1st Order Change doesn’t work but the individual or organisation is open to vMEMETIC change, then it is often possible for them to have Delta insight into the next vMEME and the new way(s) of living it will bring. This process is considered to be 2nd Order Evolution.

Returning here to our speeding illustration, let’s say the dissonance caused by the fine and penalty points was sufficient to convince me I should obey the law. Then we would be looking at a transition from RED to BLUE in my thinking in that context.

It’s instructional here also to consider Gregory Bateson’s Levels of Learning\(^\text{153}\) and Chris Argyris & Donald Schö̈n’s Learning Loops\(^\text{154}\) – shown mapped together in a simplified form in Fig 26. There seems clearly to be a link between the type of learning someone undertakes (Level/Loop) and the kind of change they experience (*Spiral Dynamics*) – see Fig 27.

Learning, according to Argyris, is about forms of detecting and correcting errors and the degree of reflection involved.\(^\text{155}\)

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\(^\text{153}\) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* – Gregory Bateson (Ballentine, 1972).
\(^\text{154}\) *Theory in Practice: increasing Professional Effectiveness* – Chris Argyris & Donald Schö̈n (Jossey-Blass, 1974).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig 25: change on the Spiral (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
## Levels & Loops of Learning

**Level 3**

**Deep Change**

- May be purely experiential
- Often unlanguageable

**Level 2**

**Challenging Mindsets (Double Loop)**

- Questioning the role of the framing & learning systems underlying goals & strategies
- Leading to new points of view - then new ways of doing things

**Level 1**

**Learning how to do things - or acquiring “flat knowledge” (Single Loop)**

- Goals, values & frameworks stay the same
- Learning to:
  - drive a car
  - operate a lathe
  - use a computer programme

- It is not impossible that change may come about through the learning - but the learning is not designed to produce any major change

**Level 0**

**Nothing is learned**

- The Customer repeats the order - same quantity/quality/price/terms & conditions
- You drive the same way to work every day in exactly the same traffic conditions
- The child does exactly the same thing and gets exactly the same results

*Fig 26: Levels & Loops of Learning (from the work of Gregory Bateson, Chris Argyris & Donald Schön)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Deep Change</th>
<th>Quantum Leap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Challenging Mindsets (Double Loop)</td>
<td>2nd Order Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Learning how to do things - or acquiring “flat knowledge” (Single Loop)</td>
<td>2nd Order Evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Nothing is learned</td>
<td>Stretch Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st Order Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>changes within the existing paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Dissonance, No Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 27: Levels of Learning related to kinds of change (from the work of Clare W Graves, Gregory Bateson, Chris Argyris & Donald Schón, Don Beck & Chris Cowan*)
When, as a speeding driver, I don’t get caught and punished, there is no error in the set of assumptions on which I base my action. There is no need to reflect, so there is no learning – hence Bateson Level 0. (The office manager I talked about earlier in this chapter!)

When I simply learned to slow down for police cars and traffic cameras, I was showing Level 1/Single Loop learning. The dissonance caused reflection that there was a need to do something different – but within the existing framework. So I learned to do something, to watch out for police cars and traffic cameras, However, my assumption that it was morally okay for me to do exactly what I wanted – speeding – stayed the same. RED was still dominant.

In the second instance, the reflection caused by the dissonance led to Level 2/Double Loop learning where my mindset was challenged – the basic assumptions behind my idea that I thought it was okay to speed. The result was that I now thought it important to comply with the law. BLUE became ascendant in my psyche.

People will often see their own way to 1st Order Change simply by thinking it through or reflecting on issues with family and friends.

Reaching a change in mindset through 2nd Order Evolution is obviously much more challenging and may have all kinds of implications. The emergence of a new (or reactivated) vMEME in a particular Environment is likely to impact on more than just the immediate issue(s) (Life Conditions).

Undoubtedly some do achieve 2nd Order Evolution without professional help. However, often people in trouble will benefit from expert assistance. Both counselling of the Carl Rogers school\(^\text{156}\) and Cognitive therapy of the kind pioneered by Aaron T Beck\(^\text{157}\) can be particularly effective for people who need some direction and nursing through fairly radical change.

It should be noted here that change on the Spiral is not always – and should not always be – in the upward direction. Depending on what the Life Conditions are, it may be appropriate to revert to an earlier mode of existence – to go down the Spiral.

A rather extreme example of movement up and down the Spiral at a cultural level was provided by the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Largely


through its tourist industry, Yugoslavia was arguably the most Westernised of the former ‘Iron Curtain’ countries. Much of its urban culture was dominated by BLUE thinking, speckled with ORANGE entrepreneurialism.

As BLUE order crumbled in tandem with the BLUE national structure of Yugoslavia, PURPLE tribalism re-emerged aggressively, whipped up by RED-led demagogues such as Franjo Tudjman, Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic.

Thus, we saw BLUE-led professionals – like doctors, nurses and teachers – slough off their uniforms and suits and put on army fatigues. It may have been a traumatising process of change; but, in the mutated Life Conditions, the Identities of many changed successfully from ‘Professional’ to ‘Tribal Warrior’. They then took to killing the men of the ‘other tribe’, raping their women and stealing their possessions as though it was perfectly natural to them.

Then, when the fighting was over and BLUE began to dominate again culturally – when fighting for your tribe was no longer a sustainable way of life - the Warriors took off their army fatigues and resumed their former lives as Professionals.

There have yet to be any large scale psychological or sociological studies report on the former Yugoslavia. However, the impression is that, for the majority of people involved in the fighting, the major trauma was not so much in being a Tribal Warrior but becoming a Warrior, giving up the tribal cause at the end of the fighting and then looking back on being a Warrior from the resumed life as a Professional.

**Escaping the Gamma Trap!!!**

But, returning to the actual process of change, what happens when you can’t find a way out of the growing Beta mess? As the Gestalt Cycle – Fig 24 - clearly illustrates, the path comes to an end. This is when, in terms of Spiral Dynamics, there is the excruciating slide into the Gamma Trap where there is no way out.

Nothing you know how to do works and you seem incapable of developing any new ideas to get out of the increasingly dreadful situation. A sense of complete hopelessness eventually pervades.

Ever been there? I have on a small handful of occasions. Gamma is a horrible place. The pain and the anguish are unbearable in this bleak psychological wasteland.

Individuals have nervous breakdowns in this state and companies get into serious financial trouble. If the situation remains unresolved, then the stress becomes chronic and people become physically ill. Some even die from the physical debilitation their stress causes. Others commit
suicide. Meanwhile companies go into liquidation. Some lose money, some lose jobs, some lose both and some lose everything. ‘Abandon hope all ye who enter here’, indeed!
Better get help before the Gamma Trap is closed!

If the old ways won’t turn the trick and no amount of counselling or Cognitive work can help you see Delta new ways of coping, then NLP-type reframing exercises may help to ‘unplug’ the ‘blockage’. Hypnotherapy or Psychoanalysis, for all the controversy these approaches have generated, may be effective for some. Even the blunt shock tactics of certain Behavioural therapies can work sometimes.

‘Breakthroughs’ to Delta insight, when they happen, can be intense, immediate and often overwhelming, both for the individual and those around them. Hence, in Spiral Dynamics, such breakthroughs are termed ‘2nd Order Revolution’.

All such approaches require the facilitation of an expert; and none are guaranteed to work – though they often do.

Sometimes, when absolutely everything else has failed, desperate people make the breakthrough anyway.

There’s yet to be an adequate explanation of how it happens; but sometimes ‘something’ just happens. Perhaps it’s the challenge of an incidental exposure to a new meme? But all of a sudden someone in Gamma will have the Delta insight that enables them to break free of the trap. This comes from what Bateson termed Level 3 learning. You can’t necessarily explain it. It just happens, it’s experiential and it may well be unlanguageable!

Sometimes 2nd Order Revolution can be so powerful it appears we can go up the Spiral by two or more vMEMES almost instantaneously. This is termed ‘Quantum Leap’. 158

Though it’s not shown on Fig 25, Fig 24 indicates a second crisis point.

Following the Gestalt Cycle through, what if you know what to do – you have Delta insight, whether from 2nd Order Evolution or Revolution – but there are things which prevent you taking action to resolve the dissonance?

158Don Beck has expressed the view that a Quantum Leap can actually be instantaneous. Chris Cowan is more of the view that such radical change can occur very, very quickly indeed but cannot actually be instantaneous. See: various postings to the Spiral Dynamics e-mail list 1998-2003 – http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics.
Often Delta insight will include ways around what Clare W Graves identified as ‘barriers to change’.

Working through the Neurological Levels, barriers to change could include the Environmental Structure – from physical layout to procedural systems. For example, if a teacher is struggling to establish BLUE order in the classroom where our 15-year-old Street Tough from Chapter 4 is causing mayhem, the teacher is unlikely to succeed if there is no system for removing the Street Tough.

Barriers to change could include the Environmental Culture. Let’s say our Street Tough, in a state of high dissonance, has been through some therapy in a one-to-one unit and is on his way to Q BLUE thinking. He then returns to a classroom where the teacher has failed to establish D order and C RED Life Conditions of disruptive teenagers prevail. How will his fledgling BLUE fare? Probably not too well; it is likely he will adapt down the Spiral for his P RED vMEME to match.

Life Conditions in the Environment should be manipulated as much as possible to favour the emergence of the required vMEME.

Barriers could also include a lack of appropriate Skills & Knowledge. If our Street Tough, on the turn to a Student Identity, is never told clearly what the expectations of classroom Behaviour are….

Another barrier could be habituation at the Behaviour level. For example, BLUE is emerging but I smoke even though I know it’s damaging to my health, my Values include good health and I have a Belief that tobacco is carcinogenic. Hypnotherapy and several kinds of Behavioural therapy, including Aversion Therapy, can be used to treat ‘bad habits’ like smoking.

If these barriers to change are not overcome, then, although Delta insight has been achieved, it is possible to slip back into the Gamma Trap. Worse still, perhaps to have achieved Delta insight via 2nd Order Evolution, only to enter Gamma because the barriers to change can’t be overcome!

This is why Graves identifies support and consolidation as so critical to successful transition.

To recount an era of my own life….

I often credit a gentleman by the name of Ian Lavan as being a kind of mentor to me during 1998-1999.

The first Spiral Dynamics workshop programme I undertook with Don Beck & Chris Cowan in April 1998 might have been intended as a
Bateson Level 2 (Double Loop) learning experience; but it actually hit me at Level 3 and I experienced something of a Quantum Leap.

At the time I was deep in a Gamma Trap and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. The level of Self-Actualisation the workshops activated in me was so profound that they were a major life-changing event.

However, there were significant barriers to me making sustainable changes in my life in terms of the Life Conditions in the Environment and some significant gaps in my own Skills & Knowledge.

Ian Lavan took me under his wing, helped me to start to fill in the gaps in my Skills & Knowledge – including grounding me in several NLP-based strategies – and protected me from some of the threatening aspects of the Environment. Ian and I have had little contact now for several years; but I owe him an immense debt of gratitude for the support he gave me at that time.

The sheer horror of Gamma, the misery it causes and the losses it brings means people need to try to avoid it. Seek help sooner, rather than later, once you start to struggle. The deeper you go into Gamma, the worse.

It also behoves us as ‘decent societies’ – to borrow Tony Blair’s once overused phrase – to ensure there are sufficient people trained with the understanding, the skills and the tools to help those in such trouble.

Change of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Order often impacts on many other Life Conditions in the Environment beyond those that caused the dissonance and may carry over into other Environments – perhaps with unforeseen consequences. Remember the loop of Reciprocal Determinism! - see Fig 23.

Others may need support in adjusting to your changes. One consequence of my 2\textsuperscript{nd} Order Revolution was that I created a large number of business opportunities in a very short space of time. Another colleague couldn’t cope and desperately deleted my e-mails unopened as soon as they entered his in-box!

Highly uncommon though it is, there are instances when the individual’s neurology is simply not capable of developing satisfactorily – perhaps through genetic defect or brain damage. In which case there may be nothing that can be done other than try to return that person to Life Conditions where they can cope.

In considering the close of the Gestalt Cycle – Fig 24 – ‘I’m available to sense again!’ – you can see that dissonance and blockage limit sensing in an Environment. That, in terms of Abraham Maslow’s
Hierarchy of Needs, would move attention from higher level needs to sort out lower level problems\textsuperscript{160}.

So, having considered the mechanics of change, where are you in the different circumstances in your life – the Life Conditions in the different Environments?

If you followed my suggestion in Chapter 2 and drew up a list of unhelpful beliefs, then you might want to assess the level of dissonance those beliefs cause you. (You may well find that some of those beliefs have sort of melted away as we have worked through the preceding chapters and revealed how ‘unreal’ schemas can be.)

If you’ve got unhelpful beliefs mapped to replacement beliefs you would like to take on, do you have sufficient dissonance to make the change?

If you have sufficient motivation to change, can such change take place within the current vMEME structure – ie: will the present operating paradigm work for you with perhaps just minor (1\textsuperscript{st} Order) changes?

Or do you need to change at vMEMETIC level?

10. Temperament and Change

The orthodox position in *Spiral Dynamics*, especially as propounded by Don Beck[^161], is that certain elements of personality are ‘vertical’ – they change as one goes up or down the Spiral in any given Environment. However, others are ‘horizontal’ – they don’t really change whichever vMEmE or set of vMEmEs is active/dominant in any Environment.

According to Beck, the horizontal elements are those which Carl Gustav Jung identified as paramount in his construct of self – the functions of Thinking, Feeling, Sensing and Intuiting and the orientations of Introversion and Extroversion[^162]. Wherever you are and go on the Spiral, whichever of these functions and orientations has applied before will apply now and will apply in future.

Thus, for example, both introverts and extroverts can be led by the RED vMEmE – or, equally, they can be led by the BLUE vMEmE.

Interestingly Beck, especially since he began working with Ken Wilber[^163], has come more and more to the view that some people ascend the Spiral with a distinct preference for one side or the other – self-expressive or conformist/self-sacrificial. This is not to say he allows for people to *skip* the emergence of the next hierarchical vMEmE in their development.[^164] Rather he sees that these people tend to ascend the Spiral primarily on one side but *dip into* the next hierarchical vMEmE on the other side – in order to access the next vMEmE on the preferred side[^165].

[^161]: Various postings to the *Spiral Dynamics-integral* e-mail list, 2002-2005 – see: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral).

[^162]: *Psychological Types* – Carl Gustav Jung (Routledge, 1923).

[^163]: Beck showed Wilber the potential for the hierarchy of vMEmEs fitting into the *All Quadrants/All Levels* concept Wilber premiered in *‘Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: the Spirit of Evolution’* (Shambhala, 1995) – since when Wilber has used *Spiral Dynamics* to map key stages in the evolution of human consciousness.

[^164]: However, Dr Jenny Wade does. *‘In Changes of Mind: A Holonic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness’* (State University of New York Press, 1996), she similarly allows for preferential paths up levels 2-4 (PURPLE to BLUE) but then allows for either Achievement Consciousness (ORANGE) or Affiliative Consciousness (GREEN) to be missed altogether on the way to Authentic Consciousness (YELLOW). Wade attributes this ‘either/or’ to gender – see Chapter 19.

[^165]: Beck has yet to offer research evidence to support this view, beyond informed observation. Strictly speaking, Beck’s comments diverge from the Gravesian/Spiral Dynamics orthodoxy that the vMEmE matches the Life
Knowing Me, Knowing You

He allows that the degree of preference for one side or the other will vary from individual to individual and that some may show no preference whatsoever.

My own personal observations tend to support Beck’s contention that some people ascend the Spiral more on one side than the other. However, he has yet to offer an explanation for this phenomenon beyond some references to left or right hemisphere dominance in the brain. Which implies at least in part a biological cause.

At this point, it’s appropriate to look in more detail at the qualities of temperament mapped out by Hans Eysenck\(^\text{166}\) and discussed in Chapter 3.

It was by revisiting Dr Ivan Pavlov’s groundbreaking work on the stimulus-response-association-response ‘classical conditioning’ of dogs\(^\text{167}\) that Eysenck found the basis on which to build the original version of his compelling model of biologically-based temperament, the 2 Dimensions of Personality\(^\text{168}\).

In his years of research, Pavlov found that dogs varied widely in their conditionability and their emotional reactions to the experimental situation – especially when he deliberately unnerved the dogs by giving them signals which created conflicting emotional states\(^\text{169}\). Dogs he categorised as ‘Lively’ seemed to take it well and remained cheerful. Dogs he termed ‘Impetuous’ barked angrily. ‘Quiet’ dogs laid down and went to sleep. ‘Depressed’ dogs whimpered and whined and seemed to go through a sort of canine nervous breakdown.

Pavlov attributed these differences to the occurrence of excitatory and inhibitory neurochemical events in the cerebral cortex – see Fig 1 – producing respectively levels of arousal and levels of inhibition.

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\(^\text{167}\) ‘Conditioned Reflexes’ – Ivan Petrovich Pavlov/G V Anearep (trans) (Oxford University Press, 1927). Pavlov famously got dogs to associate various visual and aural stimuli – such as lights and bells – with the serving of food, to the point where they would slaver at a ‘conditioned stimulus’ even in the total absence of food.


\(^\text{169}\) An example of this was ringing a bell that the dogs associated with food and then following it immediately with another bell that signalled the end of the meal.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

(Effectively actions of the reticular activating system.)

Pavlov used the temperaments attributed by the ancient Greeks to imbalances of the ‘4 humours’ (fundamental bodily fluids)\textsuperscript{170} to describe the dispositions of the dogs\textsuperscript{171}. Thus Lively (uninhibited, low arousal) matched Sanguine, Impetuous (uninhibited, high arousal) was Choleric, Quiet (inhibited, low arousal) was Phlegmatic and Depressed (inhibited, high arousal) was Melancholic.\textsuperscript{172}

In the 4 humours system the Sanguine type is cheerful and optimistic, looks for identity and significance, is pleasant to be with and comfortable with their work. The Choleric type wants freedom and variety, is characterised by a quick, hot temper and often has an aggressive nature. The Phlegmatic temperament can seem apathetic,

\textsuperscript{170}The 4 humours system reputedly was first proposed by Empedocles, though it was popularised by Hippocrates around 400 BC and is generally attributed to him. The concept was later preserved and promoted to the wider world through the writings of the hugely influential Roman physician, Claudius Galen – especially ‘On the Elements according to Hippocrates’ – see: ‘Galeni de elementis ex Hippocrate libri II’ – G Helmhreich (trans) (Erlangen, 1878).

In the 4 humours system people with an excess of blood had a Sanguine temperament (Idealists, according to Hippocrates), an excess of phlegm were Phlegmatic (Guardians), an excess of black bile were Melancholic (Rationals) and an excess of yellow bile were Choleric (Artisans). Good health was achieved through a balance of the 4 humours while ill health resulted from an imbalance. However, health was influenced by the weather as the four types were actually the corners of two dissecting lines: temperature and humidity. Thus, Sanguine people were warm and wet; Choleric people warm and dry; Phlegmatic people cool and wet; and Melancholic people cool and dry. Theories even developed over time suggesting that different climates were related to different types – so that Italians (warm and moist) were Sanguine, Arabs (warm and dry) Choleric, Russians (cool and dry) Melancholic and Englishmen (cool and wet) Phlegmatic!

The 4 humours concept was updated by Wilhelm Wundt, often credited as the founding father of scientific Psychology. He replaced temperature with changeableness and humidity with emotionality and attempted to calibrate variability along the axes – see: ‘Der Spiritismus, eine sogenannte wissenschaftliche Frage’ (Lipsk 1879)

While the medical ‘theory’ underlying the system was a wild and inaccurate fancy of its time, the ancient Greeks nonetheless came up with a robust typing of mood and behaviour which has more than stood the test of time.

\textsuperscript{171}‘Selected Works’ – Ivan Petrovitch Pavlov (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955; originally published 1934).

\textsuperscript{172}The mapping as described in this paragraph is Eysenck’s revision of Pavlov’s data. The great Russian physiologist’s mapping of the dog’s temperaments to the 4 humours contained some errors which Eysenck corrected.
plodding and dull but needs to belong. People with a Melancholic temperament require competency and knowledge but tend to be sad, depressed even, and take a pessimistic view of the world.

In using Pavlov’s work to map the original 2 Dimensions of Personality, Hans Eysenck carried through his use of the 4 humours – see Fig 28.

Thus, Eysenck sees that the more Unstable and Introverted someone is, the more Melancholic they are likely to be. Equally, the more Unstable and Extraverted will tend towards Choleric; the Extraverted and Stable will tend towards Sanguine; and the Stable and Introverted will tend towards Phlegmatic.

And these tendencies are largely biologically-determined. You are largely the way you are because you were born that way.

Further evidence of this has been provided by the work of Dr Richard Davidson. He has found that people with greater activity in the left frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex – see Fig 1 – tend to be more cheerful (Sanguine) while those with greater activity in the right frontal lobe tend to be more negative (Melancholic).173

Eysenck’s Dimensions model, rooted in the observational wisdom of the ancients, has real scientific veracity in describing temperamental dispositions. But how does it help us understand movement on the Spiral?

**From the Horizontal to the Vertical**

A comparison of the characteristics Eysenck assigns to the temperaments of the 4 humours system on his 2 Dimensions model – see Fig 28 – with the characteristics associated with the vMEMES of the 1st Tier is interesting and potentially revealing.

Phlegmatic’s qualities of ‘reliable’, ‘persistent’ and ‘passive’ would all fit with descriptions of somebody whose thinking was dominated by PURPLE. Choleric’s ‘egocentric’, ‘excitable’ and ‘hot-headed’ would fit with RED. Melancholic’s ‘sober’, ‘rigid’ and ‘pessimistic’ would all characterise BLUE thinking. Sanguine’s ‘playful’, ‘hopeful’ and ‘leadership’ could all be manifestations of ORANGE.

While they are far from being exact matches, could there, in fact, be a relationship between Phlegmatic and PURPLE, between Choleric and RED, between Melancholic and BLUE, and Sanguine and ORANGE?

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If so, this would mean that the so-called ‘horizontal’ temperamental disposition axes of Introversion-Extroversion and Stability-Instability do, in fact, influence the emergence of vMEMES on the Spiral.

And that could account for Don Beck’s observations of some people ascending the Spiral more by one side than the other.

Clare W Graves was of the view that temperament may well contribute to the ebbing and flowing of vMEMES but couldn’t find anything in his research to support the idea.\(^{174}\)

So we need to turn to the work of William Moulton Marston who identified 4 behavioural types: Dominance, Inducement (later, Influence), Submission (later, Steadiness) and Compliance (later, Conscientiousness or Caution).\(^{175}\) See Fig 31 for describing words and phrases relating to each behavioural type.


\(^{175}\)‘Emotions of Normal People’ – William Moulton Marston (Taylor & Francis Inc, 1928).
Fig 29: DISC model (from the work of William Moulton Marston; graphic copyright © 2004 Team Resources Inc, Atlanta, GA USA – all rights reserved)

Fig 30: an example of varying strengths of the Dominant, Inducement, Submission and Compliance types (from the work of William Moulton Marston)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominance</th>
<th>Inducement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic intent: to overcome</td>
<td>Basic intent: to persuade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ self-assured, egotistical</td>
<td>▪ convincing, influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ self-starter, individual</td>
<td>▪ charismatic, optimistic,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accomplishment</td>
<td>visionary, creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ control, power, prestige</td>
<td>▪ people oriented,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ dictatorial, demanding,</td>
<td>gregarious, socially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dislike of restraints</td>
<td>skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ decisive, direct, accept</td>
<td>▪ recognition needed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenges, innovative,</td>
<td>popular, self-promoting,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get results</td>
<td>centre of attention, will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ impatient, strong-willed,</td>
<td>exaggerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assertive, forceful,</td>
<td>▪ expressive, emotional,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competitive</td>
<td>outgoing, entertaining,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ quick, take action,</td>
<td>poised, demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venturesome</td>
<td>▪ enthusiastic, energising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear: loss of control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic intent: to support</td>
<td>Basic intent: to be correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ stable, co-operative,</td>
<td>▪ rules-oriented,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predictable, consistent</td>
<td>conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ traditional, status quo,</td>
<td>▪ analytical, concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resistant to change</td>
<td>▪ accurate, detail-oriented,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ loyal, sincere, dependable,</td>
<td>orderly, deliberate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedicated</td>
<td>▪ procedural, fact-finder,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ teamwork</td>
<td>methodological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ deliberate, work in</td>
<td>▪ perfectionistic, precise,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background</td>
<td>quality conscious, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ practical</td>
<td>risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ diplomatic, good listener,</td>
<td>▪ idealistic, conscientious,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathetic</td>
<td>logical, emotionless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear: abrupt changes and</td>
<td>decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of stability</td>
<td>▪ systematic, plan ahead</td>
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**Fig 31: the basic DISC attributes (from the work of William Moulton Marston)**

However, Marston’s model is substantially more than a simple typing system. It attempts, in part at least, to explain the causes of the behaviours.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Marston related his behavioural types to
perceptions of the Environment – see Fig 29\textsuperscript{176} - in a similar fashion to Graves years later.

In a way not altogether dissimilar to the ebb and flow of vMEMES, Marston also saw relationships and balances between the ‘behaviour traits’ (as he termed them) which could shift according to circumstances (Life Conditions) in the Environment.

Fig 30 provides an example of how Marston’s behaviour traits might vary in strength in someone’s psyche.

A comparison between Marston’s DISC types and Eysenck’s original 2 Dimensions of Personality will show some very strong matches in characteristics – and, indeed, Marston openly admitted to having drawn substantially on the temperamental dispositions produced by the 4 humours.

Thus, for Marston, Dominance is linked to Choleric, Inducement to Sanguine, Submission to Phlegmatic and Compliance to Melancholic.

However, a comparison between DISC and Spiral Dynamics will show equally strong matches between Dominance and RED, Inducement and ORANGE – remember: one of Graves’ early nomenclatures for E-R was ‘Manipulative’! – Submission and PURPLE, and Compliance and BLUE.

So, if there are strong matches in comparing Eysenck and Graves directly. The link becomes even more obvious when going from Eysenck to Graves via Marston – as per Fig 32.

Since Eysenck’s 2 Dimensions are derived from what are largely innate temperamental tendencies, this does indeed provide a very strong argument for biology having an effect on the manner in which someone

\textsuperscript{176}Graphic adapted with permission from http://www.pdiprofile.com/PDI/DISCOBackground.asp?res=1
ascends the Spiral.

Marston, it must be pointed out, had no concept of one behaviour trait being more or less complex than another or of there being an order of emergence. Hierarchy would be introduced with the work of Abraham Maslow.\(^{177}\)

This is an area which requires much research; and, of course, the linkages through Eysenck and Marston can provide us with nothing other than hints about how F-S GREEN and vMEMES beyond emerge.

This linkage also does not take into account Eysenck’s Psychoticism Dimension. Without credible research, one has to be very careful in saying how it might affect the ebb and flow of vMEMES. Yet this axis of temperamental disposition simply can’t be ignored.

This brings us to a key point: if YELLOW thinking is free from fear (associated with the Neuroticism axis) and compulsion and impulsiveness (associated with the Psychoticism axis)\(^ {178}\), it would seem that these Dimensions of Personality have no influence on 2\(^{nd}\) Tier thinking. This is what I was alluding to in Chapter 3 by ‘psychological growth’ – reaching the 2\(^{nd}\) Tier and providing “possibilities of freedom from temperamental dispositions”.

However, since YELLOW is clearly self-expressive and TURQUOISE conformist/self-sacrificial, it may be that Introversion-Extroversion does still have an influence.

As regards the 1\(^{st}\) Tier, perhaps the best we can do at this stage is to say that Psychoticism will affect the intensity with which someone experiences what we might call the ‘feminine’ conformist/self-sacrifice and the ‘masculine’ express-self sides of the Spiral. On the face of it, there does seem to be a match between extreme RED and high Psychoticism and extreme PURPLE and very low Psychoticism.

Since ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ are social constructs ‘welded’ onto biological sexes, this would tie in with Clare W Graves’ concept of the internal neurological system being in symbiotic relationship with the external Life Conditions.

(We will explore the issue of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ on the Spiral further in Chapter 19.)

It would appear that there is a likely tendency for introverts to prefer the conformist/self-sacrifice side of the Spiral and extroverts the self-

\(^{177}\)‘A Theory of Human Motivation’ – Abraham Maslow in Psychological Review # 50 (1943).

expressive side.

It would suit introverts, in their desire to reduce external stimulation, to minimise the ‘noise’ by conforming with others. On the other hand, Extroversion naturally wants to self-express and jockey for position with others – activities which, by and large, will tend to increase the ‘noise’.

Again, it must be emphasised that the supposition is that these are naturally-preferred tendencies, not absolutely-determined directions.

As to the Choleric state, formed via extremes of Extroversion and Instability, linking to RED and fuelled at its worst by high Psychoticism, it is notable that RED is the most extreme manifestation of Sigmund Freud’s Id in *Spiral Dynamics*. Correspondingly, the Melancholic state, formed via the extremes of Introversion and Instability, links to BLUE, the most extreme manifestation of the full-blown Superego.

If temperament does indeed influence emergence, could not emergence facilitate movement in temperament? Both Pavlov and Eysenck allowed for some changes in temperament as a result of learning. However Marston also attributed internal cognitive perceptions (schematic/memetic) of both the Environment and the individual’s ability to cope with it as key drivers in how natural behaviour changes. Thus, vMEMES, the Gravesian coping mechanisms, which interact with the Environment, must influence shifts along Eysenck’s temperamental dimensions.

For example, PURPLE’s need for acceptance being met would enable someone to feel more secure and, therefore, less shy. RED’s need for respect and esteem being met might result in someone being less aggressive.

As for 2nd Tier vMEMES, being free of fear and compulsion, perhaps they can act with whatever degree of Neuroticism or Psychoticism suits their operation in the prevailing Life Conditions? Again, much more research is needed.

These considerations give us a far more fluid relationship between temperament and the selfplex than we considered in Chapter 3. The relationship is better represented perhaps by Fig 33 than Fig 10, with no demarcation between the two and recognition of a free-flowing influence between them.

...and the Point is…?

The emergence of vMEMES being influenced by temperamental dispositions and vMEMES influencing the intensity of temperamental dispositions has huge implications for both those seeking therapy and those delivering it.
Especially for those therapists who use transformational Hypnotherapy and NLP-type techniques.

The common perception amongst so many therapists is that just about everything short of Schizophrenia can be ‘fixed’ – changed so that the ‘sufferer’ is no longer ‘like that’.

However, if the problem is due to temperamental disposition, then the evidence is strongly that temperamental disposition does not really change significantly. (At least, until the 2nd Tier freedom from fear and compulsion is achieved.) So, if you’re fundamentally shy, you will tend to remain on the shy side, no matter what positive experiences you have, simply because that is how you are naturally.

Transformational techniques on their own would be inappropriate to deal with such a disposition. Used alone, they are unlikely to have any lasting effect and may even be counter-productive. (Failure to be transformed into something different than you are is likely to reinforce helplessness as Dr Martin Seligman has demonstrated.)

Seligman found that dogs could learn depressive-type behaviour – see ‘Effects of Inescapable Shock upon Subsequent Escape & Avoidance Behavior’ – J B Overmeier & Martin E P Seligman in Journal of Comparative & Physiological Psychology #63 (1967) – and then observed a generalisation of learned hopelessness in a research project with humans – ‘Learned Helplessness &
Knowing Me, Knowing You

What needs also to be done is to learn behaviours that enable you to act in a less shy manner – provided you have motivation in the selfplex to want to act in a different manner.

To relate this to aspects of my own experience….

I, myself, am of something of a mildly shy disposition. Not terribly; just mildly. For example, if I go into a pub, it is rarely to seek company. I go because I fancy a drink. On such occasions, I usually take a newspaper or magazine with me and sit in a quiet corner. My head is then lowered to focus on my part-raised periodical, effectively a body language barrier to the world around me. I might exchange a quip or two with the bar staff; but that’s about it. Conversations that have begun in such circumstances are almost always initiated by the other party.

Yet I am a highly-effective trainer in elements of Integrated SocioPsychology. When I say to participants in my workshops that I am essentially shy, they often find it hard to believe. Watch me in the breaks, I tell them. What they usually report is that I tend to busy myself with checking through the next section of the workshop and seem disengaged from the social chitchat. Once I was told, “Keith, you almost seem to go in on yourself.”

The disengaged academic is far more the ‘natural me’. The outgoing leader is the Identity my ORANGE has created for my selfplex in the workshop Environment.

It is learned procedural behaviour my BLUE has picked up from watching how successful workshops have been delivered by others. My ORANGE wants me to be successful and, therefore, has employed my BLUE to model the procedures for success.

Recently, I have learned to watch out for people on the edges of the social chitchat during workshop breaks and to go and speak to them if they seem a little isolated. It’s an effort for me because it’s not in keeping with my natural tendency; but they usually seem to appreciate it. Is this my YELLOW at work – self-actualising beyond my own state and my temperamental disposition – to enable me to look after someone I need to be in a good state for the benefit of my workshop…?

So people can be enabled to manage their temperamental dispositions to some degree, if there is sufficient motivation in the selfplex.

Beyond that, if 2nd Tier vMEMES are activated, then it would appear

Knowing Me, Knowing You

people can actually transcend tendencies to Neuroticism and Psychoticism.

How complex the relationship is between the temperamental disposition and the schematic concept is reflected in the fact that as soon as someone talks or thinks about their temperamental disposition, they have crystallised a schema. “I’m moody,” may describe a temperamental disposition but it is also a schematic concept. That then very easily becomes a schema reinforcing the temperamental disposition.

If that schema then escapes to become a meme – “Keith is moody!” – which others then repeat, it is likely to have an even greater reinforcing effect!

It may be even better sometimes not to discuss unhelpful aspects of personality except in terms of doing something about them. And to do something about them will often require action both on a temperamental and a schematic/memetic level.

This is where Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) may be at its most useful. It involves both behavioural strategies (doing things!) to manage the disposition and the challenging of unhelpful schemas through repeated exposure to different memes. However, CBT usually requires careful management under the supervision of a skilled therapist, with a regular reporting system.

So, NLP-type transformational techniques certainly have their place but the effective therapist needs to have a bigger ‘kit bag’ of tools than is commonly provided through courses such as NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner programmes.

Not only does the therapist need to recognise which vMEMES they are dealing with – and it is often more than one at once! – but that the temperamental dispositions may well play an important part too.

Both therapist and client need to be aware of the complexity of the psychological states they are dealing with.

**Getting to Grips with Temperament**

The evidence is that temperamental dispositions are mostly innate and there is not a huge amount you can do about the way you are naturally.

That’s fine for people who like the way they are and not so good for people who either don’t like the way they are or find the way they are all too frequently lands them in trouble.

We noted in Chapter 3 that it is the people whose temperamental dispositions are at the extremes of Hans Eysenck’s 3 Dimensions who tend to have the most difficulties in behavioural adjustment.

So, for example, we have people who are too shy to date and thus
never find emotional fulfilment with another person. On the other hand, we might have people who are so loud and insensitive to those around them that they unwittingly cause offence almost wherever they go.

Are these people trapped by what ‘mother nature’ birthed in them?
Possibly not. Or, at least, not completely. Following Marston’s DISC into Spiral Dynamics, it would seem that the functioning of at least the PURPLE-ORANGE vMEMES is related to temperament as well as interrelationship with the Life Conditions in the Environment (‘Favourable’ or ‘Unfavourable’, according to Marston).

Thus, one way of managing temperament is to expose yourself to an Environment conducive to how you want to be to stimulate the vMEME which will bring about changes. But accept you are not going to become the opposite of what you presently are. We are talking incremental steps, not complete makeovers.

For example, if you are chronically shy, then find an Environment which is safe but mildly stimulating. Perhaps a walk in the park with your family, a situation where you know will be accepted – thus, satisfying the PURPLE vMEME’s need for security and belonging. Then practice expressing yourself – letting your RED come out.

Let your RED lead you into more self-expressive actions. Assert yourself: tell people what you believe. Do something obviously self-indulgent. Do something daring!

To reinforce being less shy and more outgoing, use the Skinnerian technique of Positive Reward\(^{180}\) to reinforce each incremental step in the direction you want to take.

If you get into bother because you are loud, extraverted and impulsive, seek a quiet and peaceful Environment such as a library or a traditional church and seek consciously to do ‘the right thing’, to comply with externally imposed expectations – in effect, give your BLUE an airing!

Again, reward yourself. It may be that looks of approval or comments about how much better you are now are sufficient reward. Or it may be that you need to give your sublimated RED a little reward of self-expression when you are out of that inhibiting Environment!

One of the key points about understanding temperament, though, is that often-times it is better to let it be, rather than try to change what is

\(^{180}\)Positive Reward - do something, receive a valued reward – was one of the 4 types of Operant Conditioning B F Skinner identified in his model of Radical Behaviourism – see: ‘The Behaviour of Organisms’ – B F Skinner (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1938).
for the most part unchangeable.

Seek Environments which allow you to be the way you are. They will be far less stressful!

If you’re on the quiet side and you like to curl up on a sofa and read a book on your own…well, what’s necessarily wrong with that?

If you’re loud and noisy, then accept that you’ll always like a pub on a Friday night more than a library on a Monday afternoon.

Be at peace with yourself when you can. Stretch out when you need to.

There will be many times when your temperamental disposition isn’t that comfortable with what you find yourself needing or wanting to do. Then you should facilitate your vMEMES to put you into a different psychic place.

I knew one woman, ‘Charlotte’, who was a little on the Unstable and Psychoticist axes, slightly on the Introverted axis and tended to the conformist/sacrifice-self side of the Spiral. She set out to strengthen her RED.

This began with saying rude things about other motorists who ‘cut her up’ – but in a rather polite and genteel voice. Under my instruction, she started to say the rude things with feeling. Snarling and gesturing at the offenders! To her initial surprise, she found that expressing herself this way gave her a feeling of satisfaction. Charlotte then progressed to parking in the disabled bay at a supermarket when she was in a hurry and there were no parking spaces near by. Not that I would approve of such a practice normally, but Charlotte was flushed with victory when she told me what she had done!

Formerly very self-effacing, Charlotte’s development of her RED has enabled her to take up a senior leadership position in her profession. She is unlikely ever to be a majorly dictatorial command-and-control-type leader; yet she has learned to extend her range of behaviours quite considerably.

So, when you consider those unhelpful beliefs (from your Chapter 2 list) you’ve asterisked as being rooted in temperament, think through what strategies you could use to improve your management of your temperament. You may not be able to help the way you were born; but you can do a lot to improve your management of your temperamental self.

The caveat to this is that, if you do find your well-being under serious threat, then get professional help. Fast!

Of course, if you have 2nd Tier vMEMES activated in your psyche, then temperament may not be much of an issue, anyway!
11. Yet More Selves…?

In Chapter 9 we touched on whether 1<sup>st</sup> Order or 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change was appropriate.

To learn more about 2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change – how transition from one vMEME to the next take place – we need to understand that vMEMES emerge in waves – see Fig 34.

*Spiral Dynamics* shows us each vMEME has an ‘entering’ phase, a nodal or peak phase, and an ‘exiting’ phase. As a vMEME starts to fade – in other words, it is exiting – so the following vMEME will start to emerge. There reaches a point of influence at which the new vMEME is stronger than the old one. This then is the entering phase. Only when the old vMEME’s influence has dwindled to the point of nil active influence in the Environment, is the new vMEME said to be in nodal or peak state.

What appears to happen neurologically, as a general principle in brain architecture, is that new systems evolve and superimpose themselves overtop the existing brain systems/structures. The new system then inhibits the expression of the underlying older structures.\(^1\)

Clare W Graves saw the system peaks as ‘steady states’ and the transition stages as just that: transitions.\(^2\) However, from his observations Chris Cowan has come to consider whether transition stages might be more important than perhaps even Graves had realised.\(^3\)

Certainly, apart from Graves’ original work,\(^4\) the transition stages are under-researched. Yet it is the transition stages which distinguish *Spiral Dynamics* from any other form of behavioural typing and give the model a near all-encompassing fluidity and breadth of description.

In *Spiral Dynamics* exiting phases are annotated with the old vMEME in capitals and the new one in lower case – eg PURPLE/red – while the entering phase is annotated with the old vMEME in lower case and the new one in capitals – eg: purple/RED.\(^5\) See Fig 35.\(^6\)

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\(^1\)*Brain Architecture: Understanding the Basic Plan* – Larry W Swanson (Oxford University Press, 2003).


\(^3\)Various postings to the *Spiral Dynamics* e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics.


Knowing Me, Knowing You
Fig 34: vMEMES as waves (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
Fig 35: entering, nodal and exiting vMEME positions (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan; Spiral ‘balloon’ graphic copyright © 1996 NVC Inc, Denton, TX USA – all rights reserved)
Figs 36-41 provide summary overviews of each transition stage.

In Fig 36 (PURPLE to RED) we see the tribal/familial/group situation begin to lose its hold and, in such Life Conditions, the emergence of an embryonic me.

Sometimes Entering RED can manifest a sense of urgency – a desperation, even! – to arrive at an independent me. After all, leaving the safety of the tribal stockade or the bosom of the family to be on your own can be quite anxiety-producing. In such circumstances, you need to arrive at a sense of confidence in your self and your ability to cope as quickly as you can. This may help to explain the volatility of so many young teenagers.

By Fig 37 (RED to BLUE) RED’s power-drives are no longer enough to turn a situation, leading to a questioning of such focus on me and my wants. There is the beginning of a search for an external frame of reference and the beginnings of the acceptance of guilt which characterises so much of BLUE thinking.

As someone first enters BLUE and finds external authorities, underpinned still to some extent by RED’s desire to dominate, there can be the desire to convert everyone else to your emergent understanding. Don Beck calls this the ‘Zealot’.

Fig 38 (BLUE to ORANGE) shows the breakdown of belief in Absolute Truth and the increasing recognition of plurality, coupled with the growing sense that I could do better for myself. People undergoing this transition become much more pragmatic and can be reasoned with more. Hence Beck names them ‘Moderates’.

Fig 39 (ORANGE to GREEN) depicts a growing sense of futility – ‘Is this all there is?’ – undermining the achievement motif of ORANGE and a growing desire to find meaning with others. Consequently, the approach tends to be much more conciliatory – reflected in a willingness to give in order to be accepted.

The crashing of GREEN is shown in Fig 40 (GREEN to YELLOW), resulting in the emergence of a qualitatively different way of thinking.

While all the transitions can be painful, some may find this the most painful of all – as the certainties of the 1st Tier are abandoned and you learn to live with uncertainty, paradox and sometimes chaos.

The exiting and entering phases for YELLOW and TURQUOISE are not distinguished on Fig 41 as not enough is known about this transition to be that specific.

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The shamans/tribal leaders no longer seem so sure or so powerful in their decision-making – Mummy & Daddy no longer seem infallible

The individual becomes aware that looking after the tribe’s needs (or serving the family) uses up energy that could be used to satisfy a growing sense of self

Little challenges to the tribal/family order prove successful and the world starts to seem less of a mysterious, incomprehensible and scary place

The tribal/family customs seem increasingly cloying and inhibiting

The individual may start to talk/fantasise about breaking away

First real emergence of Ego

Dismissive of tribal leaders – parents/guardians - even contemptuous

Ready to adventure – and will leave tribal/family safety structure – sometimes totally all at once (likely to lead to explosion of peak RED!), more often in incremental growth of autonomy

Fig 36: PURPLE-RED transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
Knowing Me, Knowing You

**RED/blue (C-P/d-q)**
- Questioning of selfish impulses and unbridled desires
- Some slight acknowledgement of guilt – may seesaw between acknowledging some fault and denying all responsibility
- The start of searching for morality and direction from without, rather than living purely on internal compass (‘my way or no way’)
- A growing doubt as to whether sheer energy and power can deal with newly-arising problems

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**red/BLUE (c-p/D-Q)**
- Increasing acknowledgement of responsibility and guilt
  - Awakening to consequences
  - Growing sense of future and the need to defer instant gratification
- Personal interpretation and enforcement of the correct way all should live – with self-righteous punishment of sinners
- Determination to curtail the excesses of peak RED
  - Learning self-control

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*Fig 37: RED-BLUE transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)*
Knowing Me, Knowing You

BLUE/orange (D-Q/e-r)
- Starts to listen to others – initially in order to learn how to out-argue them
- Questioning of whether there might be more effective variations of ‘the One True Way’
- Disdains Authority which doesn’t act like authority should and asserts self against the deficiencies of that Authority
- Some acknowledgement that not all real-time evidence necessarily supports the assumptions of ‘One True Way’
- Some acceptance of diversity of thought and experience - but uncomfortable with it

blue/orANGE (d-q/E-R)
- Increasing acceptance of personal experience as valid when it does not fit ‘the One True Way’
  - Awakening to possibilities and the desire to explore them
  - Emergent desire – often tainted with guilt – to improve personal lot in life
  - The desire to experiment with and search for reality, rather than just accept the ‘truth’ of ‘One True Way’
- Starting to express self but in a cautious, controlled way

Fig 38: BLUE-ORANGE transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
**Knowing Me, Knowing You**

**ORANGE/green (E-R/f-s)**
- Feelings of loneliness and/or lack of fulfilment
- ‘Where does all this get me?’ kind of questions
- Some goals start to seem less relevant and the desire to achieve them starts to become defocused
- The trappings of success start to lose their appeal and may even start to appear shallow/hollow
- Emerging awareness that others have needs too

**orange/GREEN (e-r/F-S)**
- Increasing need ‘to find myself’ in the context of others/humanity
- Awareness and increasing emotional reaction to injustice, discrimination and maltreatment of the disadvantaged
- Increasing conviction that people and their quality of life are more important than either law and rules or wealth and success
  - A growing desire to bury self in a group and engage in a communal form of expression
  - Emerging concern for the environment and elements of the planetary eco-systems

*Fig 39: ORANGE-GREEN transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)*
Knowing Me, Knowing You

GREEN/yellow (F-S/g-t (a’-n’))
- Growing dissatisfaction with group consensus methodologies and dogma
- Frustration at consumption of resources (time, money) with little care for their cost
- Growing realisation that rules and laws have their place – as do wealth-creators and those who are goal-oriented
- Turned off by attacks on those who do not conform to the group dogmas
- Emerging awareness ‘bigger picture’ thinking needed

GREEN/YELLOW (f-s/G-T (A’-N’))
- Realisation that there are no absolute certainties
- The desire to make and live by independent decisions rather than accepting group consensus responsibility
  - Growing desire to look after self and engage in activities which are intrinsically self-satisfying
  - An awareness that all resources need looking after wherever possible
  - Increasing willingness to walk away from ‘lost causes’

Fig 40: GREEN-YELLOW transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
YELLOW (G-T (A’-N’))-TURQUOISE (H-U (B’-O’))

- Increasing loneliness and stress from coping alone
- More of a sense that there is something beyond self and self-struggle
- A growing conviction that there is Order beyond the Chaos and the need to find that Order
- The understanding that everything connects to everything else and an increasing need personally to be connected
- An increasing awareness of the future and the need to resolve issues

Fig 41: YELLOW-TURQUOISE transition (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)
Troubles in Transition

As discussed in Chapter 9, transitions between vMEMES can be near instantaneous. However, in many instances the process can take some considerable time and this can give a different dimension of motivation and personality to a person’s character.

As an example, look again at Fig 34 and, say, the position on the waves of just starting to Enter BLUE; now cross-refer to the RED-BLUE transition of Fig 37.

Entering BLUE, such a person will have lost much of the sense of self-assuredness that characterised RED. Their ‘internal compass’ will more or less be ‘on the blink’ and they will be starting to run an External Referencing Meta-Programme. The problem will be that they won’t yet have found the One True Way to live in that Environment. As a result of which they may try several ‘One True Ways’!

They will be grasping to find just ‘what’s right’. An instance of this is the fact that it’s not uncommon for people who become ‘born again’ Christians to try several different churches – Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc – until they settle for one which seems to them to have the most perfect version of the Christian One True Way.

If the RED-BLUE transition is particularly slow, then the individual may end up promoting a version of a One True Way skewed through declining RED filters so that it can seem like ‘Their One True Way’ to which they and all others have to comply or face punishment. Don Beck’s Zealot!

If the transition between nodal vMEMES is too slow for the changing/changed Life Conditions, then things can get very uncomfortable. The exiting vMEME obviously can’t cope – or the dissonance would not be great enough for change – while the entering vMEME has not yet got sufficient hold to deal with the new Life Conditions.

It is rare for people who are in a drawn-out transition process to be happy and fulfilled.

If the transition gets too slow to cope or ‘sticks’ altogether, then the barriers to a successful transition need to be explored, as discussed in Chapter 9. Almost certainly this will require some kind of therapeutic intervention.

As in Chapter 9, if you have identified replacement beliefs for unhelpful beliefs, do the beliefs require transition from one vMEME to another vMEME? If so, how is that transition process going?
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Transition processes, we have noted, often can be uncomfortable. So they need encouraging along – facilitation – where possible.

Be aware of thinking that transition states, with their uncertainties and inconsistencies, are ‘mini-selves’ in the way that nodal vMEMES are and that you are stuck with them. Blockages can be dealt with usually. Except in rare cases of neural incapability, you do not have to live in a transition state for an extended period of time.

It can seem like we have a lot more than 8 selves across all the different Environments in our lives! However, Graves’ data – supported largely by the other theorists considered in Fig 18 (and others, besides!) – assures us that we really are experiencing only the ebb and flow of 8 major psychological waves. (Though there may be more to come in the unwritten future of humankind!)
12. Harmony, Wars, Stacks and Devastation

Back in Chapters 6 and 8 we touched briefly upon the concept of ‘vMEME harmonics’ – two or more vMEMES working together in harmony in a given context.

Working together can be on the same side of the Spiral. We considered the PURPLE-BLUE example of people falling in love and thus belonging together (PURPLE), leading to commitment to conform to expectations of the relationship (BLUE).

vMEME harmonics can also be across the Spiral – eg: the GREEN liberalism of the 1960s hippie generation opening the doors to RED’s massive indulgence in pre- and extra-marital sex and pandemic drugs usage.

How this occurs is one of the more-overlooked and under-researched aspects of Spiral Dynamics.

Looking at the graphics of Fig 17 – the so-called ‘Spiral Balloon’ in colour – you can see that each whirl of the Spiral, whilst being dominated by the new vMEME, contains echoes (or ghosts) of all the vMEMES to have emerged before it.

This is a graphical representation of the notion that, wherever we are in Spiral terms, we can reawaken and access the lower vMEMES as our Life Conditions require. In neurological terms the new structures which develop not only provide new output; but, through inhibition, they modulate the structures they sit atop.\(^\text{188}\)

It is this ability to access the whole range of vMEMES which have been activated neurologically in our psyche which gives us the ability to slide up and down the Spiral to meet changed Life Conditions, as discussed in Chapter 9. It also allows the formation of vMEME harmonics.

Where vMEMEs work in harmonics, the lead vMEME is annotated in capitals and the following one(s) in lower case. Thus, RED/orange or purple/RED/green.\(^\text{189}\)

vMEME harmonics may be a rather under-researched area in Spiral Dynamics; but the idea of behaviours working together or combining is


Knowing Me, Knowing You

not new. William Moulton Marston categorised what he perceived to be ‘sub-traits’ from combinations of his DISC behavioural types.\(^{190}\) See Fig 30 as an example of Inducement (related to ORANGE) being strong in the psyche, with Submission (related to PURPLE) also having an influence and Compliance (related to BLUE) just about present.

Some of Marston’s combined behavioural types relate more to temperamental dispositions and to movement along Hans Eysenck’s original 2 Dimensions of Personality – see Fig 28. However, others fit well as behavioural outcomes of vMEMES harmonising.

For example, Marston saw that Dominance leading Inducement (RED/orange) would describe someone motivated by achieving fast results. (Eg: I want to get the results but, boy, am I impatient for them!) On the other hand, Inducement leading Dominance (red/ORANGE) would produce people open to new experiences with new people. (Eg: If you can help me get on, I’ll do whatever it takes!)

Dominance leading Compliance (RED/blue) would produce self-reliant people who follow their own goals. (Eg: I’m going to get there MY way!) Compliance leading Dominance (red/BLUE) would lead to what Don Beck calls the ‘Zealot’\(^{191}\) – someone who prizes accuracy and/or efficiency demanding it of others also. (Eg: I’m good at this and you’d better be good at it too!)

Submission leading Compliance (PURPLE/blue) represents dogged, tenacious behaviour. (Eg: It’s the right thing to keep on plodding on being loyal and steadfast.)

Inducement leading Compliance (blue/ORANGE) can produce social confidence. (Eg: I know what to do to fit in with the ‘right people’.)

Marston gives us a more complicated scenario when he postulates Inducement’s (ORANGE) enthusiasm being more tempered by the need for social acceptance when Submission (PURPLE) is also strong; yet it is ready to dare all when backed by Dominance (RED).

Marston’s behavioural combinations are only just beginning to scratch at the surface of vMEME harmonics – and they tell us nothing about interactions with GREEN and beyond – but they do give us a starting point for describing likely outcomes of behaviour.

The point of understanding how vMEMES work together is to produce cognitive awareness of how that can influence behaviour.

\(^{190}\) ‘Integrative Psychology: a Study of Unit Repsonse’ – William Moulton Marston, C D King & Elizabeth H Marston (Harcourt Brace, 1931)

Understanding then allows other schemas and memes to present views of the appropriateness of that behaviour.

For example, if you found yourself deciding to attend a protest rally against an unpopular government policy such as the war in Iraq, what vMEMES do you think might be driving you/your selfplex? Most likely GREEN’s revulsion at the killing and the apparent American indifference to the huge amount of ‘collateral damage’ their military venture has caused (directly and indirectly). GREEN might also object to the imposition of blue/ORANGE American ‘corporate democracy’ on a subjugated people. There might be a harmonic of BLUE protesting the seeming illegality of the Anglo-American invasion and the way the UK Government manipulated information for both Parliament and the media to support its intentions.

Very noble. But watch out for that perhaps less obvious harmonic of RED.

As we’ve seen on countless occasions, large-scale protests, with fully-tooled-up riot police on one hand and militants intent on mayhem on the other, easily slip from D into C Life Conditions. To stir yourself to take action in such a situation, requires some degree of P RED’s go-for-it-and-worry-about-the-consequences-later motif. But RED – particularly for someone strong in Psychoticism – will actually feed off the excitement of the situation. Thus, without ever intending to, you could find your RED leading you into battle when trouble flared. (Allied, of course, with an adrenaline-fuelled fight-or-flight reaction at the BEIGE level!)

To take the view that temperamental dispositions link to the activity of vMEMES, a tendency towards Introversion is likely to lead to your GREEN and BLUE wanting to do something about the injustices in Iraq. However, the more Introverted you are, the more you will need your RED vMEME to overcome your natural tendency to avoid crowds, noise and trouble.

Such a stressful internal scenario – cognitive motivation to act versus natural tendency to escape the action - may account for why some of the more extreme actions of violence at such demonstrations often come from those from whom you might least expect it. Effectively, they flip into untrammelled RED! (The tendency of his behavioural types to ‘flip’ into other and often opposite behaviours was one of the more interesting aspects of William Moulton Marston’s work.192 From Hans Eysenck’s

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research\textsuperscript{193}, such flipping may well be due to extreme activity in the limbic system causing a surge in Instability.)

So pay attention to vMEME harmonics – in particular, the vMEME you didn’t suspect was influencing your behaviour. You could all too easily find yourself acting very “out of character”!

\textbf{vMEME Wars}

vMEMES can be dangerous when they are in harmony. What about when they go to war?

The most obvious ‘vMEME wars ’ occur between the express-self and the conformist/sacrifice-self sides of the Spiral. This is effectively a rerun of the Id-versus-Superego conflicts the great Sigmund Freud described so well.\textsuperscript{194}

At its worst, it is a straight conflict between RED and BLUE.

The student with the overactive Superego I described early in Chapter 5 was an overt example of an Id (RED) seething with frustration at its suppression by the Superego (BLUE).

I well remember a story told by my friend, ‘Nigel’….

A harmonic of PURPLE/red led him to agree to go to the pub with his friend. It was the night before an important breakfast session to kick off a day of important meetings. A harmonic of BLUE/orange set Nigel a limit of two pints of beer. He was sure he would be fine for his important day.

When last orders were rung, Nigel and his friend were most of the way down their second pints. It being his round, Nigel’s friend asked if he would like another. By this time Nigel’s RED, fuelled by alcohol, was well to the fore. He’d been having a great time and his RED didn’t want to stop. In vain his BLUE called for Nigel to say ‘No’. But Nigel’s RED had him \textit{In Time} – in the moment, with little thought for tomorrow. Nigel said ‘Yes’. His friend then asked if he would like a whisky chaser to go with it. Again Nigel’s BLUE said ‘No’; but his RED said ‘Yes’.

As Nigel lived just around the corner from the pub, his RED used his PURPLE to invite his friend back for a coffee. Which got laced with whisky.

I had cause to phone Nigel early the following evening. His wife answered the phone because he was still incapable of doing so!

\textsuperscript{193}‘The Biological Basis of Personality’ – Hans J Eysenck (Charles C Thomas, 1967).

\textsuperscript{194}‘The Ego & The Id’ – Sigmund Freud in ‘On Metapsychology’ – A Richards (ed) (Penguin, 1923).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

When we talked the incident through in Spiral Dynamics concepts several days later, Nigel said somewhat ruefully: “Now, I really appreciate the importance of vMEMES.”

In addition to the express-self vs conformist/sacrifice-self conflict, Spiral Dynamics also allows for conflict on the same side of the Spiral, based on different orientations towards time – see Fig 19.

For example, RED wants to indulge itself now; but ORANGE wants to achieve for the future.

Let’s say, my ORANGE wants to save for a new house purchase; but my RED wants to go to the pub every night. A straightforward time-oriented conflict between two express-self systems.

Such a conflict is likely to produce emotional frustration.

Or, let’s say my BLUE wants to work late again because the boss has insisted the company needs it. I want to do ‘the right thing’ so my boss will think well of me tomorrow and I will be perceived as a ‘good worker’ by the company. But my PURPLE wants to go home now to my partner and my children who have been saying how much they have missed me in the past few days.

In such a scenario, it’s easy to see how anxiety could blossom when it’s ‘impossible to do right for doing wrong’!

(Such a conflict would be exacerbated if I were extremely low on the Psychoticism axis and thus generally of a disposition to please and serve.)

So how does it work when, as all too often happens, conflict between vMEMES goes both across and up and down the Spiral?

Let’s take the RED-ORANGE conflict we described above. What is likely is that, if ORANGE is strong enough, in the interests of the house move it will employ BLUE’s disciplining action to restrain RED’s satisfy-me-now cravings. However, if the blue/ORANGE harmonic is not strong enough to stifle RED, then BLUE is likely to beat me up by activating my failure and guilt schemas for ‘giving in’ to RED.

In the PURPLE-BLUE conflict, one possible resolution would be for ORANGE to come into the equation – in which case, BLUE would almost certainly win, to serve ORANGE’s ambition agenda. This triumph of ambition over belonging may well be a significant contributing factor to the seemingly-unstoppable escalation in divorce rates among the professional and middle classes in the Western world over the past 50 years.

On the other hand, RED, especially if Psychoticism is strong, might seek refuge from the PURPLE-BLUE conflict in the nihilism of booze
and/or drugs. Again, this is all too common an outcome of failure to achieve a ‘work-life balance’.

Look yet again at the list of unhelpful beliefs you compiled in Chapter 2. Are any of them to do with the needs of different vMEMES clashing?

**How then do we deal with vMEME wars?**

Sometimes, Freudian-like, simply having insight into the nature of the conflict, can lead to a natural resolution. The understanding itself brings respite.

Other times resolving vMEME wars is nothing like so easy.

**An NLP technique for dealing with conflicting desires is the Visual Squash**, developed by Richard Bandler & John Grinder (1976). This involves visualising the desires as two ‘you’s’ – one standing in your left palm and the other in your right. Each desire, if valid, is intended to serve you – the ‘greater you’. The trick lies in allowing each ‘you’ to make its case for its desire to be fulfilled in the context of the interest of the greater you and then bringing your hands together – while asking the two you’s to collaborate in the ‘Unconscious Mind’ to resolve the conflict. The hands are held together until a solution is formed. They are then opened to ‘reveal’ a melded, unified ‘you’.

As with so many NLP techniques, it works better with a guide to talk you through the exercise. Considering that we don’t understand how the Visual Squash works, beyond ascertaining that it gives frames for the Unconscious Mind to work with, it is surprising how effective this technique is for many people.

Others, though, need a more Cognitive approach.

It can help here to take a Maslowian view. In other words, looking at the needs the vMEMES seek to satisfy. Where the needs of vMEMES conflict, you have to find a way of enabling each vMEME to have its needs met.

So, for example, if, in the example we just used, to enable ORANGE to save for its house but RED still to have its self-indulgence, BLUE might allow RED a night at the pub once or twice a week with a ‘reward’ night every additional £500 in the bank.

Our BLUE-oriented worker might be better off in a company with more ‘family-friendly’ policies. In the short-term, PURPLE needs to reassure the partner and children of its love and perhaps arrange some extra-special ‘quality time’ together. At the same time, they need to

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

know another, more compatible job is being sought. (So they know longer-term is being addressed as well as shorter-term.)

**vMEME Stacks**

It’s appropriate at this stage to explore the concept of the vMEME Stack we touched upon very briefly in Chapter 8.

In the language of Spiral Dynamics a vMEME Stack is simply the spread of vMEMES across an individual, group or organisation’s Environments.

Fig 42 and Fig 44 show two very different example vMEME Stacks.

In Fig 42, the person is primarily PURPLE-centred but with a large dose of RED and some emergent BLUE.

This person is very likely to be narcissistic and family-oriented.

With PURPLE dominating in that Environment, family, in fact, is a huge part of their life. It’s quite likely that extended family – grandparents, cousins, aunts/uncles, - will feature quite markedly on their social calendar. They are also likely to be very defensive of their family and family members.

This person’s religion would match the stereotypical Roman Catholic profile, with a fondness for ritual (PURPLE) and tormented by the struggle between self-indulgent Id RED and conscience-driven *do-the-right-thing* Superego BLUE.

They are likely to be obsessed with their own well-being (RED) and physical looks (RED); individualistic ego-pumping sports like bodybuilding would suit this person. If there is a tendency to Neuroticism, they might be something of a hypochondriac.

Their RED is so strong that it would be no surprise that one-night-stands and sexual deviance often characterise their love life – especially if they are high in Psychoticism. Only when it comes to the Law and God does this person really recognise a power greater than self – and then it would be a case of compliance through fear of a higher authority (red/BLUE), rather than being ‘the right thing to do’ (nodal BLUE).

By contrast the person represented by Fig 44 is likely to be something of a ‘high flyer’, driven by ORANGE across most of his Environments and able, by and large, to sublimate more basic vMEMES.

From this profile, you can judge that family, for him, is as much about duty (BLUE) as it is belonging (PURPLE).

Generally speaking, this person will be fairly law-abiding (BLUE) but will break the speed limit when there’s a career-important meeting they are late for (ORANGE) or simply when the thrill takes them (RED).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

**Fig 42:** an example of a vMEME stack (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)

**Fig 43:** bar chart of a vMEME stack (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan; graphic suggested by Steve Gorton)
Fig 44: an example of a vMEME stack (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)

Fig 45: bar chart of a vMEME stack (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan; graphic suggested by Steve Gorton)
Their concepts of health and sport are likely to concern golf clubs and the kind of sports centres where the ‘right kind of contacts’ can be made. Likewise, their romantic partner is likely to be someone who can fit into career progression – eg: the wife of an upward-climbing middle manager who can do dinners and ‘entertaining’ to the point where the managing director feels she is ‘suitable’.

Since RED is not that far below the ORANGE surface in this make-up, the spouse risks replacement by a more up-market model. (The quite common occurrence of successful older businessmen marking their status by dumping their wife of perhaps 20 years and effectively ‘buying’ a younger ‘trophy wife’.)

This person goes to the church/synagogue/mosque/temple to be ‘seen’. Just emerging on this person’s psychological horizon is the concept of Citizenship and the ‘bigger picture’.

Fig 42 and Fig 44 show the example vMEME Stacks in the so-called ‘fried egg’ form that Beck & Cowan use; but some people prefer to represent their vMEME Stacks as concentric circles or bar charts. The bar chart approach can be particularly useful when considering the relative strengths of the vMEMES in the Environments comprising a stack. Fig 43, in respect of Fig 42, and Fig 45, in respect of Fig 44, are examples of this.

Steve Gorton, a business coach, likens the bar chart approach to a hi fi graphic equaliser and the vMEMES to different frequencies – their pulses strengthening and weakening in response to Life Conditions changing in the Environment.⁹⁶

In Chapter 1 we discussed the quite different public and private personalities of Margaret Thatcher.

In terms of her vMEME Stack, the prime ministerial Identity was led by BLUE and ORANGE. PURPLE clearly dominated in her Stack at home.

When son Mark was lost in the desert in 1982, what the cameras filmed were PURPLE’s tears. Meanwhile BLUE tried to keep her doing ‘the right thing’ of carrying on being The Prime Minister.

vMEMES and Psychopathology

Sigmund Freud principally attributed mental health problems, from the relatively trivial to the incurable, to conflicts between the Id and the Ego, the Ego and the Superego, and the Id and the Superego.

For all the attempts to rubbish his ideas and the finding of valid

⁹⁶Personal discussion with the author in York, UK, November 2005.
contributing factors elsewhere for mental health problems – such as maladaptive conditioning\(^{197}\), the development of maladaptive schemas\(^{198}\), neurotransmitter and hormone imbalances, and genetic predispositions\(^{199}\) – Freud’s concepts have lived on. It is rare to find modern psychologists using unadulterated *Psychoanalytic Theory*; but many therapists draw considerably upon elements of it and forms of *Psychoanalysis* are still widely used.

So it seems to me that irresolvable conflicts between vMEMES will almost certainly be a significant contributing factor to many mental health problems.

Certainly this would seem to fit with Gregory Bateson’s *Double-Bind Theory* of Schizophrenia. Bateson postulates that the ‘victim’ consistently receives contradictory messages from valued sources, leading eventually to the separation of the cognitive from the emotional.\(^{200}\) (Bateson did classify the development of Schizophrenia as a failure at Learning Level 3 – see Fig 26 – which means his view is not incompatible with the huge role genetics and brain chemistry undoubtedly play.)

Working with Bateson’s approach, it is more than conceivable that different vMEMES in the Stack will latch on to different messages and each try to respond to its message. For example, a young man’s RED is told by his father to ‘sow your wild oats’ – thus feeding his BEIGE procreative instinct - but his BLUE is told by his religion that sex outside of marriage is sinful. Added to that, the GREEN feminism of his much-loved older sister (PURPLE attachment) proclaims loudly that women are not just sex objects.

vMEME wars to the extreme!!

However, Schizophrenia does not manifest itself as a single syndrome (set of symptoms). Rather, the ‘Schizophrenias’ – Eugene

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\(^{198}\) Eg: *‘Depression: Clinical, Experimental & Theoretical Aspects’* – Aaron T Beck (Hoeber, 1967).


Bleuler, who coined the term, emphasised the plural\(^{201}\) – are a group of mental illnesses sharing a central feature of dissociation of thoughts and feelings and often accompanied by thought disturbances, delusions and bizarre hallucinations. (Indeed, some of the latest thinking has proposed that the Schizophrenias may, in fact, be quite different illnesses that have similar and overlapping symptoms.\(^{202}\))

Thus, extending our vMEMETIC interpretation of Bateson’s ideas, it would not surprise me if the RED vMEME was found eventually to be a contributing factor to Paranoid Schizophrenia. Especially if there is a strong tendency to Psychoticism. RED undoubtedly can show paranoid tendencies to the extreme when resenting efforts to restrain it or scapegoating others when things do wrong.

Catatonic Schizophrenia, which is characterised by lack of movement or by peculiar movements, often for extended periods of time may possibly have an element of BLUE repressing RED by closing down the person until the undesirable impulses have passed. Our understanding of the Schizophrenias is still in its infancy – and there is undoubtedly a significant genetic/biological element in the development of Schizophrenia in many people – but Spiral Dynamics most definitely offers some important new avenues to research.

As indicated earlier, the express-self Id vs the conformist/sacrifice-self Superego is a theme which underpins much of Psychiatry. Clare W Graves saw Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder as a conversion disorder afflicting those who were coming strongly into BLUE, fighting back the impulses of RED.\(^{203}\) Graves perceived the obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour that characterise this disorder to be a Freudian-style leakage device.\(^{204}\) That view would fit with Carl Gustav Jung’s assertion that it represented the intrusion into consciousness of threatening sexual and aggressive ideas that are


\(^{204}\)Sigmund Freud saw many dreams, what were later called ‘Freudian slips’ of the tongue and some hysterical symptoms as unconscious leakages of repressed desires – eg: ‘The Interpretation of Dreams’ – Sigmund Freud (Hogarth Press, 1900).
defended against by the performance of a compulsive series of ritual acts or magical verbalisations like repetitive hand washing or the recitation of a particular phrase in moments of anxiety.\footnote{Jung, C. \textit{Psychology of the Unconscious: a Study of the Transformations \& Symbolisms of the Libido}. Kegan Paul Trench Trubner, 1912.}

Inferring from Jung, could it be that a high tendency to Psychoticism is the trigger for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in the transition from RED to BLUE?\footnote{Eysenck, H. J. \textit{Psychoticism as a Dimension of Personality}. Hodder \& Stoughton, 1976.}

Hans Eysenck himself linked Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder with Introversion. Which he also saw as being a contributing factor in the development of phobias.\footnote{Reported at SD II training session run by NVC Inc in Mirfield, near Brighouse, UK, in December 1998.}

This takes us back to the idea we considered in Chapter 10 that some people seem to ascend the Spiral with a preference for one side or the other.

It seems more than possible that those with a very strong preference for the conformity/sacrifice-self side (arising perhaps from a strong tendency to Introversion) would be vulnerable to one type of disorder. Whereas those with a very strong preference for the express-self side of the Spiral (arising perhaps from a strong tendency to Extroversion) would be vulnerable to a different kind of disorder.

Graves found that both BLUE and GREEN were vulnerable to Major (Unipolar) Depression, with GREEN having significantly higher suicide rates than all the other vMEMES. His evidence, supported by subsequent data collected by Beck \& Cowan\footnote{Beck, A. T. \& Cowan, J. \textit{Anxiety and Depression}. University of Pennsylvania, 1976.}, was that GREEN turned murderous thoughts in upon itself, rather than turning them on others. (Graves even put forward the proposition that the more people thought in GREEN in a society, the more the homicide rate would drop in proportion to the rise in suicides.)

Eysenck perceived extroverts as more liable to acting–out disorders such as Hysterical Disorder and Anti-Social Personality Disorder. Graves called C-P and E-R “…acting out systems. You get a very different kind
of pathology arising out of those systems than you get arising out of the others.’

Interestingly Freud saw Manic-Depression as resulting from an overactive Superego (BLUE) repressing the Id (at its most extreme, RED) to produce Depression; but then the Id periodically escaping its suppression to produce Mania. However, Graves (weakly) linked Mania to ORANGE. Since Mania tends to have a visionary element to it – the ‘great things’ the person is going to do – then ORANGE’s future pacing would fit with manic excitement.

What about when the needs of a vMEME are completely missed?

Reactive Attachment Disorder – originally titled ‘Affectionless Psychopathy’ by the great John Bowlby – clearly is the result of PURPLE’s attachment needs being failed almost totally. Then, in some a rather psychopathic form of RED emerges – the tendency to Psychoticism perhaps being the determining variable. The result is someone virtually without conscience, totally impulsive and unable to form relationships – or who throws themselves impulsively into inappropriate relationships.

Could it be that vMEMES contribute to Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) in which there is a failure to integrate various aspects of Identity into a unified personality?

Imagine a situation where someone had completely different vMEMES dominating in the Stack across their different Environments – especially when, due to difficult Life Conditions, the vMEMES were not ideally suited to the Environments. (Think about our example from Chapter 8 of the man pushed into P RED responses by his lover’s creation of C Life Conditions.) Then perhaps that person might find the contradictions in the attitudes displayed across the Environments so great that they begin to doubt they are one person...

This is certainly a possibility Don Beck & Chris Cowan have raised.
Can this approach even be applied to Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), DID’s more malignant cousin\(^{212}\) – in which individuals do seem to have quite distinct personalities living within them?

It may be that the core of the selfplex – the meme of \textit{I, myself} – has, for whatever reason, never rooted properly. Without that, perhaps different vMEMES could emerge to dominate in different Environments without a central connecting schema (selfplex), leading to unconnected Identities reflecting their dominant vMEMES…?

Certainly, in the case of Chris Sizemore – the woman at the centre of the notorious ‘\textit{3 Faces of Eve}’ case\(^ {213}\) - her second personality of ‘Eve Black’ was clearly dominated by RED thinking while the core personality of ‘Eve White’ reflected PURPLE and BLUE. It could be argued that Sizemore’s third personality of ‘Jane White’ embodied integrative aspects of 2\(^{nd}\) Tier thinking.\(^ {214}\)

Of course, the links I have proposed between vMEMES and mental health problems are untested and it is beyond the scope of this book to do more than suggest in this area.

Clearly, though, the ebb and flow of vMEMES does influence our psychological well-being.

In his research Graves worked mostly with psychologically-healthy young adults on issues of defining ‘psychological health’. Likewise, William Moulton Marston was interested in ‘normal people’; and Abraham Maslow made a virtue of concentrating on emotionally-healthy people\(^ {215}\).

Certainly the drive to Self-Actualisation identified by Maslow and Carl Rogers\(^ {216}\) – which is reflected in Don Beck’s concept of the ‘Prime

\(^ {212}\)The greatest champion of the differentiations between DID and MPD has been Dr Ralph Allison. See ‘\textit{Minds in Many Pieces: the Making of a Very Special Doctor}’ – Ralph Allison & T Schwartz (Rawson Wade, 1980)

\(^ {213}\)Documented in ‘\textit{A Case of Multiple Personality}’ – Corbet H Thigpen & Hervey Cleckley in \textit{Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology} #49 (1954). The movie, ‘\textit{The Three Faces of Eve}’ (20\(^{th}\) Century Fox, 1957), based on the study, won an Oscar for Joanne Woodward as ‘Eve Lancaster’.

\(^ {214}\)For a while Thigpen & Heckley saw ‘Jane’ as being the key to helping Sizemore develop an integrated personality but she continued to manifest more personalities over the years. Sizemore eventually published her autobiography, ‘\textit{I’m Eve}’ – Chris Costner Sizemore (Berkeley Publishing Group, 1978), now claiming to have become a wholly-integrated personality.


\(^ {216}\)Eg: ‘\textit{On becoming a Person}’ – Carl R Rogers (Houghton Mifflin, 1961).
Directive \(^{217}\) – has been made a tenet of ‘positive mental health’ by the likes of Dr Marie Jahoda.\(^{218}\) The implication is that failure to progress towards Self-Actualisation compromises mental health.

Nonetheless, research on Gravesian-style ideas of emergent systems, with their needs and behaviours, impacting upon specific mental health problems is to all intents and purposes non-existent.

However, if YELLOW thinking is effectively free from fear (associated with Neuroticism and tendencies to anxiety disorders and Depression) and compulsion (associated with Psychoticism and tendencies to develop forms of Schizophrenia), does this mean that 2\(^{nd}\) Tier vMEMES do not contribute to ‘mental illness’ – at least as we understand the term?

This raises possibilities that mental illness might inhibit progress up the Spiral. Equally could the assumption of 2\(^{nd}\) Tier thinking provide release from mental illness?

Such discussion is entirely in keeping with acknowledgement of the substantial contributions neuroscientists and endocrinologists have made to our understanding of how mental illnesses function. For example, not only was Graves convinced that the coping mechanisms he identified were neurological systems, but specifically he associated the freedom from fear the emergence of G-T YELLOW brings with major changes in brain chemistry.

Serious mental illnesses of the type we have been discussing here often need a multi-intervention approach.

Certainly, the medications the pharmaceutical industry is coming up with are better and better at controlling unwanted thoughts and behaviour with fewer and less unpleasant side effects. However, medications usually \textit{only} control and do nothing to tackle psychological causes of such illnesses. Until we understand more about the contributions vMEMES make to the development of various disorders, our ability to really get to grips with psychopathology is going to remain limited.

Clearly this is a major area the researchers need to start exploring!

\(^{217}\) Various postings to the \textit{Spiral Dynamics-integral} e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral. The ‘Prime Directive’ can be defined as the internal maturational drive to ascend the Spiral in the determined order, as one is able, given Life Conditions. Again, the concept of the Prime Directive reflects a divergence of sorts with the Gravesian/Spiral Dynamics orthodoxy that the vMEME matches the Life Conditions.

13. How We get Our Selves into States

Way back in Chapter 2 we said that we would look at how unhelpful schemas form and what we can do about them.

Having now made a psychological journey from schemas and memes, through Neurological Levels, to vMEMES, via a consideration of temperamental dispositions and an explanatory diversion into DISC, we are about at the point where we have the tools to do this.

The actual structure for understanding belief formation is provided by Dr L Michael Hall and his concept of Meta-States.\textsuperscript{219}

To understand this process, we’ll work our way through an example – see Fig 46.

Essentially we take in information through our senses and make a basic assessment from that data. This is the Primary State. In Fig 46 the man has concluded that: \textit{“Her eyes are glazed and focussed elsewhere.”} The Primary State is a neutral observation devoid of emotional significance.

We take in huge amounts of sensory information every waking second.

Most of it is deleted almost instantly from the brain’s sensory stores. It has to have some significance to register in the consciousness of our short-term memory.\textsuperscript{220}

From the fact he’s even registered a Primary State from the sensory input, the woman in Fig 46 has to have some kind of meaning to the man. It could be nothing more than he finds her attractive; or it could be that she’s his wife of 20 years.

However, once the Primary State is established, the man is driven – as we all seem to be – to make sense of it, to interpret it, to create a Meta-State from it. The Meta-State he creates is that she is looking into the distance.

Unless she actually tells him that is what she is doing, he can’t know that for sure. She might actually be internalising and not actually registering anything visual at all in her selfplex – her consciousness.


Fig 46: a man developing an unhealthy belief system through several levels of Meta-Stating (from the work of L Michael Hall)
However, the man now makes meaning of his first level Meta-State to create what is known linguistically as a complex-equivalence. Because she is looking into the distance, that must mean she’s not interested in him. Because she’s not interested in him, he Meta-States, she must be bored with him.

All this from the fact that the woman’s eyes are glazed and focussed elsewhere!

However, the man’s next level of Meta-Stating is a huge generalisation: “Women find me boring.” – and, from there, it’s to a level not far from being suicidal: “I’m so boring I can’t keep a woman!”

This man’s sense of self worth in his selfplex is pretty grim!

Although it’s a fairly dramatic example, Fig 46 shows how we build up belief systems by making meaning out of meaning and then making meaning out of the meaning of the meaning and then making meaning out of the meaning of the meaning…etc.

Meta-Stating is not an option. Human beings are meaning-making creatures. (And so, to a limited extent, are the higher mammals.) We all have to do it, to make sense of our lives and our relationships with others.

Where we build up positive, enabling belief systems through Meta-Stating, that clearly is very reinforcing. The problem comes when, like our man in Fig 46, we build up debilitating belief systems.

Years ago I was asked by ‘Dan’, the owner of ‘Largaso Ltd’, a small business, to coach his son, ‘James’, whom he had appointed to run a section in the company. For most of James’ life, his relationship with his father had been far from easy and James had Meta-Stated a whole fabric of unhealthy belief systems concerning that relationship. Amongst the schemas James had was that his father regarded him as “next to useless”, “hopeless”, “a waste of space”….

Why then, I challenged James, was his father paying good money to me to coach him if he really thought he was “hopeless”? This challenge clearly perplexed James; but he was convinced he had fresh evidence to support his view and came right back at me: “I tried telling my Dad an idea I had yesterday – and he told me to fuck off!”

From exploring the event with him, it transpired that James had walked into his father’s office unannounced and, without any warning or

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preamble, poured out his ideas for improving efficiency on his section. All in a rather agitated and nervous fashion.

I arranged for Dan and James – who were barely on speaking terms at this point – to meet with me and asked Dan to recount the incident.

According to him, he had just put the phone down from an altercation with a difficult customer and was still angry when James bounded through the door and started babbling away about something Dan was having difficulty comprehending.

Dan’s “fuck off!”, it turned out, had little to do with James and nothing to do with his ideas. The father apologised to his son and arranged a meeting for them to discuss James’ ideas at length.

As part of the coaching programme, I explained in detail about Michael Hall’s Meta-States concept. As a result, James began to challenge more and more of his presuppositions about his relationship with his father. The last I heard of the company, James was working well in his position as section head; and his relationship with his father was improving steadily.

**How do You attribute?**

What determines whether the meaning you attach to a Primary State or a lower Meta-State is enabling or disabling?

Firstly, since Meta-States is fundamentally an internal process, the keys to the process are internal. Obviously. The criteria on which each meaning is made are within – essentially the existing schemas of Values & Beliefs.

If, for example we believe something is morally wrong, then that will influence the formation of the next Meta-State – the meaning we give to the ‘wrong thing’.

Let’s say I have Values of loyalty and loving my wife. Consequently I believe that love means being faithful (the BLUE vMEME supporting PURPLE). What if I find myself registering the attractiveness of another woman (Primary State), think that the way she is looking at me indicates an interest (Meta-State #1) and think that I could respond (Meta-State #2, from a BEIGE/red harmonic). Then I might find BLUE kicking in to stop RED with an activation of my ‘guilt’ schema. Meta-State #3 might then be that I’m as good as unfaithful.

That may be fine in that a potential act of betrayal is stymied. But what if I generalise from that I am untrustworthy (Meta-State #4)? Now, what I believe about myself is in contradiction to my Values and no longer support them. My Neurological Levels are in turmoil!

Clearly vMEMES can have a major influence on the Meta-Stating process.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

More than this, vMEMES may produce trends in the way you Meta-State.

To help explore this, let’s work with some scenarios:

- You leave your house late to catch a bus. You arrive at the bus stop 30 seconds late just as the doors close. You gesture at the driver to open the doors. He shakes his head and drives off. Was it your fault you missed the bus because you left your house late? Or was the bus driver unreasonable and an officious ‘so-and-so’?
- You’ve passed your Psychology exam. Is your success due to your intelligence and hard work? Or is it due to the excellent tuition you received?
- Your new romantic partner of the past 2 months has ended the relationship. Is it that they can’t make a commitment? Or is it all your fault – you didn’t do this or didn’t do that?

The scenarios given are of increasing complexity; but behavioural patterns in responding may well be common.

If it was your fault you missed the bus and your relationship broke up; but it was your brilliance that got you through the Psychology exam, then you have attributed the turn of events in each instance, good or bad, to your own efforts.

If, however, it was the bus driver’s fault you didn’t get on the bus, your ex can’t handle commitment and you’ve got your teacher to thank for your exam success, then you are attributing the turn of events to things beyond your control.

So although Meta-Stating is an internal process, it is influenced by whether you are making meaning with an internal or an external orientation.

In terms of Dr Fritz Heider’s Attribution Theory\(^\text{222}\), we tend to be either ‘dispositional’ (internal – it’s all down to you) or ‘situational’ (it’s caused by external factors).

Dr Julian Rotter refined Heider’s concept by showing that people move on a scale to be more or less ‘internal’ or more or less ‘external’. However, he also showed that people do tend to generalise one way or

the other, reinforced by experience.\textsuperscript{223}

Immediately we can see an impact on the Meta-Stating process by whether you tend to attribute dispositionally or situationally. Dispositional will Meta-State that the cause is within – eg: that person is glaring at me because I’ve done something they don’t like. Correspondingly, situational will Meta-State that the cause is outside – eg: that person must have a hernia, their face is so miserable!

Attribution Theory underpins Dr Stephen Covey’s concept of Circles of Influence & Concern\textsuperscript{224} - see Fig 47.

Those who tend to be dispositional in their outlook tend to focus on what they can do – their Circle of Influence - to influence the world around them – their Circle of Concern. In so doing, they sometimes succeed in expanding their Circle of Influence. In other words, they bend the world around a little bit their way. As far as they are concerned, they make things happen.

Those who tend to be situational rather focus on what the world around is doing to them – in other words, the way their Circle of Concern impacts upon their Circle of Influence. They see things as happening to them, beyond their control. As a result, their Circle of Influence –what

\textsuperscript{224} ‘The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People’ – Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989).
they can do – often shrinks.

So, are you a ‘dispositionalist’, taking on the world and trying to expand your Circle of Influence? Or, are you a ‘situationalist’, letting the world – your Circle of Concern - control you?

The ‘dispositional’ worldview would lend itself to being driven by Extroversion and the self-expressive vMEMES; and the ‘situational’ by Introversion and the conformist/self-sacrificial vMEMES. This analysis tends to favour Don Beck’s notion that a number of people show a preference for ascending the Spiral by one side or the other.\[225\]

As a therapeutic strategy, Covey is right to encourage people to work to expand their Circles of Influence so they cope better with encroaching Circles of Concern. However, Heider’s Attribution Theory approach is too broad a brush stroke in many instances.

Rather, it is the finer detail in attribution styles of the Cognitive Triad - see Fig 48 – which really enables us to see how people Meta-State and which allows us to see more clearly how vMEMES exert their influence.

The Cognitive Triad was pulled together by Aaron T Beck\[226\] from work by Lynn Abramson, Martin Seligman & John Teasdale\[227\] in reconsidering the application of Seligman’s own theory of ‘learned helplessness’ as a major contributing factor to Depression in humans.\[228\]. (‘Learned helplessness’ is the idea that we learn to be inactive - apathetic and uninterested - through repeated failure in being active – trying to accomplish things.)

What Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale found was a distinction in internal or external attribution. Those who became depressed tended to attribute failure to themselves and success to external factors.

Those who saw themselves as successful tended to attribute success to their own efforts and failure to external factors beyond their control.\[229\]

\[225\] Various postings to the Spiral Dynamics-integral e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral.

\[226\] ‘Cognitive Therapy of Depression’ - Aaron T Beck, A J Rush, B F Shaw & G Emery (Guildford, 1979)


\[229\] This last point confirmed elements of earlier research which pointed to blaming failure on external factors as a way of preserving self-esteem and motivation- see: ‘Perceiving the Causes of Success & Failure’ – B Weiner, I
Knowing Me, Knowing You

This allows us consider how vMEMES attribute success or failure.

The express-self vMEMES, having an internal orientation, tend to attribute success to their own efforts and failure to others. With RED, blaming others can go to real extremes – especially when fuelled by Psychoticism – as admitting responsibility personally for failure (internal) would mean accepting limitations on self-potency.

The conformist/self-sacrificial vMEMES, having an external orientation, tend to attribute success to external factors – such as the safety in the tribe (PURPLE), all conforming to the One True Way (BLUE) or people working in a group consensus (GREEN) – and failure to internal factors, usually to do with not doing as expected (conformity).

Thus, we can now see that it is vMEMES which drive the attribution process – and at every level of Meta-Stating – see Fig 49.

In examining each Meta-State, we need to ask ourselves...

- which vMEME is dominant?
- is its perception of the meaning reflective of success or failure?

vMEMES which attribute failure to ourselves will tend to have a depressive effect by building up unhelpful schemas such as: “I’m no good”, “I can’t do X”, “People know I’m a fake”, etc, etc.

vMEMES which attribute failure to others – eg: “It’s his fault,” “They’re useless”, etc, etc – can easily poison relationships through the often open attribution of blame to others. They even become delusional to the point of paranoia when rejecting attribution of fault from others – eg: “It’s not my fault. They’re just out to get me!”

It’s worth considering here the other two elements of the Cognitive Triad – see Fig 48 – which affect how we Meta-State – and the possible influence of vMEMES upon them.

Personal attribution style is the first part of the Triad.

Stable/Unstable – whether we see the problem as going on seemingly forever or as being timebound (ie: it will come to an end) – is the second. Going back to Fig 19, some vMEMES do operate with a sense of time. For BLUE onwards, the potential longevity of the problem will be an issue. RED is unlikely to register the time factor. Time will only matter to PURPLE if the situation has been Stable in the past – ie: it’s always been that way. (“That’s just the way it is!”)


Knowing Me, Knowing You

**Fig 48: the Cognitive Triad** (from the work of Lynn Abramson, Martin Seligman & John Teasdale and Aaron T Beck)

**Cognitive Triad**

- **Success - Internal**: due to me/my efforts
- **Success - External**: due to luck, others, compliance with external requirements
- **Failure - Internal**: due to me/what I did
- **Failure - External**: due to failings of others

**Global** - encompasses everything
**Specific** - events as they arise

**Stable** - will last forever/timeless
**Unstable** - timebound/will end
Global/Specific – whether the problem encompasses whole areas of our lives or is essentially confined to a single issue – is the third part. Again vMEMES may have an interest. RED, for example, is the ultimate in egocentricity and, therefore, by default tends to look just at what
Knowing Me, Knowing You

interests it in that moment of time. BLUE, on the other hand, tends to look for the whole of ‘what’s right’, to ensure complete conformity.

**Handling Meta-States**

According to Aaron Beck, if we get a *Cognitive Triad* reading of:-
- I’m to blame;
- the problem will go on and on;
- my whole life is affected;

then the depressive schemas produced are likely to lead to Major (Unipolar) Depression.

My contention is that, the more we Meta-State – ie: to higher levels more abstracted from the Primary State – the more the *Cognitive Triad* influences those processes.

Let’s re-read our man in Fig 46 in these terms….

Meta-State #1 is a general situational attribution. Our man is focussed on his Circle of Concern.

By Meta-State #2 he is starting to assume that there is nothing about him that the woman is finding interesting. His view is definitely *Global* but could still be *Unstable*.

At this point an express-self vMEME – especially RED! – could assert itself to save the situation by doing something to catch the woman’s interest.

However, in Meta-State #3 - our man gives the woman’s apparent lack of interest an emotional slant which implies a fault within him – in other words he is not meeting some standard by which she would not find him boring. Almost certainly BLUE at work here.

When we reach Meta-State #4, it is truly *Global* and it is *Stable*; and Meta-State #5 finds unmistakable BLUE beating the man up in what seems to be a complete absence of self-esteem. In other words, it’s all *his* fault.

Undoubtedly, BLUE links to the Melancholic state!

The way we Meta-State either has an enabling effect or a disabling effect. Aaron Beck, via the *Cognitive Triad*, points out that the disabling effect can lead to Depression. So clearly it is important to have a way of managing Meta-Stating.

The first thing to remember is that the depressive schemas we form through this avenue of Meta-Stating are just that: disabling belief systems we have built up. The ideas we form may or may not be grounded in reality. Remember: these are just mental maps; and, as
Alfred Korzybski put it: *The map is not the territory.*\(^{231}\) The further away from the Primary State you abstract – the more levels of Meta-Stating – the less likely your perception is to be grounded in reality.

Secondly, a disabling/depressive Meta-State will almost certainly be due to a tendency to Introversion and self-expressive vMEMES being sublimated to conformist/self-sacrificial vMEMES – the Superego dominating the Id in Freudian terms\(^{232}\). All made especially worse by the failure being perceived to be going on and on (Stable) and applying across a wide range of scenarios (Global).

The conformist/self-sacrificial vMEMES – especially BLUE – tend to have a negative view of ‘self’. Back in the 1960s Jerry Phares, Elaine Ritchie & William Davis found that those with an external attributional style tended to pay more attention to negative information about themselves than ‘internals’ did.\(^{233}\)

So, if you tend to be on the introverted side and do show a preference for the conformist/self-sacrificial side of the Spiral, recognise that you will have this vulnerability in the way you Meta-State. Thus, you may need to compensate for this tendency if you find you have negative thoughts about yourself.

There is much written in modern *Psychology* and *Psychiatry* about how to deal with negative and depressive thoughts. If you like – or, more likely, your BLUE likes! - to take a fairly logical approach, then the Cognitive-Behavioural approach of Aaron Beck\(^{234}\) is probably appropriate for you. If your vMEME predominance is more intuitive – GREEN and beyond – then you are probably better-suited to the ‘imaginative’ exercises of Michael Hall\(^{235}\).

Certainly, any Meta-State can be Meta-Modelled. By breaking down the inferences people have built up about themselves and the state they’ve got themselves into, it is possible to give them enabling insight,

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\(^{232}\) *The Ego & The Id* – Sigmund Freud in *On Metapsychology* – A Richards (ed) (Penguin, 1923).


\(^{234}\) *Eg:* *Prisoners of Hate: the Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility &Violence* – Aaron T Beck (Harper Collins, 1999).

Knowing Me, Knowing You

One technique I’ve found particularly effective, though the ‘client’ requires at least a basic knowledge of Spiral Dynamics first, is to suggest to someone that they approach their troublesome Meta-State from a different vMEME.

Identify which vMEME is driving the Meta-State, then ask yourself how a very different vMEME would tackle the issue. Then associate into it – imagine that very different vMEME is now driving your head with regards to the problem.

For example, if BLUE is beating them up about some perceived failure, how would RED approach it? The answer often is something like: “Well, now I don’t give a stuff!”

Sometimes, if they are having difficulty moving vMEMES, it can help to soften them up by Meta-Modelling through the other aspects of the Cognitive Triad – eg: What would it be like if you could see an end to the problem? and/or: Tell me about the other aspects of your life this applies to.

It can be helpful also to get the client to move to a different physical position or do a different action when asking for the perspective of a different vMEME. (ORANGE seems to like walking its Timeline into the future.)

While I’ve found this approach does enable people to break free from the disabling Meta-State, sometimes it leads the way to finding more deeper-rooted problems than were initially apparent.

Obviously, Meta-Modelling requires a Meta-Modeller. If you find yourself unable to break a negative chain of Meta-States, then do seek help.

Remember: schemas are just that – and often they can be changed. Just think of what happened to ‘Father Christmas’!

So, when you consult your list of unhelpful beliefs from Chapter 2 – on the assumption you’ve some left! – can you see how you’ve Meta-Stated yourself into those beliefs?

If you can, are you able to see how you could create more enabling Meta-States – perhaps by using some of the strategies we’ve suggested in this book?

However, if you really feel trapped in an unhelpful Meta-State, don’t hesitate to get help from a therapist with the levels of understanding outlined in this book. Better to get help than end up in the Gamma Trap.

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236The concept of Timelining was developed by Tad James – see: ‘Time Line Therapy & the Basis of Personality’ – Tad James & Wyatt Woodsmall (Meta Publications, 1988).
As with several other areas we have touched upon in this book, much more research is needed into the formation of Meta-States so that we can gain a greater understanding and, from that, develop more precise and more powerful therapeutic techniques.
14. Troubleshooting Me, ‘My Self’ and My Stress

As we enter the final chapter in this first part of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’, it seems appropriate to summarise (very!) briefly some of the key points we have learned.

Leaving aside discussion of the ‘spiritual self’, fundamentally our self is a set of innate temperamental dispositions on top of which (metaphorically speaking) sits the selfplex, a confluence of schemas, chief of which is the concept of ‘I, myself’.

The selfplex mutates at a Nominal Level through exposure to different memes to provide a suitable Identity with appropriate Values & Beliefs to carry out Behaviour suitable to the Environment in which it finds itself. At a Deeper Level, vMEMES shape Values & Beliefs and the Skills & Knowledge to be deployed to deal (Behaviour) with the Life Conditions in the Environment.

vMEMES effectively are ‘core intelligences’ and, as they operate with quite different needs and motivations, can give the feeling of being quite different selves.

Our temperamental dispositions may predispose us to give a degree of preference either to the express-self side or to the conformist/sacrifice-self side in the way we ascend the vMEMETIC Spiral. vMEMETIC shifts may cause some small shifts in the intensity of temperamental dispositions.

The mechanism of change is driven by the looping feedback of Reciprocal Determinism which may or may not involve change at a vMEMETIC level.

How we Meta-State and make sense of our world and our experiences in it is influenced by vMEMES, particularly if we have a preference for one side of the Spiral.

So…what’s your problem?

Understanding Stress

Firstly, when we become seriously troubled, we get stressed. Most people don’t know how to deal with the stress experience itself.

Stress, as we discussed briefly in Chapter 3, is a physiological reaction. All too often, the actual physiological reaction itself becomes part of the problem. Already suffering huge cognitive dissonance, people tend to assume they are ‘breaking down’ or ‘going mad’ because of the intense physical sensations they are experiencing.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

To manage the physiological reaction, we have to understand it.

So a little lesson in Biology....

Looking back to the Gestalt Cycle – see Fig 24 – when we perceive something that requires a response from us that will be taxing or challenging in some way, the hypothalamus releases noradrenaline (in its neurotransmitter form) to trigger the sympathetic branch of our autonomic nervous system – see Fig 50\textsuperscript{237}.

Put rather simply, as a result of this the pupils enlarge to admit more light, the liver releases sugar for energy, and the adrenal glands release the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline to prepare the muscles for action. Breathing becomes deeper and more rapid to oxygenate the blood. Blood vessels dilate and contract, redirecting blood away from the digestive system – slowing it down – and towards the brain and muscles. Meanwhile the heart beats faster to aid that circulatory process. As a result of which the muscles tense. Perspiration acts as a cooling mechanism for muscle activity raising body temperature. ‘Butterflies’ in the stomach and a dry mouth from the lessening of salivation may be side effects of these dramatic changes in the body’s physiological state.

Endorphins are released to block pain and additional blood platelets are produced so that blood can clot more easily in case of injury.

If the stress is maintained for even a short length of time – say, over 5 minutes – then the hormone cortisol is released which is the ‘fuel’ for maintaining the stress condition. Stress also increases activity in the immune system which helps protect the body from disease pathogens.

The result is a heightened readiness to respond, both physically and mentally.

Brilliant! A wonderful N BEIGE level fight-or-flight survival mechanism for Life Conditions A – being chased by a sabre-toothed tiger ‘X’ millennia ago or attacked by hooligans on a modern city centre street.

Not so good for Life Conditions C facing shame at your own inadequacy or Life Conditions D worrying about whether you’ve done something the way you should have done.

Quite why we should have get physiologically stressed in the way we do for problems at higher levels is something of a mystery. Genome Lag – the failure of the human genome to adapt in certain respects to very different environmental conditions from 35,000 years ago – has been put

\textsuperscript{237}Graphic adapted with permission from ‘Brain Facts: a Primer on the Brain & Nervous System’ (p26, Society for Neuroscience, 2002).
forward as an explanation. However, while genome lag is scientifically proven, it is far from being a comprehensive explanation. Clearly the physiological stress reaction is appropriate at times.

Minor excitation of the sympathetic system can be positively helpful at times. Who would not want to be a little excited on a first date with an attractive member of the opposite sex? Doesn’t everybody want to feel at least a little energised when facing an important exam?

Dr Hans Selye, one of the greatest researchers into stress, called such low-level positive stress ‘Eustress’ and believed it was essential if we

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

were to remain alert and interested in life. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has identified that entering the fine zone between being bored and being anxious is critical for achieving the optimal peak performance he calls ‘flow’ in athletic, artistic and/or intellectual endeavours.

It is possible that elements of what we understand the physiological stress reaction to be are related to the functioning of vMEMES and their shifting under pressure – described in Chapter 9. Clare W Graves found noradrenaline to be significantly more present than adrenaline when someone was dominated by RED in their thinking but adrenaline to be significantly higher than noradrenaline when BLUE was utmost.

In fact, on one occasion Graves even shifted a volunteer’s thinking from RED to BLUE by injecting him with adrenaline. As the adrenaline was burned up, the volunteer’s thinking centred again around RED. It seems Graves had artificially created temporary vMEMETIC change.

For all this, when the stress reaction pervades consciousness to the point of becoming disabling, then clearly it has become pathological.

Worse still, in his concept of the General Adaptation Syndrome, Selye identified that chronic long-term stress leads to exhaustion, with failure of the parasympathetic system (which, to put it a little simplistically, tries to calm your body down and regain a physiological balance). Additionally, the immune system can collapse, leading to stress-related diseases.

The groundbreaking studies of Dr Meyer Friedman & Dr Ray Rosenman are of significance here. Investigating links between stress and coronary heart disease, they identified the kind of stress-related self-expressive behaviours often associated with RED – competitive, impatient, restless and pressured – which they termed ‘Type A’, as making people more vulnerable to heart attacks. Some ORANGE behaviours – ambitious, drive for achievement – also fitted into the Type A profile.

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239 ‘Stress without Distress’ – Hans Selye (Lippincott, 1980)
244 ‘Association of Specific Overt Behaviour Pattern with Blood & Cardiovascular Findings’ – Meyer Friedman & Ray H Rosenman in American
A later study by Stephanie Booth-Kewley & Dr Howard Friedman more specifically related this vulnerability to the kind of chronic negative states RED/Choleric is capable of getting itself into – eg: hostility to others, feeling aggrieved, ‘hard done by’, etc.²⁴⁵

However, stress can be just as dangerous to those oriented towards the conformist/self-sacrificial side of the Spiral – termed ‘Type Cs’ by Friedman & Rosenman. They saw Type Cs as sociable but repressed (PURPLE/Introversion/Impulse Control), industrious and conventional (BLUE) and as reacting to stress or threat with a sense of helplessness (Melancholic). Hans Eysenck summed up a growing body of evidence when he clearly linked Type C severe and ongoing suppression of self to forms of cancer.²⁴⁶

Clearly neither getting yourself into either an extreme state of acting out stress or total sublimation of stress is healthy. Yet it would seem a tendency towards Unstable on the Neuroticism axis is going to predispose you to dealing with the need for a challenging or taxing response in a stressed way.

So, what to do about it?

Firstly, recognise that the cause of the stress and the physiological reaction to the stress are not the same thing. If you are focussed on the physiological reaction, you are not going to be able to deal with the cause.

For many people, simply understanding the nature of the physiological response often helps them to deal with it. (Oh, that’s just me getting a big shot of adrenaline that’s making me feel that way!)

The meaning of the physiological experience is, of course, a Meta-State; and, like any Meta-State, it can be Meta-Modelled – broken down to provide understanding of the experience – and often a new positive

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Meta-State created. *(Oh, that shot of adrenaline is going to give me the alertness to solve my problem!)*

It’s impossible not to be in a state of physiological stress if you have a genuine stressor impacting upon you. However, the way you Meta-State will impact significantly upon your ability to cope. (More about this later in the chapter.)

As I’ve said before, to Meta-Model, you need a Meta-Modeller. Seek help sooner, rather than risk sliding into the Gamma Trap we discussed in Chapter 9.

As a short-term fix, do some physical actions. Your BEIGE has got you ready to fight or flee – so do some action to accommodate it. Burn up the excess energy you have been provided with!

At times of great stress in the past, I’ve found that energetic bouts of shadow boxing have enabled me to regain enough mental and emotional equilibrium to approach my problem(s) from a calmer state of mind.

These days a thorough workout at the gym often helps ease the day-to-day stress of working life.

It also helps if you can develop strategies that distract you from ruminating over the problem and continuing to feed your alarm.

Psychologists such as Diane Tice and Richard Wenzlaf have found that the most effective mood-changing strategies are those which most involve the physical senses. In addition to almost any form of exercise, deep breathing, going for a drive or playing a fast-moving video game are all recommended.\(^{247}\)

To be almost trite: remember stress is just a feeling!

The physiological experience itself is not the stressing factor.

**Internal or External, Temperamental and Memetic?**

Once we’re in a position to at least manage the physiological symptoms of our stress, then we need to tackle the cause(s).

Richard Lazarus’ *Transactional Model* of stress\(^{248}\) – see Fig 51 – provides us with some important pointers in moving from considering the physiological expression of the stress to its causes.

Lazarus assumes that the stressor is external. His Primary Appraisal of the potential harm, threat or challenge the stressor poses takes us right

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back to William Moulton Marston’s point of considering whether the Environment is favourable – ie: the Life Conditions. See Figs 11 and 29.

Lazarus’ Secondary Appraisal of the ability to cope with the perceived harm, threat or challenge also parallels Marston. Thus, we have to consider both the natural temperamental dispositions of the individual and the ability of the vMEME(S) available to them to deal with the stressor.

Thus, the amount and type of stress we will experience will depend on both our schematic perception of the external Environment and what schematic perception of our internal ability to cope. In other words, the Meta-States we make.

Our internal inability to cope may be influenced by our temperamental disposition. Thus, for example, a significant tendency to Introversion may result in a PURPLE and/or BLUE approach to life. A similar tendency to Extroversion may tend to favour RED and ORANGE.
Thus Life Conditions which require a response from vMEMES of the opposite to our preferred side of the Spiral (assuming we have a bias) are likely to be more stressful.

So what kinds of things stress vMEMES? Because what stresses the vMEMES dominating in your selfplex will affect seriously your ability to cope.

For example, P RED will find the imposition of D Life Conditions of order, discipline and compliance frustrating. Q BLUE will find an Environment populated by fast-thinking and innovative R ORANGE-led types bewildering and perhaps threatening.

Fig 52 provides a basic summary of key stress factors for vMEMES of the 1st Tier. Essentially stress factors comprise Life Conditions which don’t support the needs – as Maslowian outputs\(^{249}\) – of vMEME activity. Fig 52 also shows some of the key needs.

Life Conditions which don’t support the dominant vMEME (S) must cause stress.

vMEMES will change in the selfplex to meet the Life Conditions. But what if the Life Conditions inhibit the expression of certain vMEMES? What if the needs of certain vMEMES are never fulfilled?

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For example, the young child whose PURPLE can’t find security at home. Say they come from a one-parent family where mother is a prostitute and a junkie. Home, with ‘clients’, pimps, dealers and other junkies on the scene and mother ‘blissed out’ a lot of the time is hardly likely to be a ‘safe place’.

The child goes to school, their PURPLE looking for safety. But, BLUE is working ineffectually so there is little discipline but a lot of RED bullying. Such C Life Conditions in the Environment of the school will not enable desperate O PURPLE to have its needs met but will rather result in the emergence of P RED. Only a RED that doesn’t have a sound PURPLE foundation on which to learn to express itself healthily.

Not only is RED’s manifestation likely to be thoroughly unpleasant in such a scenario; but what does the child do about having its PURPLE safety-in-belonging needs met?

I’ve heard Don Beck say it is important to exercise each vMEME at least once a year. I’m not sure Beck exactly means a specific ‘workout’ for each vMEME. I suspect what he is really getting at is ensuring each vMEME’s needs are met.

We’ve skirted around this concept of ‘a vMEME’s needs’ several times in the first part ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ and hinted at there being a maturational factor in the way vMEMES emerge.

Now we have to tackle head on the notion of a vMEME, as a ‘mini-self’, having needs because this takes us beyond the Marston-Lazarus view of the inside looking out, assessing the outside and then responding. It takes us beyond even the Graves and orthodox Spiral Dynamics position of the internal vMEME being in symbiotic relationship with the Life Conditions. Now, we have to consider the inside independent of the outside – vMEMES as entities in themselves – and consider the ‘health’ of each vMEME.

Graves held that vMEMES emerge in symbiotic interaction with the Life Conditions in the Environment. His position has been upheld completely by Chris Cowan. However, Beck, with his concept of the Prime Directive and in other more recent comments, does imply that

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250 SD II training session run by NVC Inc in Mirfield, near Brighouse, UK, in December 1998.
252 Various postings to the Spiral Dynamics e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics.
there is a maturational factor in the emergence of vMEMES. He has not said explicitly that vMEMES are programmed to emerge in sequence as someone develops through life, irrespective of the Life Conditions; but the implications are inescapable.

The position Beck appears to be working towards is perhaps best represented in the idea of ‘Push & Pull’ factors Lawrence Kohlberg put forward as leading the moral development of children. Since Graves mapped his hierarchical systems to the stages of moral development Kohlberg identified, this seems an entirely valid avenue to explore. (We will look more at the work of Kohlberg in Chapter 22 and Chapter 23.)

More in keeping with the theories of Sigmund Freud than Graves, Kohlberg sees moral development as being driven by internal, maturational forces – ‘Push’ factors. Yet Kohlberg and others working with his line of thought also had clear evidence that views on morality could mutate under pressure from Life Conditions – eg: discussion with influential others – the ‘Pull’ factors which more support the orthodox Graves/Spiral Dynamics position. Since Beck himself, by saying that some people may ascend the Spiral with a discernible preference for one side or the other, effectively allows for the maturational factor, one suspects that Kohlberg pretty much had it right. Just when and how Push happens is strongly influenced by Pull – but Push there is!

This means there is a sense in which the state of each vMEME forms part of the Life Conditions inside us – which reinforces Peter McNab’s point that we and what is happening to us are part of the Environment.

We have to consider both the vMEME’s needs – part of our internal Life Conditions – and its ability to respond to external Life Conditions. In meeting its needs, a vMEME will impact upon the Environment, running through the loop of Reciprocal Determinism – see Fig 23.

So, when you look at Fig 51 and Fig 52, think about not only how

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253 Various postings to the Spiral Dynamics-integral e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

you are identifying and responding to external stressors; but also about whether you are enabling your vMEMES to fulfil their needs.

Once they have been activated in your psyche, the vMEMES of the 1st Tier have needs which, to develop Marie Jahoda’s line, must be met for your well-being. (It’s probably not appropriate to think of the 2nd Tier as having needs, since they are more about Being than Subsistence/Deficiency – though we don’t yet have enough understanding of those vMEMES.)

13 Tips for Your Psychological Health

The following are by no means exhaustive but sum up some of the key applications of what we have learned so far.

1. Accept the way you are temperamentally. That it is just you and there isn’t a huge amount you can do to change ‘you’. Don’t try to be something you can’t be; so relax and be who you are.

2. Recognise that you can learn and shift more or less along the lines of Eysenck’s Dimensions of Personality when you need to. Facilitate your vMEMES to respond to differing Life Conditions.

3. If you find your natural temperamental dispositions are distressingly extreme persistently – eg: depressive or delusional – get help. Even if you end up on medication, it’s better than suffering.

4. Look after your vMEMES – your mini-selves. Ensure their needs are met. They are your means of coping with life.

5. Check that Nominal Level adaptations are successful by making sure your Neurological Levels are aligned. Where there is misalignment, look at the Deeper Level. What are the Life Conditions like in the Environment and how are your vMEMES stacking up to deal with the situation?

6. Understand that most of your schemas are just like your one-time belief in Father Christmas: they can be changed.

7. Don’t assume that your perceptions are correct; they are simply

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schematic maps you have formed, based mainly on your vMEMES accepting the memes others have exposed you to.

8. If you find yourself compelled to do something you might not normally do, check for vMEME drivers – and watch for the less-obvious harmonic that may trip you up, as well as tendencies towards Neuroticism and Psychoticism.

9. If you tend towards the Unstable end of the Neuroticism axis, watch for either RED or BLUE leading you into extremes. Be aware of any tendency towards Psychoticism supporting RED excess. Try to work back more to the centre – the intersection of Eysenck’s Dimensions.

10. Recognise and seek to resolve vMEME wars before they get out of hand. Where possible, give each active vMEME its need. Where you can’t do that, anticipate and manage the consequences.

11. Consider the way you Meta-State and how your attributional tendency will lead you to make meanings. If you are building an unhealthy chain of Meta-States, try making meaning from the view of a different vMEME.

12. If you don’t understand a situation or if you are troubled, see if you can self-actualise from YELLOW to go meta to it – and see it from other angles. Often simply changing your physical position can break a state that’s locking you into an unhealthy view.

13. If you find yourself heading towards the Gamma Trap, then seek professional help sooner rather than later.

Now, from ‘Knowing Me...’ – working on understanding yourself – it’s time to do some ‘Knowing You...!’
Part Two: Knowing You…

From Part One, dear reader, I trust you’ve learned a lot about both yourself and others with whom you have relationships.

How human beings function psychologically, how you’ve come to be the way you are, what you might be able to change and what kinds of effects interactions with others are likely to have on you.

We couldn’t ignore others in Part One. Most of the Life Conditions across almost all the Environments in which you operate are the result of the actions of other human beings or your interactions with them.

However, our emphasis so far has been largely on you, your make-up and how you deal with the way changes in the Life Conditions affect you.

Now, our emphasis switches to the dynamics in relationships and how you can influence those who impact upon your Life Conditions. How you influence them is critical because how they respond to your influence will have an impact on you. What we’re talking about is the looping symbiotic interaction of Reciprocal Determinism – see Fig 23.

First, we’ll look at relationships in general and then in particular at the two most important relationships for most people: male-female romantic/sexual relationships and parents’ relationships with their children. We’ll also take a short look at that hotbed of interpersonal dynamics – the workplace. Along the way, we’ll consider aspects of conflict management and the more productive ways of dealing with ‘conflict modes’.

In dealing with others, it’s important to bear in mind that, generally speaking, you are able to be in control of your self much more than you can be in control of the selves of others. You can do much more about you than you can about others!

Where you can most influence others is in the Life Conditions their vMEMES will interact with.

The scientific understanding of the human psyche we have developed so far is arguably the most advanced and powerful on the face of our planet. As we develop that understanding in application to relationships with others, I look, dear reader, to you using this knowledge wisely and to the benefit of all parties involved.

I once made the mistake of teaching the technique of Meta-Modelling to a section supervisor who operated out of a hard, nodal RED that exhibited signs of paranoia. In two days that supervisor succeeded in
Knowing Me, Knowing You

humiliating three of his key male workers to the point of emotional devastation, with two of them walking out, threatening sabotage of the plant.

Never again!
15. Making Sense of Other People

In one sense everyone else is just like you. Structurally their personality, ignoring concepts of a ‘spiritual self’, is composed of a set of temperamental dispositions interacting with a pliable and mutating selfplex which ‘sits’ atop it – see Fig 33.

In other senses everyone else is totally unlike you. Their temperamental make-up is likely to be different to yours, with different gradations along Hans Eysenck’s *Dimensions of Personality*. The memes their selfplex will have been exposed to and the way vMEMES have ebbed and flowed to form and adjust schemas will all have been different.

Their very potential for adaptation in all of this will be different to yours, due both to genetics (the *genotype* of raw genetic potential) and to everything that has happened to them since conception (resulting in the developed *phenotype* – the person they currently are). Even monozygotic twins – for all their 100% genetic likeness – frequently emerge from the womb with slight differences in height, weight and sometimes, as far as we can tell, even intelligence and temperament. This is usually due to one twin getting a larger share of nutrition and other support from the shared placenta.

So, looking at ourselves as phenotypes receiving barrages of sensory data, including heaps of information from other phenotypes, how do we make sense of what William James, one of the great founding fathers of *Psychology*, called “…one great blooming, buzzing’ confusion”\(^\text{259}\)?

The answer usually lies in our mapping incoming information to already-existing schemas.\(^\text{260}\)

The problem is that we don’t know if our schemas and the Meta-States we create from them are anything like accurate.

Consider two hypothetical conversations: one between ‘Tony’ and ‘Bob’ – see Fig 53 – and one between ‘Phil’ and ‘Matt’ – Fig 54.

Tony is a headteacher and Bob is his head of History. At the moment we catch them, Bob is mumbling into his hand, making excuses for poor GCSE results. He is feeling intimidated by the way Tony is staring at him intently in what he takes as quite a disapproving way.


Matt is interviewing Phil for a job. Phil is talking excitedly about what he can do for Matt’s family-owned business. Matt looks pleased and engaged with what Phil is saying. Phil takes Matt’s positive feedback as encouragement to talk even more about what he can do.

In fact, Tony is totally internalised, feeling nauseous, sick with worry that his wife is going to leave him. At that point in time, he’s not even really aware Bob is there.

Matt has interpreted Phil’s enthusiasm as an indication of his ambition. He thinks the idiot will put in long hours and take on lots of his work, allowing him to spend more time on the golf course!
How do we know what others really think and feel? And what’s driving them?

As Michael Hall has been at great pains to point out, inside you have your thoughts and feelings – your ‘inner world’ – but all other people have to go on is your speech and your behaviour – what you put out into the ‘outer world’. This is why body language is so important and what makes Meta-Stating inevitable.

Others have to make meaning from your speech and behaviour. Your speech and behaviour are part of the Life Conditions they experience in that Environment. Thus, the dominant vMEME at that moment in time evaluates the memes in your speech and behaviour – the Primary State – from existing schemas. And that evaluation is the first level Meta-State. Thus, the Environment is determined to be favourable or unfavourable and vMEMES may or may not shift.

As an example…

I meet a woman I dated ten years ago and haven’t seen since. She smiles at me and says: “Remember the good times we used to have together?” If my PURPLE’s up, it may recall how fond we were of each other and what great friends we were. It may then remember the hurt when we broke up, resulting in me feeling rather sad. If my RED’s in charge, it’s more likely to recall the more daring sexual experiments – but then how much it was her fault we fell out. And the grin on her face is one of smug superiority! (Well, I’ll show her!)

In the PURPLE-led scenario, I may well end up Meta-Stating that the woman is still sad about our break-up. In the RED-led scenario, I’m more likely to Meta-State that she’s crowing over me.

So I’m at the mercy of my 1st Tier vMEMES unless I can self-actualise from YELLOW.

Then I can prolong the formation of the Meta-State by Meta-Modelling her.

I’ve mentioned the use of Meta-Modelling several times in Part One of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’; now it’s time to give a little more detail, as it is a powerful and practical tool.

Developed by Richard Bandler & John Grinder, Meta-Modelling,
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Use Open-Ended Questions to explore Values & Beliefs

- What’s important about that?
- How do you do that?
- Where did you learn that from?
- What does that do for you?
- When do you think that?
- Who taught you that?
- Which is most important to you?

Use Closed Questions to get Definitive Answers (when You want Them!)

- Are you afraid?
- Will you do that?

Use Tag Questions to get Commitment to Ideas

- So you would do that, would you?
- So that’s what you think, is it?
- That’s OK - you know what I mean?

Fig: 55: Some examples of Meta-Modelling questions (from the work of Richard Bandler & John Grinder)

in its simplest form, is the use of language to explore another’s ‘inner world’. Examples of types of Meta-Modelling questioning techniques are given in Fig 55.

So, for example, with the woman from ten years back, I might say: “What exactly do you mean?” or “What period exactly were you thinking of?” or “What are your favourite memories?” or “How do you feel about things looking back now?”

By ‘going meta’ in this way, I am able to explore the woman’s intent in her speech and behaviour (smile). This gives me more data on which to form my schematic evaluation.

Meta-Modelling also allows me to direct or shape conversation – which is why it is such a deadly tool in the wrong hands (mouth!).

For example, if I Meta-Statemented that there was a possibility of resuming the relationship and that possibility was appealing, I might say something like: “If our relationship had carried on, what would we have had to have done to make it work?”
Knowing Me, Knowing You

This creates what NLPers call an ‘As If Frame’\(^\text{264}\) which puts the woman in the hypothetical position of still being involved with me and looking back on our relationship to tell me what, from her point of view, had made it work.

On the other hand, if I Meta-Stated that the woman might still be fond of/attracted to me and that was not desirable, I can turn the conversation another way by saying something like: “Of course, we know it would never have worked out between us, don’t we?”

This ‘tag question’ is really a statement which creates a direction the woman has either to resist actively or agree to.

Meta-Modelling is a true skill. It requires concentration and very good listening skills. It also requires the creation of rapport with the other person, using positive body language and warm tones of voice – and, in most cases, it should be conversational in style. Otherwise it can easily turn into an interrogation!

Legend has it that, when Bandler & Grinder taught their first set of students how to Meta-Model, they sent them away to use the technique to fact find with friends and relations. When the students reported back, the following week, they had lots of facts but fewer friends and strained family relationships!

Perhaps most importantly, the fact-finding phase of Meta-Modelling requires as much suspension of moral judgement as possible. The more you allow your own values to influence the structure of your questioning, the more the data you extract will be skewed.

For most people, it needs a good teacher and an awful lot of practice.

\textit{vMEMES, Meta-Modelling and Meta-Programmes}

Of course, how people respond to Meta-Modelling will depend on which vMEME is in the mental driving seat.

PURPLE and GREEN need lots of rapport. RED is usually very reluctant to divulge information which could equate to power. BLUE is terrified of saying ‘the wrong thing’ – especially if the questioner is a recognised agent of the particular authority BLUE responds to. In which case it may well flip over and confess all! As for ORANGE, once it tracks onto the methodology, it may well enjoy the gamesmanship in the process.

Recognising the vMEMES driving the selfplexes of others necessarily involves you Meta-Stating. But the more accurate your Meta-

\(^{264}\)First documented in ‘Precision’ – Michael McMaster & John Grinder (Metamorphous Press, 1980).
State of another’s selfplex, the more able you will be to handle them.

People who are well-grounded in both Spiral Dynamics and Neuro-Linguistic Programming can usually recognise vMEMES by Meta-Modelling down to core values. Metaphorically, this is like peeling a psychological onion!

I once Meta-Modelled ‘John’, the highly-successful headteacher of a secondary school in Yorkshire. In a little over 5 years, he had turned it around from being the local education authority’s worst-performing school to being the authority’s best-performing.

John claimed his prime motivation was to give the disadvantaged children of this poverty-stricken former mining town the opportunity to have an education as good as anywhere else.

This sounded very altruistic, very GREEN.

However, when I Meta-Modelled John down to his core values, yes, GREEN was active in his selfplex but ORANGE was a lot stronger. For him, when it boiled down to it, his prime motivation was his own success. *He* had made this school successful. *He* was going to achieve even better next year. And he measured *his* success by the number of GCSEs his disadvantaged students got and the plaudits *he* received from the local education authority.

Once faced with the results of the Meta-Modelling process, John admitted that, deep down, he knew I was right.

If GREEN had been his principal driver, he would hardly have left his disadvantaged students to be headhunted into being principal of a college in a rather more affluent area at a significantly-higher salary.

Sometimes vMEMES can be recognised from consistent and regular patterns in speech and behaviour – though the caveats about inner world projections into the outer world we discussed earlier need always to be borne in mind. (In other words, speech and behaviour are not thoughts and feelings!)

Often Meta-Programmes – patterns in speech and behaviour – can help us to identify vMEMES in action. As with Meta-Modelling, we touched upon Meta-Programmes in Part One of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ without going into much detail.

Shelle Rose Charvet, arguably the world’s leading expert on Meta-Programmes, describes them as “…the specific filters we use to interact with the world. They edit and shape what we allow to come in from the outside world. They also mould what comes from inside ourselves as we
communicate and behave in the world.”

Around 60 Meta-Programmes were originally identified by Lesley Cameron-Bandler, drawing on speech pattern research by the great linguist, Naom Chomsky. Since then more and more Meta-Programmes have been ‘discovered’. Thankfully, several leading thinkers on Meta-Programmes like Charvet, Rodger Bailey and Fiona Beddoes-Jones have tended to concentrate on a dozen or so of the most useful.

Essentially, a Meta-Programme is a distinction in speech and/or behaviour observable between two extremes on an axis. Thus, when you consider Hans Eysenck’s Dimensions of Personality – see Fig 8 – both Stable-Unstable and Introversion-Extroversion can be classified as Meta-Programmes – and frequently are! (Impulse Control-Psychoticism could be considered a Meta-Programme too, though I’ve yet to see that axis treated this way.)

A number of Meta-Programmes identified are related to temperament and lie effectively as sub-traits across Eysenck’s original 2 Dimensions – see Fig 28. ‘Horizontal’ Meta-Programmes, if you will.

Other Meta-Programmes are clearly ‘vertical’, in that their operation is affected by which vMEMES are dominating in the psyche.

In reality the distinction between horizontal and vertical Meta-Programmes may not be as clear cut as I have indicated. The relationship between temperamental dispositions and the selfplex is much more fluid - see Fig 33 – than the kind of rigid demarcation I originally put forward in Fig 10. However, the more useful Meta-Programmes I perceive to be affected by movement on Clare W Graves’ Spiral are shown in Fig 56. Based primarily on Charvet’s work, some of the mid-points on certain axes are given titles and descriptions.

The way people’s vertical Meta-Programmes operate tend to be fairly consistent across Environments, providing Life Conditions are

268 Bailey is the creator of the LAB (Language & Behaviour) Profile, the first psychometric to be based on Meta-Programmes. His work did much to establish the popularity of the Meta-Programmes concept in NLP.
stable.

As an exercise to get you thinking about how your own personal Meta-Programmes work, you may wish to have a go at scoring your own Meta-Programme preferences – using Fig 57. There is no meaning in the score points to the left of the central point being negative and those to the right being normal (positive). This is purely to reflect different sides of the central point on an axis.

Fiona Beddoes-Jones has pioneered the viewpoint that Meta-Programmes are far from static and that it is important to map ranges of flexibility in their operation – ie: how far they can move from their preferred point. Beddoes-Jones has pushed the idea of ranges of flexibility as a way of getting people to use their Meta-Programmes in a more deliberate manner. Flexibility tends to increase the more unstable the Life Conditions are.

So, after identifying your preference points, have a go at identifying your range of flexibility along each Meta-Programme.

I’ve presented my own (general) Meta-Programme profile as a worked example of the methodology in Fig 58.

A word of warning….

As with the Eysenck Personality MiniTest in Chapter 3 and the Graves system assessment chart in Chapter 5, your self-assessment – and it is just that! – of your Meta-Programme preferences should be taken only as an illustrative indication. All kinds of factors could render your self-perception less than 100% accurate.

You may by now have identified that the Meta-Programme extremes on the left side of the central points on Fig 56 generally reflect a conformist/self-sacrificial tendency while the extremes on the right side are more self-expressive.

My contention is that the working of vMEMES in the psyche is reflected in Meta-Programme distinctions, preferences and ranges of flexibility. This is a linkage of concepts which, to my knowledge, has never been researched in any credible manner – though Dr Natasha Todorovic, Chris Cowan’s partner and a noted commentator on Spiral Dynamics and Neuro-Linguistic Programming in her own right, is convinced of the need for such research.\footnote{E-mail correspondence between Dr Todorovic and the author, July 2001.}
### Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who Move Away From problems avoid things which threaten their success</th>
<th>People who Move Towards are energised by accomplishment, by achieving their goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Matchers like to fit in with corporate culture and the prevailing situation/environment</td>
<td>Mismatchers like to take the opposite stance and dislike being told what to do</td>
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<td>Procedures people prefer to follow instruction and the accepted way of doing things</td>
<td>Options people want to have a choice and like to explore what is possible</td>
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<td>Externally-Referenced people rely on feedback to make decisions and function effectively</td>
<td>Internally-Referenced people carry their criteria for making judgements within themselves</td>
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<td>People who process via Sameness are motivated by stability; they often notice similarities</td>
<td>People who process via Sameness-with-Exception will accept incremental, positive change</td>
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<td>People who process via Difference notice what is different; they have a high capacity for change</td>
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<td>Detail Conscious thinkers have a preference for small “bite-sized” pieces of information</td>
<td>Big Chunk thinkers prefer a general impression; they think in terms of the key points</td>
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<td>People who are Others-oriented put the needs of other people over their own</td>
<td>People who are Self-oriented have themselves and their needs as their highest priority</td>
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<td>Thinking people approach situations logically and are cool-headed</td>
<td>Many people have Choice to beyond their emotions and think things through</td>
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<td>Co-operative people want to work and share with others – for them, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts</td>
<td>Feelings people are driven by emotional reactions to their experiences</td>
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<td>Reactive people respond to situations or changes in the environment</td>
<td>Proactive people initiate change and like to plan for the future</td>
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**Fig 56: key vertical Meta-Programmes (from the work of Lesley Cameron Bandler, Rodger Bailey & Shelle Rose Charvet**
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Use the increments of 5 to ring or tick (√) a point of preference. Then shade your range of flexibility.

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Fig 57: Meta-Programmes assessment chart (from the work of Rodger Bailey and Fiona Beddoes-Jones)

209
**Knowing Me, Knowing You**

*Preferred point is in white. Range of flexibility is indicated by grey band.*

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*Fig 58: Meta-Programmes assessment chart worked example (from the work of Rodger Bailey & Fiona Beddoes-Jones)*
While the lay-out of Fig 56 allows us to see general trends to the conformist/self-sacrificial (left side) and more self-expressive (right side), clearly, these trends manifest themselves more on some Meta-Programme axes than others.

It also possible to discern specific vMEMES driving certain Meta-Programmes.

For example, ORANGE will Move Towards while BLUE will enable Moving Away From. An epitome of the Move Away From Meta-Programme was BS 5750, the 1979 British Quality Standard which served as the genesis for the world-renowned ISO 9000. One of the principal stated aims of the Standard was “to prevent non-conformities”.

BLUE also likes Procedures and is Detail Conscious while ORANGE likes Options and tends to think in Big Chunks.

RED will be behind extreme Mismatching. PURPLE will thrive on Sameness.

However, the relationships to sides of the Spiral are not always absolute. For example, PURPLE and GREEN can be very concerned with Feelings while ORANGE can be very Thinking. RED’s shortsightedness can lead it into being totally Reactive at times. And BLUE may not like change but it will be Proactive in a Move Away From manner – ie: it plans to prevent things going wrong.

vMEMES may also use Meta-Programmes in ways you might not always anticipate. For example, ORANGE can be very Co-operative where it suits its purposes to manipulate people.

There can be even some quite strange twists in the way vMEMES use Meta-Programmes.

A few years ago I provided consultancy support to ‘Graham’ and ‘Steve’, long-time friends who had recently become joint owners of a small business. One of the reasons they asked me in was to mediate between them as their relationship was deteriorating rapidly.

Graham’s ORANGE made him a real Move Towards dreamer whose ideas for growing the business were ruthlessly shot down via Steve’s Move Away From Meta-Programme. Yet, in every other aspect of the way he lived, Steve seemed never to have climbed higher than RED.

What became obvious after a short time was that Steve’s RED wanted complete control of decision-making in the company. It couldn’t compete with the complexity of Graham’s ORANGE visioning but it could ‘stretch up’ enough to borrow BLUE’s Move Away From Meta-Programme.

So, if you’re in doubt as to what you’re dealing with, Meta-
Programmes may indeed help you home in on the active vMEME; but beware of jumping to too-obvious conclusions.

One of the great unexplored potentials arising from the mapping of vMEMES to Meta-Programmes is that Meta-Programme experts like Charvet and Beddoes-Jones have identified extensive linguistic patterns for working with people by talking to them through their Meta-Programmes. This enables people skilled in using these patterns to influence the thoughts and behaviours of others. What they are really influencing is the vMEMES behind the Meta-Programmes.

The more we can map which vMEMES drive which Meta-Programmes, the more we can use these linguistic patterns to talk directly to vMEMES in terms they can understand and respond to.

**Observing vMEMES**

The main published works to date on vMEMES\(^{271}\) deal primarily with the pure concepts of Clare W Graves’ systems and various philosophical, political and management-type applications.

Both Dr Jenny Wade\(^{272}\) and Peter McNab\(^ {273}\) touch upon Gravesian systems as keystones in an individual’s development. But ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ is the first book (to my knowledge) to consider vMEMES primarily in their application to interpersonal relationships\(^ {274}\).

Consequently, there is little credible scientific research available on easily spotting vMEMES at work in your spouse, your child or your friend.

Meta-Modelling is hard and skilled work; and basing assumptions on Meta-Programmes is not always guaranteed to be accurate.

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\(^{273}\) ‘Towards an Integral Vision’ – Peter McNab (Trafford, 2005).

\(^{274}\) This is not to say Beck and Cowan do not touch upon interpersonal relationships on their training programmes. Cowan in particular deals with some of the implications of different vMEMES for more personal matters. Graves’ concepts have been mixed in to quasi-spiritual approaches to interpersonal relationships – eg: Martyn Caruthers’ Soulwork Systemic Solutions – www.soulwork.net – based on Hawaiian Huna concepts and Vince & Debra Flowers’ That’s Life – www.thatslife.net – which draws upon Amerindian traditions.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

However, once again we can learn by turning to the work of William Moulton Marston\textsuperscript{275} whose behavioural types correspond to a significant degree with PURPLE (Submission), RED (Dominance), BLUE (Compliance) and ORANGE (Inducement).

Fig 59 provides a basic overview of how each of Marston’s types often appears. The overview presented here is related mostly to workplace scenarios.

As with Meta-Programmes, this is a useful way of homing in to vMEMES in action; but similar caveats need to be heeded. In tracking vMEMES, we need to be considering the motivating system behind the behaviour.

Again, Marston can tell us little about GREEN and beyond.

However, it is possible to make some assumptions about GREEN from personal experience and from implications in the work of Graves and Beck & Cowan.

GREEN tends to a more informal style of dress (‘dressing down’) than BLUE and ORANGE; and it doesn’t usually prize tidiness and orderliness. Status symbols like expensive cars, big houses and designer label clothes tend to be despised as ‘materialistic’. Rather than eat at a chic restaurant in Paris or fly to New York City to shop, GREEN would rather have a walking holiday in the Welsh hills where it can ‘commune with nature’. If it went to Paris, it would be to check out the art. It is generally gentler and more considerate than the other 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier vMEMES – unless unfairness and/or equality are perceived.

An important fact to remember in our identification of vMEMES working in others is that we have talked only of nodal or peak systems. According to Graves, around 40% of the people he studied were being led in their thinking by combinations of systems – vMEME harmonics, in *Spiral Dynamics* language.

This means we must watch for subtleties, nuances and the not so obvious which might indicate a multiple vMEME perspective – as in the story of ‘Graham’ and ‘Steve’.

So, we might recognise the likely vMEMES and their harmonics and their wars in operation in other people from their Meta-Programmes, body language and general approach (from dress to how they handle others). We can Meta-Model to explore their ‘inner world’ to some degree. And the more we understand about *Spiral Dynamics*, the easier it becomes to map the data we get.

\textsuperscript{275} ‘Integrative Psychology: a Study of Unit Repsonse’ – William Moulton Marston, C D King & Elizabeth H Marston (Harcourt Brace, 1931).
## Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission (PURPLE)</th>
<th>Dominance (RED)</th>
<th>Compliance (BLUE)</th>
<th>Inducement (ORANGE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dress</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tends to dress appropriately but for comfort rather than fashion. May lack colour coordination. Men in particular tend to dress for comfort and utility in old clothes.</td>
<td>Generally not bothered about outward appearance but will dress appropriately – eg: a conservatively-styled business suit or 2-piece costume. Particularly with a man, it may be drab, rumpled or marked.</td>
<td>Conservative, smart, neat clothes. Avoids the flamboyant and the fashionable. Stays neat all day.</td>
<td>Likely to dress stylishly, fashionably or even flamboyantly. Generally looks smart but often ends the day untidy or even dishevelled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handshake</strong>&lt;br&gt;Friendly, firm, sincere but not a flamboyant or aggressive handshake.</td>
<td>Strong, assertive handshake (brief strong grip).</td>
<td>Loose, brief, possibly even nervous handshake.</td>
<td>Very friendly handshake – may pump or hold – or even give a double-hander.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye Contact</strong>&lt;br&gt;Warm, friendly eye contact when trust relationship established.</td>
<td>Direct, steady eye contact – can be challenging or threatening.</td>
<td>Tends to avoid direct eye contact except when being authoritative.</td>
<td>Friendly, steady eye contact- usually smiling eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Language</strong>&lt;br&gt;Relaxed but not demonstrative. Often a defensive posture and gestures in an aggressive or competitive situation.</td>
<td>Restless and fidgety. Usually looks directly at the other person and leans forward when interested. May lean back or look away when waiting or bored. Uses finger pointing or other hand gestures to emphasise or take control.</td>
<td>Tends to be cautious about expressing feelings through gesture or facial expression – so may be seen as expressionless or cold.</td>
<td>Much hand and body movement – will even use hand movements to describe something over the phone. Generally open and relaxed style. Will touch or hold others as a sign of friendship or sincerity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Manners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission (PURPLE)</th>
<th>Dominance (RED)</th>
<th>Compliance (BLUE)</th>
<th>Inducement (ORANGE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodical, organised and thorough but relaxed and often apparently contented. Security conscious and often reluctant to change the status quo rapidly. Tends to question, to clarify and to verify, and to make cautious statements. May have a slow pace of response, particularly when presented with a new problem or question. Often a good listener.</td>
<td>Probably running late or in a hurry. Can be or appears to be rude or blunt – will interrupt you, make phone calls or read a letter while you are talking. Uses challenging questions related to their objectives.</td>
<td>Prepared for you, unhurried, organised and punctual. Time disciplined and systematic. Very polite, correct and diplomatic. Detailed, logical, precise and cautious phrasing of questions. Very fact, detail and evidence oriented. Looks for precedents or policy to support a decision. When certain will quote facts, rules, policy and be authoritative.</td>
<td>Often inattentive to details such as keeping appointments and double booking – so may not give you much time. Tells stories and anecdotes. Happy to share feelings. Friendly, sociable and courteous – hospitality is important. While seeming very interested or concerned, may delay a decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Office/Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission (PURPLE)</th>
<th>Dominance (RED)</th>
<th>Compliance (BLUE)</th>
<th>Inducement (ORANGE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A secure, comfortable environment, often with a nameplate on the door. Photos of possessions and/or family and certificates on the wall. Furnishings are usually comfortable and often old fashioned/worn.</td>
<td>Office and desk probably disorganised. Place is functional, rather than comfortable or stylish. Often dislikes filing (except in the bin) and uses the ‘heap system’ to save time.</td>
<td>Very neat, orderly and almost impersonal. Desk is often clear apart from pertinent file/letter. Everything is neatly and precisely filed in a system that works.</td>
<td>Office may well be untidy and disorganised. May have pictures of self or awards for performance. Casual furnishings/gimmicks/executive toys/the latest electronic gadget or computer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 59: the appearance of DISC types (based on the work of William Moulton Marston)*
As to *Dimensions of Personality*, Introversion and Extroversion can be recognised in someone’s character fairly readily. But watch out for contextual shifts along that axis.

Where they are in terms of Neuroticism and Psychoticism may show up fairly quickly if there are extreme circumstances. However, it often takes knowledge of someone over time and across several Environments to be sure of their dispositional patterns. Again, though, you need to watch out for contextual variations.

Getting to know someone – more how they are really are, rather than a careless and overly-simplistic Meta-Stating from our own schemas – can be both hard work and time-consuming. Hopefully, some of the considerations we’ve looked at in this chapter will have made that process a little easier.

The more we understand others, the more we are able to manage our relationships with them.

No wonder Stephen Covey put as one of his key habits: “*Seek first to understand, then to be understood.*”

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276 *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* – Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989).
16. Strategies for Healthy Relationships

So you’ve got the means to make some kind of sense of where others are coming from…. What next?

Well, that depends on what the relationship is and what you want out of it, taking into account what is possible and what is not.

The NLP exercise, *A Well-Formed Outcome*, provides a robust framework for enabling people to get the most out of their relationships, to the benefit of all parties involved. (For our purposes, ‘healthy relationships’ can be considered those in which everyone gets something positive and enabling out of them.)

There are several variations of the exercise; but we will work through the one shown in Fig 60. You may wish to use this exercise to tackle some real relationship problem, filling in the boxes as we go through the questions. Fig 61 is a worked example of one of my recent principal outcomes, involving my wife, Caroline (referred to as ‘C’).

1. Define the outcome. What is it you want to achieve from the relationship? How should the relationship be?

   It’s amazing how many individuals and businesses I’ve counselled over the years who don’t really know what they want. Sometimes people know what they *don’t* want; and sometimes they don’t know what they *do* want until they get it. But, for the purposes of planning and management, it is important to get a handle on just what it is you want.

   On occasion you can ask your ‘Unconscious Mind’, turn your attention to something else and find a little while later the answer just pops into your conscious awareness.

   For some people sometimes it is appropriate just to give yourself ‘dreaming time’. Perhaps relax, lie back on a bed or a sofa and let yourself daydream – effectively entering a light trance – until something clicks with you. Your ‘ah, ha!’ moment!

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*A Well-Formed Outcome* was first documented in ‘*Neuro-Linguistic Programming Vol 1: the Study of the Structure of Subjective Experience*’ – Robert Dilts, John Grinder, Richard Bandler, Lesley Cameron-Bandler & Judith DeLozier (Meta Publications, 1980). One of the prime change planning tools developed via *NLP*, this exercise can be used for almost any scenario where change involves considering the impacts upon others.
### Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the Objective?</th>
<th>How does it look/sound/feel?</th>
<th>What do We need to start it?</th>
<th>What do we need to maintain it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dovetail the Outcomes of Others</td>
<td>Context - Who/What/When/How</td>
<td>What will We lose if We achieve it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resources do We need?</td>
<td>Who will be affected by it - how and why?</td>
<td>What’s the first step?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 60: A Well-Formed Outcome (from the work of Robert Dilts, John Grinder, Richard Bandler, Lesley Cameron-Bandler & Judith DeLozier)*
### Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the Objective?</th>
<th>How does it look/sound/feel?</th>
<th>What do We need to start it? What do we need to maintain it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To keep C happy while I take the time to write a book.</td>
<td>V: She smiles at me. A: She tells me she loves me. She encourages me to keep on writing. K: Few stress symptoms.</td>
<td>S: C’s love and her faith in me. M: Time alone. Her continued love and faith in me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dovetail the Outcomes of Others</th>
<th>Context - Who/What/When/How</th>
<th>What will We lose if We achieve it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C: to feel loved (PURPLE) and to feel proud of her husband (RED/ORANGE). C’s friends/family: to be proud of having a notable person in the family (PURPLE/RED/ORANGE).</td>
<td>Me to identify &amp; block off time when I can be alone to write. C to allow that. Us to identify &amp; block off ‘quality time’ together. Me to encourage C’s friends &amp; family to be excited about the book and share that excitement with her. Me to check that C occupied or at least not unhappy while I am working on the book.</td>
<td>Both of us will lose some time together (PURPLE). Me to not always be able to write as the inspiration flows (RED/ORANGE/2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier). C the ability to engage with her husband as the mood takes her (PURPLE/RED).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resources do We need?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust. Understanding. Discipline. Blocked off-time. C to have other means of occupying her time (friends, hobbies, TV, etc). Free-flowing communication. Readiness to discuss issues as they arise. Support of family and friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who will be affected by it - how and why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The world will gain from a readily-accessible and integrated approach to the behavioural sciences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s the first step?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss with C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 61: a worked example of a Well-Formed Outcome (from the work of Robert Dilts, John Grinder, Richard Bandler, Lesley Cameron-Bandler & Judith DeLozier)*
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Other times a more structured approach such as brainstorming\(^{278}\) can help. This involves an individual or group simply generating and recording ideas without judgement or evaluation until one or more stick as the ones to focus on

2. VAK the stated outcome. By which we mean: how will you know in sensory terms that you have achieved your outcome? What will you see? What will you hear? What will you feel – both in terms of emotions and bodily sensations?

Nominalisations like *I want us to be happy* are fine in intent but not very helpful in terms of measuring an outcome. What is ‘happy’? – and does ‘happy’ mean the same thing to the other person(s) in the relationship?

In a romantic relationship, for example, ‘happy’ might mean sex six times a week to one partner and doing activities together on Sundays to the other.

The more specific we can be, the more likely we are to achieve our outcomes.

3. Decide what you need to start the course to achieve your outcome and what you will need to sustain that course.

In tackling Box 3, it’s often helpful to think of it in terms of a journey.

What would you need to start? Perhaps a car and a map. What would you need to sustain/maintain your journey? Fuel refills if the journey is any length. Food refills possibly also. A motel if the journey will take you overnight.

4. Next you need to consider who else in the relationship you need to help you achieve your outcome – and what they will get out of it.

If the people whose support you need aren’t going to get something positive for them out of supporting you achieving your objective, why should they do it? Put bluntly, what’s in it for them?

There’s a potential tripping point in Box 4 in this exercise. In its original structure, the exercise makes no allowance for others coming from a totally different – alien, even! - value construct

\(^{278}\)The brainstorming concept was first developed by Alex Osborn – see: *‘Applied Imagination’* (Scribner, 1953).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

to yourself. Yet it’s so easy to Meta-State the motivations of others from our own perspectives!

Using *Spiral Dynamics*, we can attempt to Meta-State others’ motivations with at least some degree of accuracy.

This is where we need to understand and work with the diversity of vMEMES across the Environments of others. In other words, we need to be able to recognise which vMEMES are dominating in their Stacks.

Consider, for example, the two people represented by the vMEME Stacks of Fig 42 and Fig 44 in Chapter 12.

Can you imagine these two people trying to understand one another? Apart from some very basic degree of concern on family matters, they would disagree on almost everything. The person represented in Fig 42 would largely be baffled by the ideas the person represented in Fig 44 dealt in. Fig 44 would probably despise Fig 42 as *a simpleton*!

So, in assessing what others’ interests are that could serve your interests, you need to look at the vMEMES that are driving them in the context in which you are working. What needs are they desirous of having fulfilled?

5. Box 5 is essentially for the planning of the course of action to achieve the outcome.

   Many people express this in terms of ‘SMART’ – ie:-
   - Specific
   - Measurable
   - Achievable
   - Realistic
   - Timebound

   Once considered the epitome of cutting-edge thinking, SMART has fallen into disrepute with some ‘gurus’ of late. In fact, it is a very practical schematic for saying how you intend putting a plan into action.

6. Now we are concerned with the things both you and the other person(s) in the relationship will lose by you achieving the outcome and the benefits of those things – ‘positive by-products’ you will no longer have.

   An example that gets quoted in so many attempts to explain *A Well-Formed Outcome* is the smoker whose outcome is to give up smoking. Amongst the positive by-products the smoker loses are:-
Knowing Me, Knowing You

- keeping weight down;
- having something to do with your hands;
- the calming effects of nicotine;
- etc, etc

A key checkpoint on *A Well-Formed Outcome* – even more important than ‘VAKing’ the outcome in many instances – is whether what will be gained – Box 1 and Box 4 – will be greater than the loss of positive by-products – Box 6.

If the value of Box 4 outweighs Box 6 for the others involved, then you are very unlikely to get the support you need. If the positive by-products of Box 4 are more important to you than your outcome – Box 1 – then you will have no chance of achieving your outcome as things are. Which is a principal reason so many people struggle to give up smoking.

Again, it’s highly useful in measuring the value of loss to consider the vMEMES involved.

Look again at the worked example of Fig 61….

If writing this book meant we couldn’t go on holiday this year, my wife would most likely live with that. Her RED and ORANGE would be disappointed; but, because her PURPLE is so strong, she would accept it. She would sacrifice her own interest for mine in the hope that would bring closer bonding from my appreciation of her sacrifice. Someone centred in RED would not put up with that. They would probably go on holiday on their own, after making their partner’s life a misery!

However, if writing this book meant we couldn’t go to family functions together, then Caroline’s PURPLE would be deeply troubled, forcing it to choose between a set of affiliations (members of her family) and one single but tremendously strong affiliation (with me).

As Peter McNab points out, it can help to swing that balance between Box1/Box 4 and Box 6 if you can provide means of compensating yourself and others for positive by-products which are lost.\(^{279}\)

7. In Box 7 – in many ways an extension of Box 3 – we list the resources we need to achieve our outcome. Resources can range from money to time to love. If you don’t have the resources you need, then you have to get them or you won’t be able to achieve your outcome.

\(^{279}\) ‘Towards an Integral Vision’ – Peter McNab (Trafford, 2005).
8. Box 8 is for an ecology check. Looking beyond the immediate people you need to involve, how will you achieving your outcome affect others?
   Clearly, from Fig 61, I believe the world will benefit from this book!

9. Finally, we need to take practical first steps. As the old Chinese proverb says, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”

As with so many of these kinds of exercises, it is often very beneficial to have a facilitator or guide to take you through the boxes. For people in long-term close relationships – eg: lovers, intimate friends, close partners in a business venture – it can be therapeutic to work through the exercise together.

**Communicating the Message**

So now you know what you want from your relationships, how do you tell the other person(s)?

Communication is the most difficult aspect of any relationship. After all, while we’re attempting to say what we mean, the other person is creating Meta-States from internal schemas related quite possibly to a different vMEMETIC set-up than the memes we’re attempting to infect them with.

Then there are a couple of simple biological limitations which make receiving and holding information that much more difficult.

Firstly, as we discussed in Chapter 13, when someone speaks to us, their words are just part of a huge informational bombardment of our senses. To catch our attention, their words have to have significance to us.\(^{280}\) Unfortunately, as George A Miller famously identified, we can only hold between five and nine chunks of related information in our conscious short-term memory.\(^{281}\) When new information comes into our

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\(^{281}\) *The Magic Number Seven, plus or minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information* – George A Miller in *Psychology Review #63* (1956). Miller built on the work of Joseph Jacobs who identified seven plus or
Knowing Me, Knowing You

consciousness, if short-term memory is at maximum capacity, it appears something has to go. In other words, one of the items gets displaced.

I once counselled a young man, ‘Rick’, who had just started up in business. Two weeks before he had had a very promising interview with ‘Jim’, a potential buyer. Jim had indicated that he would indeed purchase Rick’s products and would call him to confirm after getting budgetary approval.

Jim hadn’t called back and the young man was despondent. When I suggested he call the buyer, Rick demurred on the grounds that clearly Jim had lied to him and wasn’t interested in his products – otherwise he would have called.

What a Meta-State!

So I explained Miller’s 7+/−2 to Rick and that it was more than likely Jim’s intention to purchase what were relatively minor items for his company (but a big deal to Rick!) had been displaced by greater priorities.

Rick then phoned Jim who was delighted to hear from him, apologised for having forgotten and placed a sizeable order there and then.

Another biological problem communicators face is the length of time a thought will hold in conscious awareness. It seems an item in memory forms an actual physical trace but then immediately starts to decay.

Research has repeatedly shown that an item in short-term memory will last a maximum of 30 seconds unless it is rehearsed. In a famous 1959 experiment Lloyd & Margaret Peterson found that, without rehearsal, less than 10% could be recalled after 18 seconds!\(^{282}\)

By ‘rehearsal’, we mean repeating the item – eg: saying a telephone number you have just been given over and over again until you actually dial it. This seems to work better for most people through verbal rehearsal, like the example given, rather than keeping on trying to hold an image in memory – though that does appear to work for some.

Repeated rehearsal can result in an item being stored in long-term memory. This gives us Richard Atkinson & Richard Shiffrin’s Multi-store Model of Memory, as depicted in Fig 62.


225
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig: 62: linked Multi-Store and Working Memory models of memory (from the work of Richard Atkinson & Richard Schiffrin and Alan Baddeley & Graham Hitch)
Knowing Me, Knowing You

However, Fig 62 also incorporates Alan Baddeley & Graham Hitch’s Working Memory Model. This, unlike the Multi-store Model of Memory, portrays short-term memory as being active, with both auditory and visual loops for representing sound and sight to and from the ‘chief executive’ decision-making element. The chief executive – effectively, the selfplex – draws information (schemas) from long-term memory to match to incoming information to aid its processing functions.

Clearly, schematic information may be linked to vMEMES. The processing of information will be influenced by vMEMES. More than that, the very motivation to hold information in short-term memory may be influenced by vMEMES. (vMEMES will influence what is relevant.)

The actual manipulation of data by the selfplex (chief executive) may be done via Meta-Programmes. For example, the actual assimilation of information by a BLUE-driven Little Detail Meta-Programme will be quite different from that of ORANGE-structured Big Picture. A lengthy and minutely-detailed report would be boring to ORANGE which would scan impatiently for key points. BLUE, on the other hand, would be concerned that a single page of bullet points could not possibly cover all the issues – a Move Away From Meta-Programme being triggered by the lack of detail.

Not only is the way information is processed in short-term memory influenced by vMEMES but so is its storage and retrieval in long-term memory.

Meaning as the most powerful factor in memory was first put forward by Fergus Craik & Robert Lockhart in 1972 and then demonstrated experimentally by Craik & Endel Tulving. This created the proposition that the more something was given meaning the more likely it was to be remembered. Since each vMEME filters for and ascribes different meanings, we have no choice other than to conclude that vMEMES profoundly influence all aspects of attention and memory, from perceptual filters to the storage and retrieval of memories.

The influence of vMEMES and the working of Meta-Programmes on memory are represented in Fig 63.

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Fig 63: memory influenced by vMEMES and worked via Meta-Programmes (from the work of Richard Atkinson & Richard Schiffrin and Alan Baddeley & Graham Hitch, Clare W Graves, Lesley Cameron-Bandler, Rodger Bailey, Shelle Rose Charvet, Don Beck & Chris Cowan) 228
Knowing Me, Knowing You

As with so many of the areas explored in this book, much more research is needed.

Nonetheless, we can conclude that, in communicating, with others, the more what we say has relevance to them, the more they will take notice.

In the barrage of sensory information, they are subjected to, what is so important to us is very likely to get lost unless we can make it relevant to them in their terms – ie: to their vMEMES.
17. Conflict Modes

In Chapter 12 we considered the concept of ‘vMEME wars’ within the individual psyche. In Chapter 16 we looked at strategies to improve communication and create positive alliances with others with whom you have relationships.

Now we need to consider what happens when a vMEME or vMEME harmonic in one person goes to war with a vMEME or vMEME harmonic in another person (or group of people).

In Chapter 18, we’ll look at how to deal with the conflict modes (or styles) we identify here and also what to do about conflicts at the same vMEMETIC level.

While the work of Clare W Graves covers in detail how to manage what we now call vMEMES, what has been published does not say a great deal about the nature of direct conflict between individuals who are led by different vMEMES.²⁸⁶

Both Don Beck and Chris Cowan have written papers on conflict from a Spiral Dynamics perspective. However, although they are highly-recommended reading²⁸⁷, their essays are pitched at a macro/cultural/international level.

 Nonetheless, Beck has attributed generalised conflict modes to nodal RED through to the ORANGE-GREEN transition which we can take down to the more interpersonal level.²⁸⁸

To enhance our understanding of behavioural conflict at that level, it benefits us to use also the work of, respectively, Dr Robert Blake & Dr Jane Mouton and Dr Ken Thomas & Dr Ralph Kilmann. Both partnerships have been pivotal in understanding the fields of organisational development and conflict management. By mapping their efforts to Spiral Dynamics, we can gain more understanding of how vMEMES operate in conflict at an interpersonal level.

Blake & Mouton initially identified five conflict management styles

²⁸⁷For an index to Don Beck’s online essays on international and cultural conflict, see: http://spiraldynamics.net/DrDonBeck/essays/index.shtml. Chris Cowan’s articles are available at http://www.spiraldynamics.org/hotspots.html.
which they mapped onto a grid. They saw these styles as personality traits related to temperamental preferences for task/process or people. Ken Thomas, however, also thought of them as orientations which were influenced by context – in other words, the Life Conditions in the Environment – and your willingness/ability to:-

- assert yourself;
- co-operate with others.

With Ralph Kilmann, Thomas refined the work and constructed what became known as the Thoma-Kilmanns Conflict Mode Instrument.

The modes Thomas & Kilmann take from Blake & Mouton are represented against the axes of Assertiveness and Co-operation on Fig 64.

However, Blake & Mouton later added 2 additional styles to their model - which they portrayed as combinations of other styles.

By paralleling Don Beck’s work with Blake & Mouton and Thomas & Kilmann, we can see a wide range of vMEME conflict modes (styles).

**PURPLE**

Though he certainly points out it gets involved in conflicts (at the level of our tribe against your tribe), Beck does not attribute a specific conflict mode to PURPLE.

This is because its natural mode is to avoid conflict where possible.

The Thomas & Kilmann mode of Avoidance (unassertive/unco-operative) fits here – they win/you lose. (Blake & Mouton call this Indifference (Evade & Elude).)

This mode involves not pursuing either your own concerns or those of the other party. Instead you use strategies to avoid addressing the conflict, eg:-

- diplomatically sidestepping an issue;
- postponing an issue until a better time;

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig 64: the diagrammatic structure of the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode model (from the work of Kenneth Thomas & Ralph Kilmann)
Knowing Me, Knowing You

- withdrawing from a threatening situation.

If you are highly Avoidant, you are displaying a sense of hopelessness and withdrawal since conflict is perceived as a no-win alternative.

Someone who prefers the Avoidant approach is often the least visible person in a team; they are a follower who maintains distance from active involvement in any level of dispute whenever possible. According to Blake & Mouton, this person carefully goes through the motions of work, doing enough to get by, but rarely making a deliberate effort to do more. (Shades of the ancient Greeks’ Phlegmatic type!) A domineering leadership style often keeps Avoiders in the Avoidant style.

Clearly, this mode would suit PURPLE. This vMEME’s need for security makes it reluctant to engage in interpersonal conflict; though Beck & Cowan assert it could be part of one group or tribe in conflict with another group or tribe over territory or resources. As Thomas & Kilmann point out, the Avoider does recognise that conflict is a necessary evil and that we must either accept it or withdraw from human contact. Since PURPLE cannot withdraw from human contact – its security is bound up in belonging – it will engage in inter-group conflict.

Thus, tribal gang wars!

The point Thomas & Kilmann make about a domineering (RED) leadership reinforcing the Avoidant style is interesting since this is reflected in Clare W Graves’ take on how tribalism might have mutated into feudalism. PURPLE will defer to those more senior in its grouping or tribe and seek to avoid being caught up with those who struggle for power to lead the grouping. Interestingly Jerry Coursen has pondered whether there can ever be a pure PURPLE tribe since those who lead exercise power and, therefore, must have some RED driving them to use that power.

It also might be that PURPLE subservience to such RED is exacerbated by a tendency to Impulse Control.

For all the difficulties it brings for the individual concerned, Thomas & Killman do see the Avoidant mode as being valid in certain circumstances, such as:-

- when there are other more important issues to be dealt with than the one under dispute;
- when you are not sure of your competency to deal with the issue

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294 Presentation by Dr Coursen at Don Beck’s first Annual Spiral Dynamics Confab in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, USA, in May 2000.

233
at hand and there are other competent persons to solve the problem;
- when there are more chances of disruption than finding a solution or when the status quo is to be maintained;
- to provide cooling time;
- when the issue is only symptomatic.

**RED**

Don Beck gives this vMEmE a conflict Identity of the ‘Flamethrower’, seeing its mode as aggressive, violent (physically and/or psychologically) and predatory, with the intention of attacking and eliminating.

Thomas & Kilmann’s *Competition* (assertive/unco-operative) mode pretty much matches to RED – you win/they lose. (Blake & Mouton call this *Control (Direct & Dominate)*.)

This mode is concerned with pursuing your own concerns at the expense of the other party, using status, economic sanctions, your ability to argue, etc, eg:-
- ‘standing up for your rights’;
- defending a position which you believe is correct;
- simply trying to win.

If your main style is Competitive, this is because you tend to see differences among people as reflecting their competences: some people have skills, others have none, and some are right and some are wrong. Ultimately, ‘right’ prevails and this is the central issue in conflict. *We owe it to ourselves and those who rely on our judgment to prevail in conflicts with others whose opinions and goals we see as dubious.* If you are a strong Competitor, you believe that persuasion, power and force are acceptable tools for achieving conflict resolution and that most people expect them to be employed. (Clearly a world of those who have ‘it’; and those who don’t but respect and defer to those who do!) You believe that conflict is a competition for status that will be won by the person demonstrating more competence. This style places prime importance on personal goals to the exclusion of any concerns for the relationship.

In Graves’ words for C-P, ‘...to hell with others...!’ As Blake & Mouton point out, though, the low concern for others limits their involvement and that invites an overly forceful approach. So we end up with the powerful and the victimised.

In terms of rules, it’s *my rules for you and no rules for me.*

Since RED is unconstrained by rules, it will do what ever it needs to do – exercising its competence – to win. Tactics such as lying, cheating, threats, manipulation of others, psychological violence, sexual
harassment, physical violence, sexual violence, etc, are all means to the end. The more nodal the RED – especially if there is a tendency to Psychoticism – the more extreme the measures it will take. *What matters is the winning!*

RED populates a world full of ‘enemies’ out to stop it expressing itself. So, if you break RED’s rules for you/others – designed to enable its maximum self-expression – you automatically put yourself in the enemy camp and, therefore, at least have to be neutralised, if not actually eliminated.

There is something of Jesus’ “He who is not with me is against me” *(Matthew 12:30)* and the proverbial “My way or the highway” in this.

Thomas & Kilmann see the virtues of the Competitive approach in situations such as:-

- when quick decisive action is required – eg: an emergency situation;
- when unpopular actions have to be taken such as retrenchment or disciplinary actions;
- when dealing with issues vital to your own well-being;
- to stop competitors from taking advantage of non-competitive behaviour;
- to maximize gains

**RED-BLUE Transition**

In British commerce & industry, people who get promoted out of the ranks and into the lower rungs of management (supervisors and foremen) because they are the most skilled or productive workers, often display something of the Competitive approach.

Traditionally they usually don’t get trained so as to upgrade themselves in BLUE management techniques and are left to fend for themselves.\(^{295}\) Unsurprisingly then, many have to depend on their RED domineering others to get them to do things in what they perceive the organisation’s only part-understood (BLUE) way to be.

Blake & Mouton perceive that people employing these elements of

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\(^{295}\)This practice was identified during the 1980s in a number of reports produced through the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) and/or the TUC (Trades Union Congress) concerned with poor British economic competitiveness. These reports and other sources of pressure led to the development of the *Investors in People* standard (1992) via the then-Department of Employment. While *Investors in People* has enjoyed some notable take-up both in the UK and abroad as a standard of ‘best practice’, the issue of promoting people without adequate managerial support remains topical, especially in the SME (Small-Medium Enterprise) sector.
the Competitive style often tend to expect everyone else to ‘keep up’ with their efforts. However, expecting everyone else to keep up with you is more typical of thinking in the RED-BLUE transition where your version of right and wrong is to be followed by everyone else.

Don Beck thinks of RED-BLUE as producing ‘Zealots’ who are partisan and fiercely evangelical yet highly doctrinaire. There is a developing sense of greater morality – right and wrong – but it is still skewed by the highly-personal and ‘superior’ perspective. In terms of rules, we have graduated to my rules for you and for me.

Leaders of smaller religious cults and political demagogues, such as the old Soviet style apparatusiks, often tend to come from this base of expressing power from a ‘superior’ personal understanding.

The later-identified Blake & Mouton style of Paternalism (Prescribe & Guide) fits with RED-BLUE. This style results from a combination of the Controlling (Competition) style and the BLUE element in the Accommodating style. (See below.) Since it’s still about my rules, the Paternalist will reward and nurture their co-operative ‘children’ (the BLUE Accommodation influence) and punish strongly those who don’t perform as required (the Control influence). This punishment strategy of the ‘Righteous Man’ was the one conflict strategy clearly identified by Graves.

So someone in this transition phase will be fair by their own, increasingly exacting standards but still relentlessly brutal towards those who don’t comply.

**BLUE**

According to Beck, BLUE produces the ‘Ideologue’ who is a ‘true believer’, an absolutist with firm convictions and rigid boundaries.

None of the Blake & Mouton styles/Thomas & Kilmann modes fit exactly here. However, BLUE would employ some elements of Accommodation (unassertive/co-operative) – they win/you lose. One of the Blake & Mouton nomenclatures for this style is Compliance. This mode could include accepting an instruction when one would prefer not to (because it’s the right thing to do) or yielding to another’s point of view (because they are a more senior agent of the ‘Higher Authority’ than you are).

In BLUE, Accommodation’s mode of neglecting your own concerns (in deference to what’s right) would fit. Generally speaking, though, Accommodation matches more to GREEN.

Since BLUE is absolutist and its organisational structure is rigidly hierarchical, we all obey THE rules. We do whatever the recognised Higher Authority – whether the Pope, the law of the land or the ISO 9000
Knowing Me, Knowing You

quality system – tells us to do, without deviance. Those who are lower
down in the structure obey those who are higher up. All deviance must
be punished and corrected. If instruction won’t work, then extinction will
follow. Doctrinal heresies are like cancers – they must be eliminated
before their corruption of the body spreads.

In confrontation, righteous BLUE will quote chapter and verse (holy
book, act of Parliament or quality system procedure) to validate its
authority and justify its actions. This is what it says. You didn’t
comply….

And, it’s nothing personal – and it isn’t in pure nodal BLUE. You
broke the rules. For BLUE, it really is that simple!

BLUE can be utterly ruthless in its quest to know and comply with
the ‘One True Way’. The idea of ‘Humanity’ doesn’t enter the equation.
BLUE will sacrifice itself and all to achieve compliance.

In the event that it can’t convert you from your deviance (preference)
or eliminate you (if necessary), BLUE will attempt to isolate you.
Particularly, if there’s a PURPLE harmonic, this can lead to ostracisation
in, say, the workplace – eg: you let our department (tribe) down by not
doing ‘the right thing’ and getting found out by the auditor (the
authorised representative of the One True Way).

So we all sacrifice ourselves to the One True Way. There is no
alternative.

BLUE might use elements of the Thomas & Kilman Accommodating
mode:–

▪ when you are sure you have committed a mistake;
▪ to minimize losses;
▪ when you are sure that the other is wrong and to give lessons to
  the opponent for their mistakes.

BLUE-ORANGE Transition

Don Beck perceives BLUE-ORANGE as initiating a major ‘sea
change’ in mode, calling its product the Identity of ‘Moderate’. Softer
beliefs, the ability to consider other options and less sheer intensity
characterise the progress of this transition.

People undergoing this transition are starting to become the sort you
‘can do business with’.

There is still a strong sense of righteousness but increasingly a
willingness to allow for variations on the truth – leading eventually to the
acceptance of ‘many truths’.

Someone in this position is likely still to argue from a position of
authority but now will be increasingly ready to listen as well.

Along with the breaking down of rigidity, though, parallels a
Knowing Me, Knowing You

growing desire for personal benefit. What’s in this for me?

**ORANGE**

Beck focuses on ORANGE producing ‘Pragmatists’ who are very practical, believe what works and advocate the art of the possible.

In mapping the work of Sigmund Freud and Clare W Graves to each other, I have often thought of ORANGE as the most complete manifestation of what Freud meant by the ‘Reality Principle’. *Forget the uncontrolled impulses of RED and the ideologies of BLUE and GREEN, this is the best I can do for me, taking everything into account.*

The ‘me’ is vital to keep in mind when faced with ORANGE in conflict.

Remembering that one of Graves’ nomenclatures for E-R was ‘Manipulative’, the other of Blake & Mouton’s later-identified styles matches here to present something of an unpleasant proposition.

*Opportunism (Exploit and Manipulate)*, according to Blake & Mouton, uses all the previously-identified 5 styles (*Indifference, Control, Accommodation, Compromise and Sound*) as it can and as they are needed. The Opportunist approaches every situation with the underlying attitude of "What's in it for me?" and then takes on whatever style is most likely to result in private advantage. The key to successful Opportunity is the ability to persuade people to support selfish objectives without revealing the underlying motives. To accomplish this, the Opportunist appeals to people personally and professionally. Once they have capitalised on the trust, the Opportunist feels little obligation to continue the relationship unless there is potential future gain.

Clearly ORANGE’s manipulative style in action!

So, yes, ORANGE produces Pragmatists you can deal with who will explore every possible avenue of conflict resolution with you…but watch out for the self-interest.

I well remember the story of my friend ‘Ralph’ (BLUE just starting to exit) involved in a tough contractual negotiation with ‘Andrew’ (experienced ORANGE).

After several hours of tough talking, they had an agreement drafted that Ralph felt was not only fair to the two parties but potentially highly beneficial to them both. They stood up, shook hands and then, as they were packing away, Andrew threw in his extra demand with the words: “Oh, and you could do Z for me, couldn’t you? It’s only a little extra. I’ll get my secretary to write it in.” Ralph, now pressed for time, mumbled, “Er, okay.”

On the way home Ralph realised that ‘Z’ would cost him the best part of a day a month. For which he would get no return. But he was
trapped by his BLUE: he had acceded to Andrew’s extra demand and he couldn’t go back on his word.

**ORANGE-GREEN Transition**

Beck thinks of ORANGE-GREEN as operating from a sense of inclusiveness for all and producing ‘Conciliators’ searching for consensus and a place for everybody.

There is still a centre of self-interest to protect what’s important to you but enough of a concern for others to get a deal that suits everybody to some degree.

The Blake & Mouton style/Thomas & Kilmann mode of *Compromise* (moderately assertive/moderately co-operative) fits well here – you both win/you both lose.

This mode is concerned with finding an expedient, mutually acceptable solution, partially satisfying both parties, eg:-

- ‘splitting the difference’;
- ‘exchanging concessions’.

If you prefer to Compromise, then you believe that differences between people should be treated in light of the common good and that parties to a conflict should be prepared to ‘win a little, lose a little’. (One of the Blake & Mouton names for this style is *Balance*.) This mode tries to soften and make more tolerable the effects of losing by limiting the gains. Blake & Mouton point out that you must be intelligent and informed enough to persuade people to settle for less than they want – and perhaps less than they could achieve. This is done by being well liked, keeping well informed, and effectively convincing people that the consequences of doing otherwise are not worth the risk. Both ends are played against the middle in an attempt to serve the ‘common good’.

If you are a high Compromiser, you may well believe that, although everyone should have an opportunity to air personal views and feelings, these should not be allowed to block progress. You will hold that it is never realistic for everyone to be satisfied; and those who insist in such unrealistic goals should be shown their error.

This is a natural style for GREEN’s concensus-seeking – but doesn’t lose *too* much for ORANGE’s Opportunistic self-aggrandisement.

Thomas & Kilmann advocate the *Compromise* mode in situations such as:-

- when the issue is technically divisible like land disputes;
- when both parties are equally powerful;
- when an immediate temporary solution is required due to time pressure or other factors;
- when the *Collaboration* and *Competition* modes fail in the
situation.

**GREEN**

As with PURPLE, Beck doesn’t attribute a specific conflict Identity to nodal GREEN.

This is because GREEN generally doesn’t seek conflict but tends to Accommodate.

While some elements of the Blake & Mouton/Thomas & Kilmann Accommodation lend themselves to BLUE, mostly it is a mode (style) GREEN would use.

*Accommodation* is about neglecting your own concerns to satisfy those of the other party, eg:-

- selfless generosity or charity;
- yielding to another’s point of view rather than risk interpersonal conflict.

If your main style is Accommodating, you dislike the impact that differences between people may have on their relationships. You believe that self-sacrifice and placing the importance of the continued relationship above your own goals is necessary for solving conflict. From this point of view, it is better to ignore differences than to risk open combat by pushing for personal objectives. If you are a high Accommodator, it reflects a need for affiliation and acceptance, resulting in appeasement of others. Since personal objectives are set aside, this style lends itself to exploitation and can become incredibly burdensome in the longer term.

The Blake & Mouton version particularly emphasises the concern for people over results and the fact that people with this style have a heightened awareness of others’ personal feelings, goals and ambitions. People operating in this mode tend to be considerate of how their actions will affect others.

GREEN is likely to use elements of the *Accommodation* mode:-

- when you are sure you have committed a mistake;
- when issues are important to the opponent;
- to build social credits for later issues;
- to minimize losses;
- when the relationship is more important than the issue at hand.

For all its dislike of conflict, like PURPLE, GREEN as a grouping will be prepared to join battle under certain circumstances. Circumstances that enrage GREEN enough to enter conflict would centre on injustice, unfairness and discrimination.

Never forget the 1999 World Trade Talks debacle in Seattle or the anti-capitalist May Day riots in London the following year! Some would
Knowing Me, Knowing You

argue that the violence was actually the work of RED in a harmonic with GREEN. But GREEN will use whatever other vMEME it can to pursue its egalitarian agendas.

2nd Tier

If Don Beck doesn’t assign a specific conflict Identity to GREEN, then he’s hardly likely to do it for the 2nd Tier vMEMES.

What we can say is that the Thomas & Kilmann mode of Collaboration (assertive/co-operative) requires at least some 2nd Tier thinking – you win/they win. (Blake & Mouton call this Sound (Contribute & Commit).)

Collaboration involves working with the other party to find some solution which fully satisfies the concerns of both parties, eg:-

- exploring disagreements to learn from each other;
- resolving a condition which would otherwise lead to competition over resources;
- confronting and finding a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

If you favour Collaboration, then you believe that conflict itself is neither good nor bad, but usually a symptom of natural tensions in relationships and should be treated accordingly. ‘What's right’ is more important than ‘who's right’. When properly interpreted, differences may be resolved and serve to strengthen relationships rather than divide. Conflict cannot be ignored and requires problem-solving often of the type that goes beyond the superficial issues. Trust is the result of solving conflicts successfully and to the satisfaction of all parties. In this respect, past successes in finding creative solutions to conflict serve to promote future successes, creating a ‘win-win cycle’. A strong Collaborative style is based on the assumption that working through differences will lead to creative and effective solutions that everyone can support.

A truly Collaborative approach requires 2nd Tier thinking since it needs at least one of the parties to be able to self-actualise beyond their own stance and to be able to address the needs of the other(s) as well as their own.

Thomas & Kilmann recommend Collaboration:-

- to find integrative solutions;
- when the basic objective is to learn from sharing;
- to gain commitment for the implementation of the decisions;
- to have better understanding with the opponent;
- where there is no time pressure.

Where Collaboration is not possible, then 2nd Tier thinking is likely to settle rather reluctantly for Compromise. It simply is not always
possible to arrive at a truly Collaborative solution.

Of course, the further we go into 2nd Tier thinking, the less it is understood and documented – since clearly there are fewer people thinking that way to explain how and why they think as they do.

This leads to the somewhat murky consideration of what TURQUOISE might do in extreme circumstances.

Since TURQUOISE is concerned with the well-being of the whole, could it conceivably sacrifice some for the good of all, as we pondered in Chapter 7? And, if it would, could we necessarily tell that from BLUE’s cutting out of “cancers”?

To divert to a macro level, there have been some claims that the American-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq originated in 2nd Tier thinking to rid the globe of the ‘cancer of terrorism’. Given the mess that has followed in each country – particularly Iraq – I personally find difficulty in detecting any 2nd Tier thinking in either military adventure.

Nonetheless, the possibilities of what extremes TURQUOISE might go to, if faced with a sufficiently-threatening scenario, are both intriguing and a little frightening. One might hope that the quality of 2nd Tier thinking would prevent such scenarios ever arising!

One key difference between the Blake & Mouton/Thomas & Kilmann type of approach and Graves/Spiral Dynamics is the issue of choice. While Thomas & Kilmann accept people have preferred conflict modes, their whole concept of recommending when to use the different modes assumes choice. Spiral Dynamics takes a much more deterministic view: you are dominated by whichever vMEME(S) is (are) running your mind. Only by altering the Life Conditions can you really bring about a major change in thinking. Choice, from the Spiral Dynamics perspective, is limited until you reach the 2nd Tier. Then, chameleon-like, you have the flexibility to adopt whichever conflict style is most appropriate.

Nonetheless, the Blake & Mouton and Thomas & Kilmann styles/modes provide invaluable information in looking at how vMEMES behave in conflict situations.
18. Conflict Management

Having looked at the styles of vMEMES in conflict, let’s now consider how to handle each vMEME.

In determining how to do this, it’s important to consider distortion patterns in the way vMEMES evaluate the memes in messages they receive.

Don Beck has considered this in terms of the Assimilation-Contrast Effect, identified by Muzaffer Sherif\textsuperscript{296} (under whom he studied at the University of Texas).

Contrast occurs when someone distortedly perceives the message to be further away from their position than it actually is and thus treats it closer to being a polar opposite. Beck states that vMEMES from RED, with its for-me-or-against me stance, through to BLUE’s complete intolerance of any deviation tend to use the Contrast distortion and thus accentuate the distance.

Assimilation takes place when someone distorts the message to be closer to their position than it actually is. Beck’s view is that the higher up the Spiral (in the 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier), the more likely the vMEME is to assimilate and thus think the other’s position is closer than it really is. This is why he treats the BLUE-ORANGE transition, with its breaking down of rigidity, as beginning the possibilities of moderation.

See Fig 65\textsuperscript{297} for how Beck applies this in ‘Left/Right’ political divides. For example, the Flamethrower RED of L-6 is likely to consider the L-1 ORANGE Pragmatist as much an enemy as the R-4 BLUE Ideologue. This is especially likely if there is a tendency to Psychoticism. Correspondingly, the ORANGE-GREEN Conciliator of R-1 risks expecting more co-operation from the emerging practicality of the BLUE-ORANGE Moderate than they might actually get.

Beck, of course, has used these views to assist major negotiations affecting the futures of nations – most notably, the South African transition of the early 1990s. However, we can still apply much of his macro approach to conflict in small groupings such as families and workforces in small companies and larger organisation departments.

\textsuperscript{297}Graphic adapted with permission from ‘The Dynamics, of Polarisation, Social Conflict & Systemic Peacemaking’ – Don Edward Beck (p3, presentation materials, 2003).
Firstly, Beck attempts to minimise general aggressive talk while isolating the Flamethrowers, the Zealots and the Ideologues and exposing them to others as extremists.

Then he works to diminish their power while positively enabling the Moderates, Pragmatists and Conciliators.

In applying Beck’s strategies to small groups, a guided working of the Moderates, Pragmatists and Conciliators through Robert Dilts’ Neurological Levels model – see Fig 12 – can be a potent means of identifying shared Values & Beliefs and creating a common Identity. From there, it is possible to minimise the differences and develop strategies for taking the group forward as a whole.

Of course, many factors will influence the outcome of such tactics. Not least the numbers of each viewpoint, the history and bitterness of the conflict, the soundness of the assimilators’ policies and their ability to articulate or otherwise get those policies across and the rewards offered to all sides by the potential agreements.
Nonetheless, if you’re involved in resolving group conflict, it’s well worth looking at who you need to isolate and diminish and who you need to enable and promote.

**Relationship Values & Tensions**

A key point in resolving or at least managing any conflict situation is the relative value of the relationship to each of the people in it.

Where one participant in a relationship values it significantly more than the other(s), then that person is at a disadvantage as it is easier for the other(s) to walk away from the relationship.

If you are disadvantaged and want to change that, then you must increase the value of the relationship to the other person(s). That means understanding what their dominating vMEMES want in that context, the specific schemas relating to the issue(s) and the Meta-States formed, the Meta-Programmes being used and the temperamental dispositions on display. (We will look more at how to see things from another’s viewpoint later in this chapter.)

The more you can ascertain what they want – and how they want it – the more you are in position to use that information to make them want the relationship. The more they want the relationship, the more they will work with you to resolve issues.

Of course, not all issues are resolvable. Management guru Ichak Adizes makes the important point that tensions in relationships are often natural and cannot as such be resolved.\(^{298}\) Or, if they are resolved, the resolution will only be temporary because the tension will naturally reoccur as Life Conditions change.

Circumstances and context will at times favour one point of view on a continuum of disharmony. At other times, circumstances and context will favour another’s point of view. Remembering at all times that our views are not reality but merely Meta-Stated maps of the ‘territory’.

For Adizes, then, it’s important to ascertain when tensions are irresolvable. Instead of wasting time and energy trying to solve what can’t be solved, the focus should be on trying to achieve the best balance for the current Life Conditions.

Don Beck would term this ‘macro-managing the Spiral’.\(^ {299}\)

As the balance of the viewpoints changes, so the value of the


\(^{299}\) Various postings to the Spiral Dynamics-integral e-mail list 2002-2005 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral.
relationship is likely to change for its participants, relative to the context and the psychological set-up of the individuals involved.

For example, BLUE with some Impulse Control, would be likely to seek more than ever to conform to a representative of the ‘Higher Authority’ if that person was disapproving from a marginal level of disagreement. On the other hand, nodal RED, especially if fuelled by Psychoticism, would be more likely to act inversely and be driven away from ever-greater levels of disagreement. A mistake disapproving parents make all too often with rebellious teenagers!

Now, let’s consider how to deal with individual 1st Tier vMEMES.

**A Maslowian-rooted Approach to Conflict Management**

Our approach is to some extent, based on Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs concept\(^\text{300}\) in that Maslow’s needs are the desired outcomes of vMEME activity. As we discussed in Chapter 14, we need to think of vMEMES as neurological ‘mini-selves’ living within us – each vMEME having its own unique needs.

So the basic principle is to enable the vMEME to have its needs met in as healthy and positive a fashion as possible.

Once you get beyond basic BEIGE survival needs, PURPLE wants security and finds that security in belonging. The more secure the better. Of course, complete security creates the Life Conditions which foster the emergence of healthy RED.

A lack of security drives PURPLE to push more and more to get security; the more PURPLE becomes desperate to achieve security, the more readily it will belong. Thus, for example, we get kids emerging from a troubled childhood, where they have not found sufficient security, flinging themselves into sexual relationships and joining gangs from even before they’ve gone through puberty.

Thus, PURPLE will protect its security by avoiding conflict within its tribe or gang – the Avoidance strategy – but will fight with the tribe or gang to protect their collective security.

If PURPLE is completely frustrated in its search for security or is shorn of it in an Environment, it seems that RED will come to the fore to fight in what is almost a desperate and often quite unpleasant beige/RED

Knowing Me, Knowing You

harmonic for survival. Hence, the disaffected 8-year-old from a dysfunctional family in a deprived home telling the primary school teacher to ‘fuck off!’ and meaning it.

A rather unpleasant assertion of RED can compensate for PURPLE being frustrated in adult scenarios too.

You will recall from Chapter 13 that I did some work with a small business called ‘Lasargo Ltd’. The company was run by ‘Dan’ and his wife, ‘Julia’. Dan tended to be dominated by RED in his thinking while I used to refer to Julia as ‘Mama PURPLE’ – so powerful was that vMEME in her psyche.

Dan got involved in a joint project with another company helmed by an attractive, single and rather flirtatious female managing director. Numerous meetings and several late nights began at eat at Julia’s PURPLE. Dan’s RED ignored or pooh-poohed her questioning which became increasingly agitated. When she asked him to discontinue the joint project, his no-consequences RED told her in no uncertain terms that he was the boss of Lasargo. He made the decisions. With nothing to reassure her PURPLE, Julia’s RED came screaming out in full Flamethrower mode.

She left him, bad-mouthed him and any business associates (including me!) to anyone who would listen, and started proceedings both for divorce and to force him to sell Lasargo.

When Dan came to me for advice, the best I could tell him, if he wanted to keep both his wife and his company, was to discontinue the joint project. Julia was not going to compromise.

I also told him he had better concentrate on loving her, so that her PURPLE could stabilise again.

In the total absence of security during infancy, some people at one extreme may develop Reactive Attachment Disorder. At the other extreme some may experience a psychological collapse into a pure BEIGE survival mode – we might find this in many ‘rough sleepers’ and the attendant mental health problems so many of them suffer from.

Though there is yet to be research evidence to support the proposition, I rather suspect one’s genetic tendency along Hans Eysenck’s Psychoticism axis will be a significant determining factor.

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301 As noted before, this is not the orthodox Graves/Spiral Dynamics position but is based on my own observations.

302 John Bowlby’s work on Affectionless Psychopathy is highly relevant here. See: ‘Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves’ (Tindall & Cox, 1946).
So, to handle PURPLE well, give it security but not in abundance – unless you want to create the Life Conditions for a transition into RED.

Make PURPLE work at pleasing to get its security – some positive Paternalism?

RED, on the other hand, requires respect and esteem. It also needs to know just how far it can assert itself.

If you have more power in the ‘power pecking order’, then let RED know what the limits are and assert your greater power. However, instant reward works better than delayed punishment. Even B F Skinner, the architect of Radical Behaviourism, came to doubt punishment as anything like as effective a strategy as reward; while Graves held that it was ineffective with nodal RED. This vMEME, in its peak state, simply will not be shamed. Thus, our 15-year-old Street Tough from Chapter 4 who will take detention after detention rather than apologise and conform to classroom rules. The detentions are worn like badges of his self-esteem in asserting himself. Nicholas Emler saw attitudes like this as ‘reputation management’.

Don Beck & Chris Cowan do make the point, though, that you must never threaten RED – only fulfil promises. If you do you say are going to punish, then you must do it. Any backing off will be seen as a sign of weakness.

In their workshops Beck & Cowan have gone further in the past. They have stated that, if you are going to punish RED, it must be so hard it really hurts – psychologically and/or physically. Skinnerian Positive Punishment to the max that shows it who’s higher in the power pecking order. Absolute force it cannot resist, which no one could resist and, therefore, there is no shame in giving in to such force. Anything less will result in a wounded beast that will want its revenge.

An area of research I would like to see projects conducted in is the relationship between high Psychoticism and this all-but psychopathical

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307 SD I training session run by NVC Inc in Wakefield, UK, in April 1998.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

manifestation of RED as ‘do-or die!’.

Respect, acknowledgement and instant reward are the better means of coping with RED where you have the greater power.

Where RED has more power than you, it is a much more difficult situation.

Most secondary school teachers know this only too well when required to create D BLUE Life Conditions in the classroom Environment, which the P RED vMEME simply doesn’t recognise. Unfortunately, the school system in the UK, where BLUE’s authority is all too often undermined by GREEN’s concern for human rights, is ill-equipped to cope with peak RED. Consequently teachers are often placed in an impossible situation.

Clare W Graves’s advice would be a Skinnerian tactic of Positive Reward. Unfortunately BLUE’s quest for order, rules and consistency make many Positive Reward strategies difficult. For example, a sweet thrown to the 15-year-old Street Tough from Chapter 4 for answering a question correctly might encourage him to try answering more questions. However, throwing sweets to students is against the rules in the majority of school classrooms!

Until 2nd Tier thinking starts to permeate our education system more, schools, especially in the really deprived areas, are going to struggle with discipline and achieving targets.

RED-led bosses are a problem in almost all sectors. I have had a number of individuals coming to me over the years, stressed-out and unable to cope with their bosses’ domineering behaviour. The lies, the inconsistency, the favouritism, the cruel put-downs and the divide-and-conquer rumour mill to keep any opposition from forming all take their toll on more sensitive psyches, particularly if they are operating from the conformist self-sacrificial side of the Spiral with tendencies to Introversion and Neuroticism.

My advice is usually ‘play the game’ – and, if you can’t, extract yourself from that Environment. RED assumes a sort of feudal Environment where the king has absolute power and the lords (the favourites) wield the king’s power over the serfs. ‘Playing the game’ means insinuating yourself into the king/boss’s favour so that you too can be a lord/favourite. Best of all is to become the king’s ‘grand vizier’, a suggester of ideas which, when they work, can be seen as the king’s. If they don’t work, of course, it can be a case of ‘off with his head!’

Don’t challenge the boss unless you really want to go to war. If you go to war, you must be prepared to destroy the boss. A nominal victory will simply put you in the boss’ sights. RED may respect your show of
power but it will be looking for the next opportunity to neutralise that power.

Peak BLUE is simply intractable. You are wrong, deviant and you must be punished. If you won’t be corrected, then you must be eliminated. You must conform. Or, at least, you must appear to conform.

One advantage of BLUE’s Little Detail Meta-Programme is that it is so often wrapped up in checking the detail of what you’ve done, that it misses the ‘bigger picture’. As long as BLUE thinks it is getting what it requires – eg: the checkboxes ticked and the signature in the right place – it is possible to work around it and do other things. (It’s how ORANGE Options thinking types get around BLUE Procedures audits!)

Straight-out argument in a RED Competitive style is usually pointless.

However, a more senior agent of the ‘Higher Authority’ can order incremental change. The lower agent is likely to be resistant at first; but, if the order comes from ‘on high’….

The change must be small and, as we noted earlier in this chapter, within the broad structure of the revered orthodoxy. Otherwise the lower agent may doubt the ‘faithfulness’ of the senior agent and reject both them and their change altogether.

Instigation of too large a change too quickly is one of the reasons there have been so many schisms in the Christian religion down the centuries.

Bearing in mind that each vMEME is more complex in its thinking than the one before it on the Spiral, ORANGE, in an authority hierarchy which BLUE recognises, often uses incremental change to manipulate it. For example, phrases like ‘the latest thinking in best practice’ are potent implements for change in BLUE bureaucracies like government departments and the traditional universities.

ORANGE, in its Opportunistic strategies, is best managed by allying yourself to its causes – fully aware that you may be dumped once you are no longer perceived to be useful. So, the trick is to continue to be useful. The more useful you are, of course, the more you are likely to be used!

That may be no bad thing in itself as ORANGE’s relentless drive to improve things for itself often has spin-off benefits for others. For example, just think how Bill Gates’ striving to make the biggest fortune ever through bigger and better versions of Microsoft Windows has transformed the technology of large parts of our planet!

Of course, ORANGE’s egocentric focus can lead it in directions which are ecologically unsound.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

On a global scale, we can attribute much ongoing pollution, the continued depletion of natural resources and even global warming to the work of ORANGE. Consider how concerned major league environmentalists are about the effect the Chinese and Indian (ORANGE-driven) economic booms are going to have on global warming!

So, how to restrain ORANGE?

The answer is to create either a threat to its goals, with assistance to counter the threat; or to help it find an opportunity to expand and/or improve. This is how GREEN has manipulated the large supermarket chains into stocking (supposedly) ‘dolphin-friendly’ tuna (threat of consumer boycott) and organically-grown produce (opportunity to increase sales with the environmentally-concerned consumer market).

And, finally, GREEN….  

As identified through the work of Robert Blake & Jane Mouton\(^\text{308}\) and Ken Thomas & Ralph Kilmann\(^\text{309}\), GREEN tends to be very much an Accommodator. It tries to build a consensus that is inclusive.

The problems come when its egalitarian-based dogmatism is challenged by unfairness, discrimination or lack of care. Then GREEN can become aggressive, mobilising RED for protest and riots or codifying its dogma through BLUE laws.

Unfortunately, GREEN can become unrealistic in its dogma. For example, GREEN’s determination to oblige Western industries to pay higher wages to its poorer workers and to be ‘disabled people friendly’, while being laudable from a humanitarian point of view, will tend to make many of those industries less competitive when set against China and much of South-East Asia. There ORANGE, which basically doesn’t care, is far less encumbered by GREEN constraints.

The way to handle GREEN is to appear Accommodating. While GREEN thinks it respects everyone enough to acknowledge their point of view, it will not tolerate any significant deviation from its dogma. If you doubt this, try getting someone who’s centred in GREEN to listen politely to a racist (usually a harmonic of PURPLE and BLUE) expound on why their particular take on racism is right. Most people centred in GREEN can’t do it; they find it too disgusting to tolerate. So argument


about values from an opposed point of view is usually futile.

Far better to empathise. Sympathise with its humanitarian/egalitarian aims – create an *Assimilation* effect so that you become one of them. Then start to slip in the ‘but’s and the ‘what ifs’. Since GREEN is a highly complex vMEME, it may well provide answers that are a little more tempered in realism.

Or you may even stretch it far enough to start the journey to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier….

**Arguing from the same vMEME?**

So far our discussion in the last chapter and this has been around conflict between vMEMES. What about when the conflict is at the same vMEMETIC level?

What we’re talking about here is, for example, two people operating from the same vMEME but different schemas, pushing non-complementary memes at one another.

Let’s take this vMEME by vMEME.

Does PURPLE even disagree? Don Beck chooses not to give it a conflict Identity and Clare W Graves views it as only being aggressive when territory or resources are under threat.

Graves’ view was based on the discovery of the Tasaday in the Philippines in the 1960s and is borne out by the slightly-later discovery of the Fore in New Guinea. Both have provided social scientists with the only opportunities to study true tribalistic societies in modern times - and both have proved non-aggressive (except when under perceived threat from outsiders).\textsuperscript{310}

Pure PURPLE, it would appear, is non-argumentative. Rather, it seems that traditional ways are passed on virtually without comment and that change, when it does come, is incremental and probably accidental.

RED, on the other hand must dominate or else know its place in the power pecking order. Thus, the schemas I hold I will prove are right/better by beating you and yours. Thus, RED always has the last word – or will carry on arguing until it has the last word – and, thus, arguments between RED and RED often end in physical violence. The schemas and the memes involved don’t really matter too much. What matters is who is best, right, strongest, sexiest, etc. In other words, who is the most powerful.

By contrast schemas and memes matter hugely at BLUE, with its Little Detail Meta-Programme. The slightest deviation from the One


252
Knowing Me, Knowing You

True Way can result in all-out efforts to punish and correct. Thus, the schisms in religion; and, ironically, some of the most bitter philosophical arguments in modern history have been between scientists – not least psychologists! – on the basis of who’s right and who’s wrong. Black and white. Very BLUE!

ORANGE, thankfully, is more interested in whether what you’ve got to say is going to help it progress and achieve. It will listen to see if you’re offering a better way. If you are, it will take from you and get on. If you’re not, it’s too goal-focussed to bother trying to convert you to its view. Nodal ORANGE will not care whether you’ve got the best way as long as it has.

Having said that, the cut and thrust of debate can appeal as ORANGE quite enjoys a good intellectual workout at times.

GREEN is pretty much cutting-edge thinking for a great deal of our world. In many ways we are still learning the basics of this vMEME. So, how does GREEN handle conflict with GREEN over GREEN concerns?

Intra-group, within its own circle, GREEN will be Accommodating in its search for consensus. It will ally with other vMEMES – like RED for protest and BLUE for legislation – to advance its group’s causes. But what happens when GREEN group is in conflict with GREEN group?

This level of conflict is just beginning to appear historically/anthropologically.

For example, we now have those who advocate ‘sustainable energy generation’ through wind and wave farms coming increasingly into conflict with those who complain such farms are ‘blots on the landscape’ and ‘visual pollution’.

How such conflicts work out, we shall see in the coming years. Will GREEN recruit its sometime allies of RED and BLUE to fight other GREEN – or will we see more mutation into 2nd Tier thinking?

I rather suspect a bit of both….

Understanding with the Meta-Mirror

When you are in a dispute with someone, the best way of approaching the conflict is to approach it from self-actualising YELLOW. Then you can see all needs and should be able to work towards at least a Compromise, if not Collaboration.

However, it it can be very difficult indeed to see beyond your own point of view. And the more your emotions are concerned, the harder it is to self-actualise.

So how can you move beyond your own perspective?

To help you self-actualise, to realise which schemas and vMEMES are driving your position and which are driving the other person(s), you
Knowing Me, Knowing You

might want to try a Robert Dilts exercise called the *Meta-Mirror*.311

This is a development of the concept of the 3 *Perceptual Positions*
concept developed by John Grinder & Judith DeLozier312.

In Dilts’ exercise – see Fig 66 – start off by imagining you are facing
the other person (Step One/1st Position). For the sake of this description,
let’s call you ‘Bill’ and the other ‘Gail’. In your mind, root Gail to a
geographical spot – sitting, standing, how ever she might be when you
are really in a room, work area or other place with her. Fix the distance
between you and Gail as close as it would be in a real encounter between
the two of you. Then associate into yourself and look at Gail from your
own perspective – through your own eyes.

*How does Gail make me feel? What do I think of her? What
vMEMES and schemas are driving her? Which ones are driving me?*

Let yourself ‘soak’ up the thoughts and feelings from this experience
– you may find yourself experiencing real fear or hostility!

Then move physically into the other’s shoes (Step Two/2nd Position)
and become Gail looking at Bill. Then, through Gail’s eyes, ask
yourself:-

*How does Bill make me feel? What do I think of him? What vMEMES
and schemas are driving him? Which ones are driving me?*

If you really put yourself in Gail’s shoes and ‘see’ Bill ‘over there’,
you will start to take on something of Gail’s perceptions.

When I facilitate this exercise, I can always tell if the ‘client’ has
really taken 2nd Position by the language used – especially the pronoun.
If ‘Bill’, in the position of ‘Gail’ looking at Bill, says something like, “I
think Bill is a real meanie. He makes me want to puke!” – then Bill’s
language is very much that of 2nd Position. However, if ‘Bill’ says
something like: “Well, I think Gail would see Bill could be a bit difficult
on occasions. She wouldn’t always agree with him.” – then I would infer
that ‘Bill’ is intellectualising about how ‘Gail’ might see him. He has not
truly associated into her position.

Different people find each of the Perceptual Positions revelatory in
different ways. Personally, I never cease to be amazed by the power of
2nd Position: the awesome understanding of seeing yourself through
someone else’s eyes.

311 This was first documented in ‘Changing Belief Systems with NLP’ – Robert
312 See: ‘Turtles All the Way Down’ – John Grinder & Judith DeLozier (Grinder

254
Returning to ‘Lasargo’, if you recall ‘James’ from our discussion of Meta-States in Chapter 13, I once had call to mediate a long-running series of disputes between James and his younger brother, ‘Alan’. These had not only soured their own relationship but were increasingly having a seriously disruptive effect on the company.

One evening, after everyone else had gone home, I persuaded the brothers to do Meta-Mirror. I will never forget the look on Alan’s face as, from 2nd Position, he realised just how James saw him. After the exercise, the brothers resolved to put their differences behind them and to

Fig 66: the Meta-Mirror exercise (from the work of Robert Dilts)
take positive steps to build up their relationship. Within a week they were going to the gym together and calling in at the pub on the way home.

Returning to Fig 66….

Next take up the Observer position (Step Four/3rd Position) and look at the relationship from a distance (abstracted/meta position). As your ‘meta you’:

*What’s going on between these two? How different are their schematic perceptions? Which vMEMES are driving them? In the bigger picture of the relationship, just how serious is this problem?*

It is surprising just how trivial disputes often seem from the 3rd Position. Certainly, it enables ‘much bigger picture’ understanding.

Robert Dilts’ genius was to add a second meta position to the format devised by John Grinder & Judith DeLozier. From this position (Step Four/4th Position), you are studying the Observer’s 3rd Position reaction to the conflict between 1st and 2nd Position. This can often lead to…

*“Oh, for goodness’ sake. The Observer thinks the dispute is ridiculous!”*

With the insight gained, ‘Bill’ returns to being Bill (Step 5/1st Position). Only now Bill can’t look at Gail again in the same way. He now knows too much about himself! Plus, he knows so much about the bigger picture, what the forces are which are driving the dispute and how the conflict appears to others.

The key to resolving disputes often comes from 4th Position – though, sometimes, 3rd Position is enough.

To create the Collaborative win-win Blake & Mouton and Thomas & Killmann hold up as the ultimate conflict resolution, it is necessary to go meta to one’s own position.

As with so many NLP exercises, *Meta-Mirror* works better with a facilitator; though it still can be highly effective if performed solo.
19. Women, for Men…and Men, for Women

So often men and women all but stumble into longer-term relationships, pulled together by combinations of sexual lust (BEIGE), the excitement of something new (RED) and the need to bond (PURPLE). What’s actually involved in sustaining a longer-term relationship often doesn’t come into the decision to have that relationship.

Sometime later, when the excitement has worn a little thin, the sex is verging on the routine and they find they don’t belong together quite as well as they thought they might have done, they wonder how they got themselves into this situation. If they don’t take action to sort the mess out, it may not be too long before they’re wondering how to extricate themselves from it!

One could almost wish for the 1950s when not every boyfriend and girlfriend had ‘carnal knowledge’ of each other within a week or so of first meeting and living together before marriage was considered so scandalous it rarely happened. In those days almost all marriages in the Western world were in church; and most engaged couples found themselves receiving a rather BLUE ‘talking-to’ from the priest about the gravity of their proposed marital enterprise. The ostensible aim of this talking-to was, in terms of Neurological Levels, to ensure the couple’s Values & Beliefs around love and marriage held up when given such grave Knowledge.

Of course, the polar opposites described above are just that: extremes. Many modern couples ‘in love’ do have some kind of idea of what they’re getting themselves into and they do have some degree of affection with the potential to sustain.

Nonetheless, the sky-high divorce rates do serve as a stark warning that a significant number of couples are not managing their ‘love’ as well as they hoped when they entered into their partnership.

But, let’s face it, many people enjoy and appreciate the sexual and societal freedoms the GREEN libertarianism of the 1960s initiated – and you can’t turn the proverbial clock back, anyway. Besides which, the priestly homilies of the 1950s and before only worked so well. As Abraham Maslow pointed out\textsuperscript{313}, unsatisfied needs lower down the Hierarchy (Spiral) tend to dominate the psyche. So BEIGE, PURPLE and RED in a romantic love/lust harmonic will have won out over

\textsuperscript{313}‘Motivation & Personality’ – Abraham Maslow (Harper & Row, 1954).
PURPLE/BLUE societal conformity in many cases. Hence so many ‘shotgun weddings’ in those days!

In an ideal world, especially when modern contraception means having children can be delayed indefinitely, we could hope for couples doing values matches and future-pacing plans in a rather BLUE/ORANGE way. And some do.

Many more don’t – led by the lower vMEMES of the Spiral into relationships which may not have the makings of ‘forever’ romantic fantasy but could still be highly successful if only….

We’ll pose a few strategies for maximising the success of relationships in the next two chapters. But first we need to take a closer look at the raw material of relationships: men and women.

**Sex & Social Differences between Men & Women**

Over the past 15-20 years neuroscientists and biologists have come to appreciate that there are many more differences between human male and female brains and endocrine systems than we had thought previously.

We now know that biological sex differences in the womb start some six weeks after conception, with washes of androgens (male hormones, primarily testosterone) at critical times being essential in the development of ‘maleness’ away from the natural female (XX) template.³¹⁴

During puberty another rise in male hormones exaggerates and confirms these differences.³¹⁵

These processes undoubtedly affect positioning along Hans Eysenck’s Psychoticism Dimension.

Dr Ruben Gur is one of the leading researchers in the field of brain differences between the sexes. His research³¹⁶ has led to a number of important realisations, such as:-

- The greater amount of the fatty ‘white matter’ throughout male brains gives them superiority at spatial reasoning.
- The white matter also prevents ‘information spread’ in the cortex

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³¹⁶ Eg: ‘Sex Differences in Brain Gray & White Matter in Healthy Young Adults: Correlations with Cognitive Performance’ – Ruben C Gur, Bruce I Turetsky, Mie Matsui, Michelle Yan, Warren Bilker, Paul Hughett & Raquel E. Gur in *Journal of Neuroscience* #19/10 (1999).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

– see Fig 1 – resulting in males tending to pay attention to only one thing at a time. (Which is why men proverbially can’t walk and chew gum at the same time!)

- The white matter in females is concentrated in the corpus callosum, This ridge of nerve fibres which connects the two hemispheres of the brain is thicker in females – in other words, there are more connections. Which means female brains are more balanced and better organised. (For this reason, they don’t need to be so large – which is why the average woman has a smaller head than the average man.)

- One result of more white matter in the female corpus callosum is that the right side of the brain can join in language tasks – language areas of the brain being primarily in the left hemisphere. This tends to give females superiority in language skills.

According to Michael Gurian, this is why women talk more and can multitask while men tend to concentrate on one thing at a time and favour fewer and shorter verbal exchanges.317

When you add these factors to the biological issues to do with memory and communication we looked at in Chapter 16, even before we consider temperamental and motivational differences, it is vital that men and women make allowances for each other’s processing modes.

In practicality, this is going to make it harder for a woman to grab a man’s attention because he tends to focus on one thing at a time - the thing which has greatest value to him. On the other hand, the sheer amount of verbal noise a woman can put out may irritate the man and force him to hunker down even more to focus on the thing which has most value to him at that moment in time.

How much frustration in relationships these kinds of difficulties cause is reflected in the huge sales of books like ‘Why Men don’t listen & Women can’t read Maps’318 – the title of which sums up the whole issue, really!

Then we must consider the way socialisation develops the biological raw material – from the genotype to the phenotype.

While occasionally very significant variations in male and female

317 ‘What could He be thinking?: How a Man’s Mind really works’ – Michael Gurian (St Martins Press, 2003).
318 ‘Why Men don’t listen & Women can’t read Maps: how We’re different and what to do about it’ – Alan & Barbara Pease (Welcome Rain, 2000).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

roles around the world have been documented\(^\text{319}\), by and large the stereotypes of the more aggressive, task-oriented male and the nurturing, people-oriented female hold up. (This is provided one accepts there is a continuum of extreme Maleness and extreme Femaleness\(^\text{320}\) with X gradations in between which are related to Psychoticism\(^\text{321}\).)

A number of sociologists and social psychologists\(^\text{322}\) have carried out studies showing that most men tend to have *instrumental* ‘side-by-side’ friendships, centred on doing activities together. By contrast, most women tend to have *expressive* ‘face-to-face’ friendships where they talk about their feelings.

Two quite different approaches to communication in relationships!

As Dr Deborah Tannen has summed up so clearly: women want to talk about the way they feel; men want to do things – or, at least, talk about doing things.\(^\text{323}\)

*Evolutionary* theorists, like Dr Rhawn Joseph\(^\text{324}\), tend to assign this divergence of approach to necessity in prehistoric times. Primitive men were obliged to communicate only what was necessary to each other while out stalking their prey. Meanwhile, their women, grouped together back in the cave, were forced to reveal their thoughts and feelings to others (self-disclosure) to build up rapport in what would have been tense and quite claustrophobic circumstances.

Although Talcott Parsons, the influential sociologist, believes these differences are rooted in biology\(^\text{325}\), there is plenty of evidence to show that socialisation reinforces them. For example, Angela Phillips has

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\(^\text{319}\)Eg: Margaret Mead’s groundbreaking study of New Guinea tribes the Mundugumor (both sexes aggressive), the Arapesh (both sexes nurturing) and the Tchambuli (males nurturing, females aggressive) – see: ‘Sex & Temperament in 3 Primitive Societies’ (Morrow, 1935). However, in all 3 tribes – even the Tchambuli – it was the men who did most of the fighting when it came to war.


drawn attention to the way boys are raised to find and express themselves by standing alone, appearing strong, being independent and proving themselves through competition. By contrast, girls are encouraged to develop relationships and gain affiliative skills. According to Phillips, girls spend hours practising emotional skills while boys expend their energies on mastering physical ‘doing’ skills.\textsuperscript{326}

Self-disclosure – telling the other person about yourself and how you feel – is an important part of building up and maintaining romantic relationships – and research\textsuperscript{327} has shown that one or both partners either disclosing less or else disclosing things they know will hurt the other is a clear indication the relationship is in trouble.

However, R L Archer has identified that one partner disclosing less may also be due to a desire to offer understanding and support to the other.\textsuperscript{328} In other words, I won’t burden you with my troubles because I want to support you in yours.

There is most definitely a gender tendency to the way men and women disclose to each other and seek support. Researchers such as Hasida Ben-Zur & Moshe Zeidner\textsuperscript{329} and Erina MacGeorge\textsuperscript{330} have found fairly consistent patterns. Women, in general, disclose their issues and problems fairly readily; they export support from their partner and they give it when needed. As Tannen puts it: for women, it’s about emotional connectedness. On the other hand, men are reluctant to divulge problems – especially if they feel they are even partly to blame; in such circumstances they tend not to seek support from their partner. However, men tend to give support readily to their partner. (Once their partner has got their attention, that is!)

MacGeorge attributes this to men perceiving themselves (in stereotypical form) to be expected to have more control over what happens to them than women. Therefore, they engage in problem-focused coping, thus avoiding the appearance of weakness or

\textsuperscript{329} ‘Gender Differences in Coping Reactions under Community Crisis & Daily Routine Conditions’ – Hasida Ben-Zur & Moshe Zeidner in Personality & Individual Differences #20 (1996)
dependency. Victor Seidler also comments that men acknowledging their emotional needs is often perceived, both by themselves and other men, as a weakness.\textsuperscript{331}

Interestingly, William Samuel has evidence that the way women tend to attribute affects their seeking help. In terms of Fritz Heider’s\textit{ Attribution Theory}\textsuperscript{332}, women tend to be much more ‘situational’. They perceive themselves less able to control major events in their lives than men do. Samuel ties this in to women generally having lower self-esteem than men.\textsuperscript{333}

Is there a vMEMETIC element in this? While both men and women clearly disclose to each other and support each other from PURPLE belonging, there seems also to be an element of RED self-esteem tied up in male reactions to both their own stress and that of their partners.

Whether this is an evolutionary hangover from the male protecting the mother of his children – the means of passing on his genes – we don’t know; but men, in general, do seem to feel they have to cope.

This macho \textit{do, don’t cry} stereotype is reinforced through the media. As Anthony Easthope has pointed out, you wouldn’t expect to find the likes of Arnold Shwarzenegger, Jean-Claude Van Damme or Bruce Willis being anything other than masterful, physically strong and in control of both nature and women.\textsuperscript{334} ORANGE manipulating RED? (The few movies in which such heroes play against type are usually far less successful.)

In the wider world, the kinds of gender tendencies we have discussed are reflected in facts such as fewer men than women visiting their doctor and more women than men buying books like ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’!

However, these gender differences can cause problems right in the area the man intends to achieve a positive result.

Firstly, men tend to be driven by a harmonic of PURPLE wanting to make their women feel safe and their RED wanting to do something about whatever the difficulty is (instrumental problem-solving mode). This tends to work out as the man trying to make the woman safe by solving the problem.


\textsuperscript{334} ‘What’s a Man gotta do: the Masculine Myth in Popular Culture’ – Anthony Easthope (Paladin, 1986).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

However, women’s PURPLE expresses its feelings (usually insecurities), needing to receive assurance back that it still belongs. Then, when assured, women tend to be ready to do something about the difficulty.

I first started to realise the problems these gender differences caused years ago when I was called up one Monday evening by ‘Glenda’, a woman I was dating from a neighbouring town.

She was crying and near hysterical because her boss had told her she wasn’t good enough at her job. My PURPLE/RED harmonic, enraged that this jerk should belittle my woman, went straight into instrumental problem-solving mode. However, being told what she needed to do to give this man his come-uppance was not what Glenda needed.

Within minutes Glenda was screaming down the phone about how insensitive and boorish I was and that there was no future in our relationship if I could be “so like that”. Thankfully, I realised the state Glenda’s PURPLE was in, told her to wait and drove around to her house. I then spent an hour at the Impulse Control end of the Psychoticism scale, cuddling Glenda and letting her cry into my chest. Later in the evening, with Glenda reassured of my belief in her, we worked on strategies to resolve her difficulties with her boss.

Time after time I see men telling their distressed wives and girlfriends what to do (instrumentally) about problems they are faced with and the women getting even more upset (expressing). The problems the women faced might have had nothing to do with the relationship; but the men’s responses all too often became relationship problems.

So many men need to let their PURPLE lead them into empathising before their RED takes them into action. Women need to learn to make allowances for what is almost certainly an evolutionary hangover. Their men are genuinely trying to help, even if not giving them what they need there and then.

Remember, guys: empathy first; action later!

Another unwanted effect of men putting the emphasis on supporting her – combined with a general male tendency to self-disclose less – is that it can seem to the woman, if Meta-Statting erroneously, like emotional distance. Even though the man may be trying to help her, he is not self-disclosing – sharing his feelings. That, for the PURPLE of a

335 This anecdote historically is from before my introduction to Spiral Dynamics. At the time I actually thought of Glenda expressing herself in terms of William Moulton Marston’s Submission (Steadiness) behavioural trait.
woman wanting emotional intimacy, can even seem like rejection.

Doubtless the *Evolutionary* theorists will be able to explain these gender differences in activation of vMEMES via the vastly different roles men and women played in prehistoric times. However, that still leaves us with problems today!

Men, in general, need to learn to talk more to their women. Women need to make allowances and perhaps let their men do one thing at a time.

**Men, Women, Ambition and Caring**

Speaking of gender tendencies, are men more ambitious than women?

We’ve seen that evolution, reinforced around much of the world by socialisation, has tended to favour females developing the kind of expressive bonding skills PURPLE uses while males tend to favour instrumental ‘doing’ skills suited to RED’s action orientation.

But is there a difference in motivation higher up the Spiral too?

If Jenny Wade is to be believed, there very clearly is. And it’s not just about orientation, it’s about a clear difference in accessing and non-accessing of vMEMES.

She has studied the work of Clare W Graves in detail and cross-related it to other studies – most notably those of Mary Belenky and her colleagues into female learning styles. From this Wade has come to the contentious conclusion that, when ascending the Spiral:

- women tend to go: Conformist Consciousness (BLUE) -> Affilative Consciousness (GREEN) -> Authentic Consciousness YELLOW;
- men tend to go: Conformist Consciousness (BLUE) -> Achievement Consciousness (ORANGE) -> Authentic Consciousness YELLOW.

For Wade it’s very much either Achievement or Affiliative. Very few experience both. If her proposition can be validated, then this has profound implications for our entire species and the way societies socialise males and females.

The Graves/SpiralDynamics model holds that vMEMES are discreet systems within the brain, effectively determined biologically. In other

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig 67: the Male-Female continuum in terms of population

words, under the appropriate Life Conditions and assuming fully-functioning brain chemistry, we should all be able to develop the full set. Though vMEMES learn, they are not learned behaviours.

Matching Wade to Graves then, we would have to infer it is biologically determined that most females won’t experience ORANGE in their Spiral development and most men won’t experience GREEN.

In which case, there is not much point in encouraging girls to become managing directors and boys to care for the planet!

There is a general acceptance now of Carl Gustav Jung’s proposition that maleness and femaleness are not 2 biological absolutes but a socialised biological continuum, with the bulk of the population nearer the extremes. This is represented (fairly crudely) by see Fig 67 – note, though, that there something of a tail-off of population levels at the very extremes of ‘masculinity and ‘femininity’.

Even accepting this continuum, Wade’s proposition is that most men won’t – presumably, due to their biology, will be unable? – to experience GREEN while most women will miss out on ORANGE.

Certainly, there is some credible evidence that girls have been less


achievement-oriented than boys in the past\textsuperscript{340} – though the evidence put forward has not indicated this difference has biological roots. However, even back in 1977 Dr Martin Hoffman was predicting that sex differences in achievement-related motives and behaviours would diminish and probably disappear altogether as it became more socially acceptable for women to have careers.\textsuperscript{341}

In the first decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century more and more women are taking senior places in business, the professions and politics. Many of them are very clearly at the female end of the Male-Female continuum. (Even several members of her Cabinet reputedly found Margaret Thatcher rather sexy!) Academically, there is growing evidence of females outstripping males in pre-university level qualifications – eg: on 17 August 2000 BBC TV News reported that, for the first time in the UK, girls had performed better overall at A-Level.

It would seem females do experience ORANGE.

As for GREEN, well, where do all these male environmentalists come from? Certainly, you can see RED as well in many of the protesters; but GREEN must have given them the issue to get worked up about!

And try telling Sir Jonathan Porrit that he has never experienced GREEN! Admittedly very ORANGE in his career path – former leader of the Green Party and now adviser on environmental affairs to Tony Blair’s government – his dedication to environmentalism over the past 20 years must have at least had its beginnings in GREEN.

Jenny Wade is a respected academic and a champion for the work of Clare W Graves. Her views cannot be dismissed summarily.

Nonetheless, it seems to me she has made a clear error in making it an \textit{either/or} issue.

There is an argument for saying that many women, if they do show a preference, probably tend to ascend the Spiral with more of a conformist/self-sacrificial flavour. Generally speaking – and it is a big generalisation! – they are more familial and security-oriented (PURPLE), more conforming\textsuperscript{342} (BLUE) and more caring and communal (GREEN).


\textsuperscript{341}‘Sex Differences in Empathy & Related Behaviours’ – Martin L Hoffman in \textit{Psychological Bulletin} # 84 (1977).

\textsuperscript{342}Overall, evidence tends to point females being more conforming than males – see: ‘Statistically combining Independent Studies: a Meta-Analysis of Sex Differences in Conformity Research’ – H M Cooper in \textit{Journal of Personality &}
Correspondingly, many men are more self-expressive – adventurous and risk-taking (RED) and achievement-oriented (ORANGE).

That’s a long way from saying males don’t experience GREEN and females don’t experience ORANGE.

Identifying male and female trends in how they ascend the Spiral is useful – and it almost certainly related to dispositions on the Psychoticism axis, as well as socialisation. However, as with so much we’ve talked about in ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’, it needs more research.

The Cycle

Before we leave this discussion of the biological and socialised differences between men and women, I should make some mention of the female menstrual cycle and its impact upon relationships.

After 50 years of modern feminism, the cycle and the fluctuations it brings in mood and mental capacity remain the most powerful weapon men have to keep women out of strategic decision-making in business, government and many other areas of social and economic life. It’s the one big chink in the feminist argument that women are as capable as men of rational thought.

So how valid are these perceptions and what effect should they be allowed to have on male-female relationships?

Firstly, as we have seen in this chapter, hormones do play a very significant role in how males and females develop both physiologically and psychologically. Going back to Chapter 3, Hans Eysenck even attributed the whole temperamental dimension of Psychoticism to the effect of testosterone on the psyche.\textsuperscript{343}

So what about the female hormones of oestrogen and progesterone?

I have often been surprised by how little many women know about how these hormones affect them. That so, it’s hardly surprising so many men are simply baffled by the menstrual cycle!

Although writings back to the ancient Greeks document it, open public discussion of the cycle is still largely taboo. Think about the television adverts you see for tampons and towels – themselves a pretty recent phenomenon! Do they talk about absorbing blood? More likely they use words like ‘comfortable’, ‘fresh’ and ‘safe’ in a rather indirect –

mysterious? – manner.

While younger adult men’s sexual desires tend to remain at a fairly constant level, women’s will vary. Recent research by the likes of Pamela Regan\textsuperscript{344} has shown that one consequence of the cycle is that women’s sexual desires are regulated by oestrogen (increase) and progesterone (decrease). Scientific acknowledgement of the impact of the cycle upon a woman’s sexual activity more generally goes back at least to the time of Marie Carmichael Stopes\textsuperscript{345}.

A woman’s sexual desire is also influenced by the (usually small-ish) amount of testosterone flowing through her. Perplexingly, as the levels of oestrogen and progesterone drop off with the menopause, testosterone levels usually increase. Which is why post-menopausal women often experience heightened sexual desire and sometimes find themselves combating increased body and facial hair.

The cosmic irony in this is that many men in their Forties experience reduced sexual desire as a result of decreasing levels of testosterone. Just when the girls are really getting going.....!!!

This, of course, is a BEIGE level biological account. If that was all there was to it, then we would simply have to live with what ever nature birthed in us.

However, researchers have shown that liking and loving can strongly influence sexual desire. For all that she has emphasised the role hormones play, Regan has significant evidence for the impact of ‘emotionality’\textsuperscript{346} Since ‘emotionality’ is centred in the amygdala\textsuperscript{347}, then taking into account Jerry Coursen’s views on the potential link between the amygdala and the emergence of vMEMES\textsuperscript{348}, it would appear we are talking PURPLE belonging allowing healthy RED self-expression.

So science can explain sex drive at several levels; and men can influence their woman’s sexual desire towards them.

Of course, in addition to varying sexual desire and women being too ‘unclean’ for sexual intercourse during their \textit{menses} according to the


\textsuperscript{345}‘Married Love’ – Marie Carmichael Stopes (Fifield, 1918).

\textsuperscript{346}‘The Role of Sexual Desire & Sexual Activity in Dating Relationships’ – Pamela C Regan in \textit{Social Behavior & Personality} #28 (2000).


\textsuperscript{348}Discussed in Chapter 6. From \textit{e-mail} correspondence between Dr Coursen and the author, 2004-2005.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

traditional organised religions – eg: Leviticus 15:19-23, Qur’an 2:222) – the next biggest ‘beef’ men have with the cycle is PMS – PreMenstrual Syndrome.

First acknowledged scientifically as a distinct condition by gynaecologist Robert Frank\(^{349}\), it was British endocrinologist Katharina Dalton who really brought worldwide acceptance of PMS in the 1960s.\(^{350}\)

According to Dalton, 4-5 days before the onset of menstruation, women will experience symptoms such as cravings for sweet or salty foods, aches and pains in the muscles or joints, headaches, fatigue or bursts of energy, irritability, tension, anxiety, sadness, moodiness, depressed feelings, constipation or diarrhoea, feeling out-of-control, insomnia, alterations in sex drive, a decline in alertness and sometimes changes in appetite.

Dalton also found that crime, suicides, accidents and a decline in the quality of schoolwork clustered around the pre-menstrual interval. The scientific evidence has become so undeniable that PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), the condition at its most extreme, was entered as a psychiatric condition in *DSM-III* in 1980 and is still in *DSM-IV-TR*\(^{351}\).

According to *DSM*, only 3-5% of women suffer to the extremes of PMDD but at least 75% suffer PMS to some degree or other.

No one has yet been able to explain just how the hormone fluctuations cause these psychological and physiological symptoms. However, some research has indicated that women who seek treatment for PMS exhibit higher than average trait anxiety\(^ {352}\). In other words, they are higher in Neuroticism. It may also be that a preference for the traditional feminine gender role – which we have associated more with the conformist/sacrifice-self side of the Spiral – is an influencing

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\(^{349}\)‘The Hormonal Causes of Premenstrual Tension’ – Robert Frank in *Archives of Neurological Psychiatry* # 26 (1931).


\(^{351}\)‘DSM’ is the acronym for the American Psychiatric Association’s ‘*Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*’. The condition was originally called Late Luteal Phase Dysphoric Disorder. The name changed for *DSM-IV* in 1994. *DSM-IV-TR* is the current (2000) edition.

factor\textsuperscript{353}.

So, is there anything we can do to influence the effects of biology? The answer, thankfully, is: Yes.

In a classic experiment, Diane Ruble led some women college students to believe that they were premenstrual when they were not and others to believe that they were not premenstrual when they actually were. She found that the women who mistakenly believed they were premenstrual reported more symptoms than did those who mistakenly believed they were not.\textsuperscript{354}

This demonstrates the power of schemas. If women expect to experience the symptoms we have discussed, they are more likely to. So there is some element of a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ in this.

Men need to be prepared to deal with their women being ‘out of sorts’ in the run-up to menstruation while not indulging them in it. The more men can encourage women to ‘get on with it’ – stimulation of a positive RED ‘can do’ attitude – the better. But men need to watch their women carefully and give their partner’s PURPLE plenty of safety-in-belonging. Bad behaviour doesn’t have to be tolerated; but allowances may need to be made.

Men should keep an eye on the calendar and prepare themselves to help their women through it.

Of course, the biggest beef most women usually have with their own cycle is the actual period itself.

There are those who buy into the it enables me to have beautiful babies meme; as a result, they do tend to cope better. However, many women find the whole thing a rather unpleasant experience. Apart from the ‘mess’, for around 40% or so the monthly experience involves some degree of physical pain. Some 10% are incapacitated with severe pain (Dysmenorrhea) for up to 3 days.\textsuperscript{355}

To top it all, the memes of ‘polite society’ frown on open discussion of the period experience – especially in mixed company.

Steven Covey has a wonderful concept of the ‘emotional bank account’, into which you make payments against the time when you need

\textsuperscript{354}‘Premenstrual Symptoms: a Reinterpretation’ – Diane N Ruble in Science #197 (1977),
Knowing Me, Knowing You

to withdraw.356

For men, supporting the women in their lives through the downs of their cycles and making allowances where needed can provide some very powerful emotional ‘deposits’.

356 *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* – Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989).
20. Sex, Faithfulness and Romantic Relationships

Sex is usually the single biggest cause of conflict in romantic relationships.

One partner wants more than the other. One partner wants it at times the other doesn’t – and vice versa. The male suffers from premature ejaculation; the female is frigid. Regular sex with the same person using a limited repertoire of foreplay and positions can become dull and routine. One partner wants to engage in activities the other doesn’t want to and may even find disgusting. One partner has sex with someone else, without permission, and gets caught – or can’t contain the guilty secret and confesses anyway. The partners agree to ‘swing’ – together or separately – but one or both can’t handle the jealousy. Etc, etc, etc….

Yet, few will deny that ‘great sex’ with a partner you ‘love’ can be a profound human experience – truly life-affirming in the sense that Sigmund Freud meant when he talked about the Eros ‘life instinct’ element of the Id\textsuperscript{357}. (After all what could be more life-affirming than the act which creates life?)

It is beyond the scope of this book to provide a manual of sexual techniques. For the past 50 years – and further back in many other Western countries – the UK has become increasingly saturated with ever-more-explicit books and videos full of good ideas for ‘great sex’. It is a concept which has as its great master template the \textit{Kama Sutra}; but there are many others far better placed than me to provide such guidance. I encourage you to explore. You can never have sex that is ‘too good’ in a relationship with a partner you love.

Rather, my interest is in how vMEMES approach romantic/sexual relationships and the effects on relationships of fidelity and infidelity.

Personal sexual fidelity is certainly something many people truly espouse as a noble intention at certain points in their relationships - such as when first falling in love, or getting married, the woman getting pregnant, or possibly resolving their partner’s bouts of insecurity. Some people seem genuinely to espouse fidelity to each other for years and sometimes even lifetimes.

\textsuperscript{357}‘The Ego & The Id’ – Sigmund Freud in ‘On Metapsychology’ – A Richards (ed) (Penguin, 1923).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

But these days actually sticking to one partner seems to be a real problem for an awful lot of people.

People - particularly in the professional/middle classes - tend to 'settle down' later (in their thirties, often with a number of 'notches on the bedpost'). Noted social psychologist Steve Duck has identified that relationships where the partners have had a higher-than-average number of previous partners are more likely to break up.\(^{358}\)

Considering Duck’s data, are patterns set that then repeat? Once you know how to handle a break-up, does breaking up become easier? This is something we will consider in more detail in the next chapter.

Fewer couples marry. Marriage in itself cannot be a guarantee of either permanence or fidelity; but, in theory, it is an act of intent. People with money who do marry often make prenuptial agreements, effectively planning for the end of their relationship. Divorce rates continue to escalate - approximately 50% of British marriages now end in divorce. The number one reason cited for divorce remains adultery - although a number of marriages do manage to survive at least one and occasionally several infidelities.

Meanwhile promiscuity and infidelity fill our modern entertainment media - films, television, theatre, many forms of pop music. And we have become fascinated with celebrity sex lives. For example, celebrity-oriented magazines like *Heat* and *Now* are actually circulation-dependent on reporting the who's-shagging-who this week syndrome.

In the early 1960s film star Elizabeth Taylor adding yet another divorce and yet another husband to the list was seen as somehow sad or bizarre. Now our Naughties media glories in celebrity romance, infidelity and bust-up. In Summer 2004 England football team coach Sven Goran Eriksson was exposed as cheating on his long-time partner, Nancy Dell'Olio. Nancy wasn't just long-time, she was long-suffering - since just over a year previous Sven had been caught having an affair with television presenter Ulrika Johnson. However, there was a further twist. Sven's sperm receptacle this time, Faria Alam, was also obliging Sven's boss, Mark Palios, Chief Executive of the Football Association. This doesn't seem to have caused much of a stir other than adding a quite delightful frisson to the whole affair for the tabloids. The promiscuity that would have caused real outrage 40 years ago seems merely to have added spice and voyeuristic excitement.

Indeed, Sven not only kept his job – unthinkable 40 years ago! – but has reputedly been ‘at it’ again since, according to some of the tabloids.

Meanwhile Faria and Nancy, both previously unknown to most people, have become minor celebrities with lucrative television and modelling contracts.

Of course, the fascination with sex is older than Homo Sapiens and a prurient fascination with famous or powerful people having sex - particularly with people they nominally aren't meant to! - probably dates back to the earliest civilisations. However, there does seem to have been quite a cultural shift in Western society during the second half of the 20th Century.

Not only is our media glamourising celebrity promiscuity; but there seems to be a trend to normalise promiscuity as a way of life.

For example, during the late 1990s first the UK’s *Channel 4* and then *Five* successfully broadcast censor-beating television programmes on the 'sex industry'. These pseudo-documentaries tended to treat pornography as just another form of entertainment alongside sport and soaps. Paralleling the mainstream acceptance of pro-made hardcore has been the takeover of much of that industry with amateur videos and web sites. Now amateur porn is hitting the television screens. In the past few years both *Channel 4* and *Five* have broadcast programmes about apparently 'normal' everyday people having group sex and indulging in wife swapping.

With the technological explosion of satellite, cable and especially internet TV now happening, what’s been shown on terrestrial television so far is just a foretaste of the promiscuous-sex-as-entertainment blitz ORANGE has clearly got planned.

When I was 14, ‘porn’ consisted of a grimy photograph of an airbrushed nude your friend had stolen from his father’s stash in the garden shed. The chances are today your 12-year-old daughter is soaking up the memes of ‘*Randy Housewives Anal Gangbang #6*’ on her bedroom PC even as you read this.

To understand this phenomenon, we have to explore the underlying motivations driving human interactions at several levels.

### Is Monogamy normal?

If monogamy cannot be normal, then our attempts at it are likely to result in failure.

Let's define our terms for mating systems here:-

- **Monogamy**: one man one woman
- **Polygyny**: one man, more than one woman
- **Polyandry**: one woman, more than one man
- **Promiscuity**: any man can go with one or more women; any woman can go with one or more men
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Historically polygyny was by far the main pre-Western hegemony/non-Christian mating system.

As enshrined in religious doctrines such as those of Shia Islam, one man, who can afford it, supports several women with whom he has sex and, as a consequence, children.

This may not go down well with the advocates of one man/one woman romantic love as a basis for marriage; but it has provided a stable mating system for centuries in many cultures.

From the point of view of Evolutionary Psychology – in which the genetic motif is seen as adaptation-to-survive-and-reproduce – this is a highly-successful adaptive strategy for procreation. The man gets to spread his genes through several women - rather than just one, as monogamy would demand. That gives greater chance of his genes being passed down to the next generation. For the women, they get the benefit of being taken care of by a male with good resources which will enable more effective nurturing for their offspring - thus increasing the woman's chances of passing on her genes.

Theoretically, this is all down to the size of the individual sex's gametes (sex cells). Since men produce sperm in millions, it makes sense as an adaptive behaviour to impregnate as many women as reasonably possible. Since women produce a limited number of eggs, each one impregnated needs to be given maximum care, to maximise its chances of survival and then reproducing its genes again as an adult man or woman.

This is at the BEIGE survival level. Pre- or non-cognitive survival behaviours - including behaviours to provide the best chances of reproducing one's genes - are natural at this level. So males being promiscuous can be considered a natural behaviour at this level.

However, this gets more complicated. In much of the world, over the millennia socialisation has tied up a BEIGE level driver with the achievement of the Identity, ‘Man’. Victor Seidler is just one sociological commentator to have discussed the pressure men are under to have sex with a woman – even to the point of pretending they have when they haven’t.\(^{359}\) In Spiral Dynamics terms, part of a male’s RED assertion of self then is tied up with having sex with a woman.

On the Neurological Levels, to be a man (Identity) is to have sex with a woman (Behaviour).

Andy Metcalf & Martin Humphries take this further by asserting that

\[^{359}\text{‘Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, Language & Sexuality’ – Victor Seidler (Routledge, 1989).}\]
part of having the cultural Identity of ‘Man’ is to conquer. So then, to assert its Identity, RED has to conquer both the woman’s body – performance: the number of orgasms he can cause her to have – and have more conquests – more women – to prove he’s a better man than the other guys.

Charles Darwin, in whose work Evolutionary Psychology is rooted, believed that male promiscuity was an inevitable (if not always desirable) adaptive trait while females were naturally monogamous so long as the male was protecting and providing for her and her offspring.

However, over the past 10-15 years, a newer train of thought has emerged in Evolutionary Psychology – that it is adaptive for the female also to be promiscuous in certain circumstances. This is to do with the woman's hunt for the best genes with which to reproduce. Thus, a furtive one night stand with a 'hunk' with ‘better genes’ than the woman's husband (or committed partner) can be considered adaptive behaviour if the woman succeeds in getting pregnant by the hunk and then hoodwinks the husband into believing the child is his and thus providing and caring for it.

According to whose statistics you believe, the named father on the birth certificate of between 10% and 30% of British children is not actually the biological father.

Professor Tim Spector caused something of a stink in November 2004 when he claimed proof of a genetic link to female infidelity. Spector and his colleagues had found a concordance rate of 44% infidelity between monozygotic female twins compared to an average risk of only 22% in the general adult female population. In other words, there is a 22% likelihood of the average woman being unfaithful. If the woman has an identical twin who commits infidelity, the chance of her also being unfaithful goes up to 44%.

361 ‘The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex’ – Charles Darwin (Murray, 1871).
363 Eg: Matt Ridley claimed 20% in ‘The Red Queen’ (Penguin, 1993).
Although he did not identify any particular gene as such, Spector claimed that variations on between 50 and 100 genes associated with chromosomes 3, 7 and 20 could be responsible for female promiscuity.

So are women programmed for multiple partners? A 44% concordance rate is high but far from conclusive. If it were to be argued that women have an automatic natural biological driver towards promiscuous sex, then statistically the concordance rate would have to be at least 50% and preferably more like 80%.

Perhaps the best way of making sense of Spector's findings is to take the Diathesis-Stress view. Yes, it may be that there is a significant number of women with a genetic predisposition to multiple partners but it needs a stress or lifestyle trigger for it to be realised.

Where the Evolutionary approach starts to show holes, is that it doesn't account for the idealisation of 'romantic love' even in pre-Western hegemony/non-Christian societies.

So men with harems still fall in love with a stranger and cheat on their wives sometimes; and women, who would stand much better chances of passing their genes on successfully with a rich man, fall in love with beggars.

The notion of 'romantic love' is one of the most powerful memes ever to have materialised in human civilisation. As much as, if not more than, 'sex-for-sex' sake, love is sold as a desirable commodity in our Western consumer society. For every hit single extolling the virtues of sex, there are ten dealing with the ups and downs of love. And while we slaver salaciously over the latest celebrity scandal, the magazine editors know that a celebrity love affair at its peak is even more popular, Happy Charles & Diana sold more than divorcing Charles & Diana; glowing Posh & Becks got more coverage than scowling Posh & Becks.

And, whether it's wide-eyed innocent teenagers plighting their troth at the altar or a middle-aged couple who've each been around the block a few times, most observers tend to nurture the hope that it will work for them.

Historically sex as a meme has been repressed at times – eg: in the Victorian era. Love rarely, if ever, has been repressed. Even in arranged marriages, it is usually hoped that the couple will find romantic love. Which of these two memes is the most powerful? While it might be a close run thing at times, it does appear that romantic love is the more powerful 'mind virus'.

What we are talking about is an extreme manifestation of the need to affiliate – the level of belonging in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of
Knowing Me, Knowing You

**Needs**\(^{365}\). As noted in Chapter 5, in *Spiral Dynamics* the PURPLE level effectively collapses Maslow’s Safety and Belonging levels into one in which people find safety by belonging. And nobody belongs to each other more than a couple in the throes of romantic love! (Such feelings of belonging have been expressed at times as being so intense the couple want to *meld* into each other!)

Susan Johnson, the influential couple & family psychologist, has put forward the notion that romantic love is essentially an adult form of attachment\(^ {366}\) and that many aspects of *Infant Attachment Theory*, as developed by the likes of John Bowlby\(^ {367}\), apply. She draws support for this in particular from the famous ‘Love Quiz experiments of Cindy Hazen & Phil Shaver\(^ {368}\).

Of course, where human beings are concerned, things are often more complex than many psychological theories allow. A complete disassociation between romantic love and sex, as I have described it above, is both difficult, if not impossible, and potentially dangerous. (Although it has been tried by societies – as in the aforementioned Victorian era!)

Most couples, after a bout of mutually-satisfying sex, will find their feelings of affection and belonging with their partner considerably enhanced.

*Sociobiology* – so often claimed as a close ally by the *Evolutionary* camp – offers an explanation of this phenomenon. Humans in the throes of great sexual arousal and orgasm experience high levels of the hormones vasopressin and oxytocin. A study by Sue Carter & Lowell Getz into the unusually monogamous relationships of American prairie voles found high levels of vasopressin and oxytocin associated with the animals’ bonding patterns.\(^ {369}\)

What this gives us is a biological partial explanation of the bonding

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\(^{369}\) *Monogamy and the Prairie Vole*’ – C Sue Carter & Lowell L. Getz in *Scientific American* #268 (1993)
function of the O PURPLE system in a sexual relationship. (Interestingly, the work of Tim Spector and his colleagues referred to earlier hinted at an association between female promiscuity – which obviously includes a lack of sustained bonding with sexual partners – and the role of vasopressin receptors.)

While there is still much research to be done in this area, it does appear that we are programmed for the sexual act to make us want to belong.

So we have on one hand a BEIGE driver to reproduce our genes and on the other hand a PURPLE need to affiliate, with it seems a biological driver to affiliate intensely with the person with whom we seek to pass on our genes. A BEIGE-PURPLE harmonic!

Has the meme of romantic love meshed with the bonding imperative to make us want to belong to our sexual partner?

It’s perhaps worth considering here Susan Blackmore’s position that memes can – and often do - drive genetic adaptation.\(^{370}\)

**The Importance of Environmental Factors**

To summarise so far, we can say that the Evolutionary concepts fit with the BEIGE need to reproduce and the Sociobiological identification of the role of bond-producing hormones in sex gives us a BEIGE-PURPLE link into PURPLE’s need to belong to our lover.

So how does it so often go so wrong?

An important clue here is provided in a 1994 study by Georg Sasse, Hansjakob Muller, Ranajit Chakraborty & Jurg Ott.\(^{371}\) Their research indicated that only 1.5% of Swiss children were born to biological fathers not named on their birth certificates. A staggeringly low figure when set against the 10%-30% claimed for Britain!

Are the Swiss genetically different from Britain and much of the rest of the Western world? The answer is almost certainly a ‘yes’ – but a very qualified ‘yes’ and probably not in ways which would explain such a statistical difference.

So we have to look at environmental factors – the Stress side of the Diathesis-Stress equation.

Swiss society is notoriously BLUE – so much so that the polite manners, conformity to rules and general mechanical nature of much of what goes on in that country are mocked throughout much of Western

\(^{370}\) *The Meme Machine* – Susan Blackmore (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Europe.

Yet it seems that Swiss BLUE tends to suppress many of the ‘me-me-me’/no-consequences excesses of RED while supporting the traditions of PURPLE. (Switzerland is in many ways proud of its traditions; and attitudes towards family life tend very much towards the traditional.)

In much else of the Western world, PURPLE and BLUE have been undermined through an unholy combination of ORANGE and GREEN.

As discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 12, the rise of libertarian GREEN thinking (particularly in the 1960s) promulgated a disdain for the rigid societal structures of BLUE and the ageist and sexist differentialism of PURPLE-dominated communities. With PURPLE taboos discarded and BLUE’s absolutism on the correct way of living in tatters, RED was enabled to indulge itself that much more freely. That also allowed the BEIGE reproductive drivers free reign. So a BEIGE/RED/GREEN harmonic gave us the ‘free love/free sex’ ethic that dominated so much of the late Sixties and has been with us, if rather less obviously, ever since.

So, it’s OK now to have sex before marriage – even to live together without getting married. It’s even considered OK to have one-night stands and other forms of sex without love/attachment. (What was once considered surreptitiously OK by some for young men before marriage – ‘to sow their wild oats’ – is now often thrust on women per se as a way of life!) It’s OK to get divorced, remarried, divorced again, remarried again, divorced again, ad nauseam. (Liz Taylor, your time has come!)

ORANGE caught on big time to the commercial value of all this sexual libertarianism around about the time James Bond first started bedding several women per movie and naked hippies onscreen were packing out showings of the Woodstock Festival movie. Since then ORANGE has packaged and sold the ‘sex-for-sex’ sake meme in countless different varieties. In the name of GREEN freedom, it has eaten away more and more at the disciplines of PURPLE and BLUE – feeding RED and allowing it to indulge itself in a frenzy of Sex!Now! excitement.

Of course, this discarding of traditional values and structures has brought about a karmatic payback in many instances for the vMEME which has most benefited from it.

As we discussed in Chapter 5, a key point of Maslowian theory is that the higher levels can be compromised and destabilised by lower levels collapsing. A prime example of this is the effect on self-esteem – a principal need of the RED vMEME – when long-term couples split up.
The loss of second-level PURPLE belonging frequently causes third-level self-esteem to plummet. Isolation, anxiety, Depression and even suicide are associated with marital break-ups and the dissolution of long-term partnerships – particularly for men whose women have ended the relationship.

So, for many, there is greater freedom; but, for many, there is also greater unhappiness.

The Environment ORANGE and GREEN have created in the Western World over the past half-century have done much to change the way we think about sex and relationships – and, in some, those changes have enabled whatever BEIGE genetic predispositions there may be to promiscuity.

**So how do We foster Personal Sexual Fidelity?**

The proverbial genie is out of the bottle. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to go back to a time when sex before marriage was frowned upon - at least publicly! - and divorce was a rarity.

ORANGE has led us into an age of technological innovation undreamed of in modern history. Meanwhile GREEN has decreed that all knowledge should be available to everyone (regardless of their ability to handle it!), using ORANGE mediums of communication like the Internet.

So, there really is no going back. But, perhaps, operating from a level beyond GREEN - 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier - it is possible to educate people and give them some tools to help them preserve their relationships.

One great benefit of the *Spiral Dynamics* map is that it allows us to explore and understand conflict and complexity.

So we know at the BEIGE level, the drive is to reproduce. We also know that a satisfying sex act will incline us to attach to our partner - thus feeding PURPLE. BLUE disciplines can provide support and structure to PURPLE’s need to belong.

We also know that, if untrammelled and with a tendency to Psychociticism, RED will indulge itself as it pleases. If BEIGE reproductive drives are strong in such circumstances, then sex without attachment or contravening an attachment is a potential outcome.

So, someone wishing to preserve their romantic love attachment - providing they understand what could happen - will seek to avoid being in a situation where RED could have free reign to indulge a BEIGE sex directive.

A practical example of this could be ensuring you don’t end up drunk and alone with an attractive colleague of the opposite sex when
Knowing Me, Knowing You

away from home for work obligations. Another example would be to avoid boys' or girls' nights out where a number of your 'mates' are unattached or up for cheating, there is a lot of alcohol and the venues abound with unaccompanied members of the opposite sex.

These are essentially examples of avoiding temptation. To avoid a temptation, we have to understand and acknowledge that temptation is there.

BLUE absolutism and GREEN idealism tend to promote the idea that, for someone in love and/or committed to their partner, there simply shouldn't be any temptation. A variation of this is that, if temptation should manifest itself, then it should be resisted with ease. The 'real world' of adulterous affairs, betrayals and bust-ups, populated by people who intended to 'do right' by their original partner, shows us that many have great difficulty living up to such ideals.

We know that we have several different modes for living – vMEMES – operating within us and that the different modes will dominate according to the Life Conditions we find ourselves in. So, controlling the Life Conditions is a key factor in controlling Behaviour.

We need to be clear on what's really important to us and to nurture that. We need to recognise what temptation can do to our vMEMES and take a more considered approach to avoiding certain circumstances and developing strategies for when we can't.

We talked in Chapter 4 and Chapter 8 of the importance of adapting Identity to the Environment. Sometimes, though, it’s important to carry over Identities into different Environments and try to manipulate the Life Conditions in our favour. When you’re single (Identity) and 'on the pull' (Environmental Culture), you will want to Behave in one way in a club full of attractive members of the opposite sex (Environmental Structure). When you’re a husband/wife (Identity) out for a drink with friends (Environmental Culture ), you will want to Behave in a different way in a club full of attractive members of the opposite sex (Environmental Structure). Depending on the Values & Beliefs you hold.

Which is why the likes of Susan Johnson stress romantic love needs to be understood in terms of Attachment Theory and treated with the same criticality one treats the attachment between a mother and her baby. In other words, look after your PURPLE’s need to belong!

As controversial as the advent of Evolutionary Psychology has been, one of its great benefits has been to reveal how much, under the veneer of civilisation and at a biological level, we function as animals. The Evolutionary approach makes clear that the drive to reproduce may
override higher-level cognitive intentions of loyalty to our partner if we let it. By understanding what BEIGE level drivers can do to us if we allow RED and GREEN to create the appropriate Life Conditions, we can anticipate the consequences.

With this knowledge, we can develop the means to control those vMEMES which would lead us into temptations we don’t want to be realised.
21. Consummate Love

We looked at the biological and socialised differences between men and women in Chapter 19. In Chapter 20 we considered the role of sex in relationships and the differing drives we need to control.

Now, we will concentrate on what makes for successful man-woman romantic/sexual relationships and how to manage when things aren’t as they should be.

Robert Sternberg’s *Triangular Theory of Love*[^372] is arguably the most comprehensive model of romantic love yet constructed. See Fig 68.[^373]

To follow the model through…

- **Liking** includes only one of the love components - Intimacy. In this case, liking is not used in a trivial sense. Sternberg says that this intimate liking characterises true friendships, in which a person feels a bondedness, a warmth, and a closeness with another but not intense Passion or long-term Commitment.

  Although other vMEMES may well shape elements of the way such an Intimacy is played out, PURPLE will be at the core of this belongingness.

- **Infatuated Love** consists solely of (sexual) Passion and sometimes produces ‘love at first sight’. But without the Intimacy and the Commitment components of love, Infatuated Love may fade quite rapidly.

  This will undoubtedly have its roots in the BEIGE reproductive drivers and brings into account all that the Evolutionary theorists tell us make men and women attractive to each other[^374]. If allied to RED’s *if-it-feels-good-do-it* motif, then this can lead to one-night stands and short-lived tempestuous affairs.

[^373]: Graphic adapted with permission from ‘Psychology for A2’ – Michael W Eysenck & Cara Flanagan (p80, Psychology Press, 2001).
Empty Love consists of the Commitment component without Intimacy or Passion. Sometimes, a stronger love deteriorates into Empty Love, in which the Commitment remains, but the Intimacy and Passion have died.

In the Western world we saw much of this from around the start of World War II through to the early 1980s. As the economic emancipation of women grew faster than moral libertarianism, societal BLUE obliged couples who had lost all interest in each other and sometimes even had come to actively dislike each other to stay together. ‘For the sake of the children’ was the common mantra so often heard.

Even in these days of ‘anything goes’, couples who detest each other but have considerable joint assets – eg: property – can be found living together, held in an unholy partnership by ORANGE’s avarice.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

In cultures in which arranged marriages are common, relationships often begin as Empty Love – though it is usually hoped by the matchmaking parents that their offspring will find Romantic Love.

Interestingly, Fathali Moghaddam has pointed out that families in the East tend to perceive Commitment as being more than just the Commitment of the marital partners. They see it also as Commitment of the families to support the marriage.\(^{375}\)

At an anecdotal level, I have found my present wife’s family to be far more involved and supportive than the families of previous partners and (so far, at least!) this has proved highly beneficial to our relationship.

- **Romantic Love** is a combination of Intimacy and Passion. Romantic lovers are bonded emotionally (as in liking) and physically through passionate arousal.

  This is Liking supported by the BEIGE/PURPLE harmonic of bonding through sexual activity we discussed in the Chapter 20.

  Interestingly, in their famous ‘Love Quiz’ studies\(^ {376}\), Cindy Hazen & Phil Shaver found that couples who had had Secure Attachments as infants and now felt securely attached in their romantic relationships, experienced regular resurgences of Romantic Love with a strong passionate/sexual element. Some long-term securely attached couples reported no fade of Passion at all throughout decades of being together.

  Such findings as those of Hazen & Shaver affirm once again just how important enabling PURPLE to meet its safety and belonging needs from early infancy can influence the whole development of the psyche.

- **Companionate Love** consists of Intimacy and Commitment. This type of love is often found in marriages in which the Passion has gone out of the relationship, but a deep affection and commitment remain. It is typical of marriages which have lasted

\(^{375}\) *Social Psychology: Exploring Universals across Cultures* – Fathali M Moghaddam (W H Freeman, 1998).

years but complacency and other priorities have helped the novelty of the Passion on its way out.

For many such people, PURPLE’s security needs are reflected in a ‘better the devil you know...’ motif keeping the partners together despite the lack of excitement. Such partnerships tend to be run on routines, often with an element of permitted ‘separate lives’ of the “Oh, he has his mates at the pub and I go to the Womens Institute” variety.

While seemingly very secure, such relationships can get caught out by a sudden BEIGE/RED harmonic catapulting one of the partners into an affair.

- **Fatuous love** has the Passion and the Commitment components but not the Intimacy component. This type of love can be exemplified by a whirlwind courtship and marriage/co-habiting relationship in which a Commitment is motivated largely by Passion, without the stabilising influence of Intimacy.

  People whose PURPLE belonging needs are unfulfilled are often vulnerable to the BEIGE/RED sex harmonic landing them in this kind of mess. They so want it to work this time.

- **Consummate Love** is the only type of love that includes all three components: Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. It is the most complete form of love; and it represents the ideal love relationship for which many people strive but which apparently few achieve.

  However, Sternberg cautions that maintaining a Consummate Love may be even harder than achieving it. He stresses the importance of translating the components of love into action.

So, when you look at Sternberg’s Triangle and map your own relationship to it, what do you see? What kind of shape is your ‘love’ in? Do you have Consummate Love… or does one or more of the 3 components need working on?

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287
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Rescuing Relationships

Much of the sex therapy stuff that’s about can help put some Passion into a Companionate Love, providing your selfplexes will both admit the need and make the time.

However, just what strategies you use will need to be considered carefully in terms of shared schemas and the vMEMES which are active in the partners. For example, pushing anal sex onto an unwilling partner is more likely to revolt than arouse. I do strongly advise against any activities that involve others – group sex or voyeuristic fetishes such as ‘dogging’. While these can excite RED, they tend to tear away at PURPLE’s safety-in-belonging fabric.

Sternberg’s Romantic Love will usually benefit from Commitment, providing it’s not pushed by one partner too soon for the other and providing one or both partners don’t have deep-rooted hang-ups about making a commitment.

Those who have grown up in families with plenty of healthy PURPLE around and feel securely attached usually have little difficulty making a Commitment. BLUE exerting itself to do the right thing can give support and structure if the PURPLE belonging foundation is in place. Beware Commitment offered from RED which is often equivalent to an ‘impulse purchase’. Also approach Commitment offered from ORANGE with caution. Unless you’re going to go to the same ‘places’ together, you may find yourself being discarded when you’ve served your purpose!

The roots of hang-ups about Commitment usually lie in problems at the PURPLE level, either from childhood modelling of adults – usually Mum and Dad – or from personal experiences in prior relationships. These hang-ups can often be addressed quite successfully through therapies like Psychoanalysis and Penny Parks’ Inner Child Therapy. Readers, who want to commit but find themselves unable to, are advised strongly to seek help from an appropriate therapist.

Fatuous Love seems to me to be the least ‘fixable’ of all Sternberg’s axes of love. After all, if you really, really don’t like your partner….

Research has shown that partners in arranged marriages in many parts of the East and Middle East report as much marital satisfaction as Western marriages. So clearly people, who didn’t necessarily like each

other at first, can grow to like each other.

However, the relationship between parents and children and the expectations of marital partners tend to be significantly different than in the West. Even young adult offspring tend to conform to their parents wishes and both sexes expect a woman to be subservient to the man’s wishes, like it or not. Despite these factors, the ideal of ‘romantic love’ persists in such cultures and stories of passionate adulterous liaisons abound in Eastern literature.

So what to do?

Clearly, if there are things your partner says or does that prevent you liking them, then they can be addressed. The partner can change or you can change – it is only a case of schemas and/or habits, after all!

If the pair of you can’t self-actualise enough to see each other’s position, why not try the Meta-Mirror exercise from Chapter 18 – see Fig 66? If you need the services of a professional counsellor/mediator, then don’t hesitate. Better to save a relationship if you can!

If it runs deeper than disliking your partner’s behaviours, to a real lack of liking – or even active disliking – then ask yourself what it is about yourself you dislike that you see in the other person. What you dislike in others may well be what you dislike in yourself and you are using the Freudian defence mechanism of Projection\(^\text{379}\) – attributing this unpleasant characteristic to your partner – to avoid facing up to it being in yourself.

It could be that there are ‘blockages in you’ that prevent you from allowing you to be intimate with someone – and ‘not liking’ them is the manifestation of that. In which case, Psychoanalysis and/or some forms of NLP therapy may enable you to clear out the blockages. Where you want the relationship to survive and you want to like your partner (but can’t), then therapy is definitely worth trying.

In the end, though, it actually may be that a couple in the mess of Fatuous Love can’t find any real liking for each other – or certainly not enough liking to sustain that relationship.

For all that Psychology is getting closer and closer to understanding what ‘love’ is and how romantic relationships work, we still haven’t got a complete understanding. There is yet something – mystical? – that escapes the scientist. When we know what that ‘something’ is, then maybe we will be able to make people like each other. Until then….

If a couple really can’t find any liking for each other, then separation may well be the best course for them. However, whereas many couples...

in the mess of *Fatuous Love* attribute blame either to themselves or to their partner and tear the very structure of their sham relationship apart, wouldn’t it be better to acknowledge the emotional incompatibility and construct a planned separation?

Again, skilled mediators can be very helpful here and are usually a lot cheaper than the lawyers. Children can be spared some of the anguish of a divorce/separation if their parents carry it through in a something like a civilised manner.

Who knows, it may even be possible to salvage a friendship of sorts for the separating couple!

**Breaking the Break-Up Pattern**

Before we plunge ahead with breaking up a relationship, we need to return to a question we posed in the last chapter: once you have learned how to handle break-up, does breaking up become easier? And, therefore, is the breaking-up behaviour more likely to be repeated?

Undoubtedly, for some, the answer is ‘Yes’ – which is evidenced by the research of Steve Duck.

Human beings generally are adaptive and learn behavioural patterns. Once a behaviour is in the behavioural repertoire, it can be repeated in the appropriate circumstances.

So are some people more likely to learn and repeat breaking-up behaviour more than others?

Those who tend more to the self-expressive side of the 1st Tier are more likely to think of relationships in terms of what John Thibaut & Harold Kelley called *Social Exchange Theory*. A partner with this approach looks to maximise what they as an individual get out of the relationship (eg: sex, affection, attention, etc) and to minimise what the relationship costs (eg: time, effort, etc).

Some who think like this tend to conduct what is called the Comparison Level – an internal comparison between themselves and their partners as to who’s getting most and ‘paying’ most in the relationship. If they perceive the balance to be in their partner’s favour, they may try to redress that balance. The tendency to try to redress is

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382 *Equity Theory*, this extension of *Social Exchange Theory*, was first proposed by Elaine Hatfield. See: ‘*Equity Theory & Intimate Relationships*’ – Elaine
likely to be influenced by where they are on the Neuroticism and Psychoticism axes.

In this approach to relationships, you are much more likely to find the Competitive and/or Pragmatic conflict mode being used in an effort to get their own way.

They may also look outside the relationship to carry out a Comparison Level Alternative – by which they estimate whether someone else they are interested in could give them a better ‘deal’.

Shades of the grass is greener on the other side!

Such thinking is more likely to break up a relationship because of dissatisfaction or the promise of a better ‘deal’ than the Communal approach. Supported by PURPLE and GREEN thinking and identified by Margaret Clark & Judson Mills, this involves a self-sacrificial focus on the needs of the partner. In terms of conflict mode, this approach tends to use Avoidance or Accommodation. At best, there may be some Compromise.

The degree to which someone self-sacrifices may be influenced by how near they are to the Impulse Control end of the Psychoticism scale.

The self-sacrificial character of the PURPLE and GREEN vMEMES means that those who favour a Communal approach are much less likely to bail out of the relationship when the going gets tough.

Having said that, if PURPLE’s safety-in-belonging is seriously compromised or GREEN finds the situation too unfair to others affected by the relationship – eg: children – then these vMEMES may ‘flip’.

This is why it is so important to keep the Neurological Levels aligned, taking note of what’s going on in both the Environmental Structure and the Environmental Culture.

To relate a personal story….

You may recall ‘Glenda’. my one-time girlfriend from many years ago who made an appearance in Chapter 19.

When I first met Glenda, she seemed extremely cautious of getting involved in a relationship and was very procedural in how we arranged our embryonic relationship. Her BLUE was running a Procedures Meta-Programme to protect her PURPLE. Glenda was terribly insecure and


But not BLUE which sacrifices itself to ‘what’s right’, rather than to the needs of other people.

told me she had been deeply hurt in previous relationships. (In retrospect, I suspect the hurt went way back into her childhood….)

It took some considerable time but once her PURPLE was satisfied that I loved her and, therefore, she was safe, Glenda’s RED emerged in full Flamethrower mode. Her approach to our relationship was very much in terms of what rewards she would get from it.

Eventually, after a particularly bad week of being beaten up verbally, my own BEIGE/RED harmonic got me out of that situation. Having sacrificed myself to some degree to Glenda’s wishes, I flipped and walked out. When I thought again and went back to her a week later, she wouldn’t even let me into the house. Her BLUE was back to protecting her freshly-damaged PURPLE.  

So we must be careful not to be too rigid in labelling people’s approaches to relationships as either exclusively ‘Exchange’ or exclusively ‘Communal’. The ebb and flow of vMEMES is liable to outfox us if we ignore the fluidity of the Spiral.

Nonetheless, Exchange and Communal are useful behaviour categorisations for recognising potential faultlines in relationships.

Just consider the combinations:-

- Exchange & Exchange – likely to be exciting but an ongoing competition for who gets the most out of the relationship;
- Communal & Communal – very nice and considerate but frustrating: giving to the other can’t be satisfying because they’re too busy trying to give to you;
- Exchange & Communal – one dominates and the other serves; but an invitation for one to abuse the generosity of the other.

A preference for either the Exchange or Communal approach clearly will affect both how someone takes on the Commitment element of Robert Sternberg’s Triangle and what is required to keep that person committed.

The likelihood is that someone with an Exchange approach is going to find Commitment more difficult unless personal rewards are clearly to be gained.

Steve Duck has written at length of the need to identify factors that put the relationship at risk. He divides them broadly into those which are external to the relationship and precipitate a crisis – eg: job loss, the appearance of a rival, etc – and those which are internal and predispose

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385This anecdote historically is from before my introduction to Spiral Dynamics. At the time I actually thought of Glenda expressing herself in terms of William Moulton Marston’s Dominance, Submission (Steadiness) and Compliance behavioural traits.
the relationship to trouble - eg: differing interests, changing values, boredom, etc.

Now, let’s transpose this information into Ben Karney & Tom Bradbury’s Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation Model\textsuperscript{386} – see Fig 69\textsuperscript{387}.

Karney & Bradbury have outlined the way pre-existing vulnerabilities in a relationship – especially the kind of faultlines we have talked about – can reduce the couple’s ability to adapt to external stressors.

Thus, it is more likely, as a generalisation, that someone with a preference for the express-self side of the Spiral, with an Exchange approach to the relationship, will respond less well to stressors which put the relationship under pressure. Those with a more Communal approach are likely to show greater solidarity with their partner under pressure.

However, as indicated earlier, those with a more Communal approach are vulnerable to those specific pressures that stress PURPLE and GREEN.

We can assume, from the links we made in Part One of ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’, that the more balanced the individuals in the relationship are along Hans Eysenck’s temperament axes – see Fig 8 – the less likely they are to favour one side of the Spiral that much more than the other. This will give couples more flexibility in responding to different and difficult Life Conditions – on the presupposition that both partners are able to access a wide range of 1\textsuperscript{st} Tier vMEMES.

Of course, accessing the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier will provide much greater flexibility in self-actualising beyond the impact of the stressors.

As we discussed in Chapter 2, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi makes the point that having insight as to how we are influenced enables us to take action to shape that influence\textsuperscript{388}.

Thus, being aware of how our temperament and the composition of our selfplex lead us to deal with Life Conditions provides us with opportunities to make changes – particularly at the memetic level.

Several years ago, I realised that I took an Exchange approach to relationships. Consequently, few of my relationships had lasted more than a couple of years. And I was well-versed in break-up behaviour.


\textsuperscript{387} Graphic adapted with permission from ‘Psychology for A2’ – Michael W Eysenck & Cara Flanagan (p77, Psychology Press, 2001).

When I fell in love with my wife, Caroline, I realised that, to make this relationship work long-term, I needed cognitively to counter my (natural?) tendency to an Exchange approach and unlearn my own break-up behaviour.

I still do have something of an Exchange approach. Fortunately, I can self-actualise beyond my own egocentricity to take a bigger picture view of what’s going on in the Environment – including the needs and wants of my wife. It sometimes needs something fairly dramatic in the Life Conditions to grab my attention; but I am learning more and more to be aware of her.

And the results? So far…so good!
22. Younger Children, for Parents (and Teachers!)

*Our children are our future!*

How often have you heard this trite saying? – and yet it is completely true!

At a global BEIGE level, our children carry forward our species. At a personal BEIGE level, they carry forward our genes. At a PURPLE level, they carry forward the traditions and folk memories of our tribe and our family.

Not surprisingly, then, a huge amount of research in the behavioural sciences has been devoted to children, their development and their welfare.

Some of it is dubious; but much of it is excellent. So what’s going wrong?

Much of our media would have us believe – with at least some truth – that, in the Western world, today’s children and young people are more troubled than any previous generation.

Certainly indicators like the numbers of juvenile delinquents dealt with by the police and/or the courts, the numbers of teenage pregnancies and the estimated levels of alcohol and drugs abuse among the young tell us that a significant minority (at least!) are not prospering the way society would like them to. On the other hand, many Western youngsters grow up in previously unheard-of affluence and have opportunities in life previous generations could only have dreamed of – eg: more variety and nutrition in foodstuffs, sex without pregnancy, travel abroad, access to cutting-edge technology for (almost) all, more and more entertainment in more and more forms, etc, etc. If exam results are any reliable measure, they receive a better education and are more intelligent.

In the richest countries our history has ever recorded, in the longest sustained period those countries have known without a major war, it shouldn’t be going wrong for any but a hapless few.

Unless, of course, we’re missing something critical. I, of course, am going to contend that we are: vMEMES – and their interplay in family dynamics.

It’s not my intention either to duplicate or critique the large amount of good material on the market about child development and child rearing. I wish merely to consider these things briefly from a
vMEMETIC angle. In this chapter I will deal with youngsters up to puberty. In Chapter 23, I will deal with that bête noire of parents and teachers alike: the teenager!

Clare W Graves did not comment much on his work in relation to the development of children – beyond acknowledging that what we now call vMEMES develop in them in hierarchical order. However, Graves did map his work to that of Lawrence Kohlberg, undisputedly the most important researcher to date into the development of children’s ability to make moral reasoning.

Essentially Kohlberg identified 6 stages of moral reasoning which mapped into 3 levels of morality: Pre-Conventional (Stages 1-2), Conventional (Stages 3-4) and Post-Conventional (Stages 5-6). He later added Stage 4.5 – sometimes called ‘4+’ or ‘4B’ – to account for discrepancies in Stage 4 responses which included some of the relativism of Stage 5.

Although Kohlberg’s work has attracted some criticism – most notably on gender discrepancies from erstwhile colleague Dr Carol Gilligan – it has largely stood the test of time and is considered a strong and robust theory.

In mapping Graves to Kohlberg, with his concept of ‘Push’ and ‘Pull’ factors – as discussed in Chapter 14 – we get a causal explanation for how moral reasoning develops. In other words, the emotional and moral development of children is the result of vMEMES emerging and interacting with the Life Conditions in the Environment. Those Life Conditions – containing the memes the children are exposed to –

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393 Gilligan had assisted Kohlberg with some of his earlier work and even co-authored with him. She criticised his conclusion that most women were at Stage 3 while most men were at Stage 4 on the grounds that his procedures tested male-oriented ‘morality of justice’ while she demonstrated that females responded more to ‘morality of care’ issues. See: ‘In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory & Women’s Development’ – Carol Gilligan (Harvard University Press, 1982).
influence the timing and manner of the emergence of the vMEMES.

We can give this a developmental timeframe by using Erik Erikson’s psychosocial stages of development.

Erikson actually identified 8 broad stages human beings go through in their lives. In this chapter we will use just the 4 that take us from birth through to the onset of puberty; in Chapter 23 we will consider stages 5-6 which can be said to apply to the teenage-early adult years.

Of course, in applying models such as those of Erikson and Kohlberg to childhood development, we must take into account the immense variations in both biology (the genotype) and experience (to produce the phenotype) of the human species. These make it dangerous to apply such models in too absolutist a fashion in all circumstances. For example, so far there has been no culture or situation in which Kohlberg’s model can’t be applied; yet many variations in age of the manifestation of the different stages have been found.

As with all stage theories, the boundaries between the stages are not always that sharply drawn in reality.

Fig 70 shows Erikson’s first 4 stages with Kohlberg mapped onto the stages and a commentary on the underpinning activity of vMEMES. As noted above with regard to Kohlberg, there seems to be some fluidity in the assignment of timespans to the Erikson stages. (I have seen Oral-Sensory extended to 18 months and Love Relationships (dealt with in Chapter 23) still carrying on at 40!)

Erikson unabashedly took his lead from the work of Sigmund Freud in his consideration of the first 4 stages.

However, Erickson put his emphasis on interaction with the Environment and those in it (psychosocial) – ie: the Life Conditions – rather than the maturational development of the child as a sexual being (Freud’s psychosexual stages). Nonetheless, there is much Freud can teach us about the manner in which someone goes through those first four stages. So Freud’s views are used where appropriate, in what follows, to compare – and contrast! – with Erikson.

For both Freud and Erikson, psychological development effectively begins with baby on the breast.

## Erikson/Psychosocial Development

### Oral-Sensory

**0-1 year**

**Issue:** Trust vs Mistrust

**Critical Event:** Feeding

The infant must form a first loving, trusting relationship with the caregiver, or develop a sense of mistrust.

### Muscular-Anal

**2-3 years**

**Issue:** Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt

**Critical Event:** Toilet training

The child's energies are directed toward the development of physical skills, including walking, grasping, and rectal sphincter control. The child learns control but may develop shame and doubt if not handled well.

## Kohlberg/Moral Reasoning

### Pre-Conventional Morality

**Stage 1: Obedience & Punishment**

Whatever leads to punishment is wrong. Individuals focus on the direct consequences that their actions will have for themselves.

## Graves/Spiral Dynamics

### BEIGE/PURPLE harmonic

The meeting of BEIGE survival needs leads to the development of trust and belonging thus, meeting PURPLE’s security needs.

### PURPLE needs to get it right so its belonging needs are not compromised by punishment. RED comes to the fore to take control and avoid shame.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Locomotor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pre-Conventional Morality</strong></th>
<th><strong>Graves/Spiral Dynamics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>Stage 2: <em>Instrumental Hedonism</em></td>
<td>RED leads to a greater assertion of self – though without compromising PURPLE. Compromising of PURPLE creates Life Conditions suitable for the emergence of BLUE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue: Initiative vs Guilt</td>
<td>Behave in ways that get rewarded. This reasoning shows a limited interest in the needs of others, but only to a point where it might further one's own interests, such as &quot;You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Event: Independence</td>
<td>The child continues to become more assertive and to take more initiative, but may be too forceful, leading to guilt feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence.</td>
<td><strong>Conventional Morality</strong></td>
<td><strong>BLUE</strong> comes increasingly to the fore, leaving behind RED’s need for respect (approval) and coming to comply totally with doing ‘the right thing’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stage 3: Good/Bad</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6-12 years | Behave in ways that conform to ‘good behaviour’. Individuals are receptive of approval or disapproval from other people. | The failure of BLUE to get a grasp will leave RED exposed to shame and is likely to lead to negative ‘reputation management’.
| Issue: Industry vs Inferiority | **Stage 4: Law & Order** | |
| Critical Event: School | Obedience to authority. Do your duty. Obey the laws and social conventions to maintain a working society. The individual understands that society needs to transcend individual needs. | |

*Fig 70: the work of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and Clare W Graves. Don Beck & Chris Cowan mapped from infancy to puberty*
Knowing Me, Knowing You

However, we now know so much more about foetal development that, to understand how vMEMES first influence us, we have to look further back beyond the nipple and into the womb.

**In and out of the Womb**

There is evidence that the BEIGE/PURPLE harmonic which drives the Oral-Sensory stage is at work before birth. We know that foetuses hear human voices in the womb. We know that they taste and smell the amniotic fluid in which they live. As Professor Peter Hepper has pointed out, being able to attach to your mother by her smell and the sound of her voice is an advantageous survival mechanism for the newborn baby. (After all, you can’t see your mother from inside the womb!)

Once born into the world the baby needs food – their innate sucking schema is a BEIGE level driver. Put their lips against a nipple (or something like a nipple) and most babies will suck. It doesn’t take long before babies learn to salivate at the sight of a nipple – a Pavlovian-style conditioning effect. (The sight of the nipple is associated with hunger drive reduction.) But the initial sucking response is innate.

Getting the milk they need from the person whose smell and voice they recognise, will also fulfil PURPLE’s need for safety and belonging. Interestingly, research has shown that the focal length of the eye for babies under a month old is fixed at around 8 inches – the approximate distance of a baby’s face from its mother’s while breast feeding. Clearly part of nature’s programme to bond baby and feeder through the pleasure of drive reduction.

Feeding is the central issue on which Erikson poses the newborn’s first major dilemma: Trust vs Mistrust. Will I get my milk or won’t I?

From this we can see that, for all the maligning of Freud’s theory of

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psychosexual stages and the fixations he proposed could occur, *Oral Receptive* and *Oral Aggressive* fixated types are clearly valid concepts. The baby who gets their milk too easily, without ever having to experience the tension induced by waiting may well grow up to be overly-trusting and dependent on others – *Oral Receptive*. On the other hand the baby that has to wait and wait for feeding when they really are hungry might be twisted by this first crisis of trust to grow up stingy, a hoarder and bad-tempered – *Oral Aggressive*.

To explain this, let’s look again at the proposition of Jerry Coursen we considered in Chapter 6 – namely that the PURPLE and RED systems emerge neurologically as a pair, tied in to certain activity in the amygdala - see Fig 1.

If the baby always receives milk instantly, then that would favour the dominance of PURPLE. If the individual was also born temperamentally at the Impulse Control end of the Psychoticism scale, then that baby might be susceptible to growing up with the kind of dependency characteristics that match *Oral Receptive*.

On the other hand, if the baby has to wait and wait for feeding, that would not support PURPLE’s need to belong and be safe. Rather it would support RED’s self-expressive demanding nature. If the individual was also born with a Choleric disposition and high in Psychoticism, then that would very much lead to a condition that matched *Oral Aggressive*.

The baby’s temperament can play a critical role at this stage – as Jerome Kagan has put forward persistently and eloquently. Infants that are ‘easy’- perhaps more extroverted and lower on the Neuroticism and the Psychoticism scales – tend to bond more easily with their mothers than those who are ‘difficult’ – perhaps more introverted and higher on the Neuroticism and Psychoticism scales.

There is some significant evidence for Kagan’s *Temperament Hypothesis* that the temperaments of babies tend to shape the relationship with the mother. Kazuo Miyake, Chen Shing-jen & Joseph Campos discovered that babies who became upset when their feeding was interrupted were more likely to be insecurely attached by 12 months of...
Jay Belsky & Michael Rovine found that newborn babies who showed instability—effectively, signs of Neuroticism such as tremors and shaking—were less likely to become securely attached. Gottfried Spangler learned that the mother’s perception of the baby’s temperament influences her caregiving. Mothers who saw their babies as ‘difficult’ had become less responsive to them by 24 months.

When we set this against Mary Ainsworth’s Sensitivity Hypothesis that it is the responsiveness of the mother to the baby which influences the security of attachment, we can see the dangers for a baby with a ‘difficult’ temperament. Their temperament puts them at risk of discouraging their mother from giving them the attention their PURPLE needs.

Ainsworth’s ideas have been taken forward by Dr Daniel Stern who has observed in detail the fine process of ‘attunement’ between mother and baby. By attunement, Stern means all the noises, looks and gestures by which they establish a positive pre-language communication. He has evidence that this process enables the baby to begin to understand that another person separate to their own person has empathy with them. Thus, attunement is fundamental for healthy social, emotional and cognitive development.

In the way they give attention to their baby, though, mothers can unwittingly provide the wrong kind of attention. For example, Kagan has evidence that a baby with a tendency towards Neuroticism could easily overreact to a mother’s alarm at the baby endangering itself—e.g.: crawling somewhere it shouldn’t. The mother’s reaction to the drama can create a conditioning effect which increases the infant’s level of Neuroticism.

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

So mothers need not only to judge very finely just how easily they give in to baby’s demands for food; they may need to force themselves to give a ‘difficult’ baby attention and care they might not receive immediate reward for. ‘Difficult’ babies provide fewer ‘social releasers’ – eye contact, smiles, gentle touches, etc – which John Bowlby proposed are designed by nature to ‘warm’ mothers to their infants.\(^{411}\) In other words, mothers of babies with less attractive temperaments need to make more effort if PURPLE is to get the security and sense of belonging it needs.

However, there is a danger of the ‘wrong’ kind of attention reinforcing temperamental tendencies – which needs to be avoided if at all possible.

With trust hopefully established – but not to the point of being *Oral Receptive* – the child has a secure foundation on which its personality can develop.

If, as Cindy Hazen & Phil Shaver demonstrated with their ‘Love Quiz’ experiments, the quality of our infant attachments is very likely to influence our *Love Relationships* stage\(^{412}\), then ensuring PURPLE needs are met appropriately right from the start really is critical.

### From Infancy to Puberty

The next developmental challenge for infants Freud perceived was toilet training – though Erikson widened it into the whole issue of muscular control of the body\(^{413}\).

Since the child is usually punished in some way for getting things wrong – eg: defecating on the living room carpet – and rewarded for getting things right – eg: walking across the room – this leads, according to Lawrence Kohlberg, to a simplistic *Pre-Conventional* understanding of right and wrong. *Whatever is punished is wrong; and I can learn to do those things which bring me rewards.*

Interestingly Erickson poses the key issue of the *Muscular-Anal* stage in what are RED terms: Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt. The child’s

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\(^{413}\)A number of studies have supported Erikson’s view that this stage is more than just about toilet training per se. Eg: *Obsessive-Compulsive Personality: a Review* – J M Pollack in *Psychological Bulletin* #86 (1979).
PURPLE need to be safe and to belong will be compromised if they are being punished frequently for getting it wrong; but there seems to be almost a parallel RED operation going on – a harmonic. Children undoubtedly take pride in getting it right and get upset – even to the point of neurosis – if they keep on getting it wrong.

One form of fixation here, according to Freud, is Anal Expulsive – characterised by temper tantrums and simply not caring about mess. Almost certainly RED negating shame by devaluing the whole experience – and again most likely if the infant has a Choleric disposition and is high in Psychoticism. Freud’s other fixation at this stage is Anal Retentive – characterised by meanness and a tendency to neatness and tidiness that can border on the obsessive. One can detect the premature emergence of BLUE here if RED is unable to handle the pressure – and possibly the seeds for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder are laid here if toilet training proves a particularly traumatic experience.

Certainly the number of people who match Anal Retentive to some notable degree is indicative of just what a critical stage this is. Anal Retentive enjoys something of a mythological status as being more a ‘boy thing’; but I’ve had a number of females in my classes and workshops who will admit to being obsessive about keeping their CDs and books in alphabetical order. In fact, I once had a woman on one of my workshop programmes who was so Anal Retentive she felt obliged to ‘plump up’ her sofa cushions and put the vacuum cleaner around within seconds of visitors leaving her house!

So parents need to be careful about just how they go about toilet training and the rest of the Muscular-Anal stage since this clearly has a major effect on personality development.

Too early a trigger of BLUE – because RED can’t cope – may be the root of the Anal Retentive condition.

Just what is punished and just what is rewarded – both obviously and not so obviously – needs to be carefully structured by parents if they wish children to go through these stages in the most psychologically healthy manner.

On the assumption that RED is successful in creating an infant proudly in control of their bodily functions, that enables them to assert themselves and explore the world about them in Erikson’s Locomotor stage. Again his language around the key issue is interesting since Initiative vs Guilt is effectively RED vs BLUE. Kohlberg’s Stage 3 leaves us in no doubt that RED is dominant in the child’s psyche, yet the need to express self without compromising safety and belonging may well trigger emergent BLUE’s responsiveness to ‘doing wrong’.
It’s valuable to note that Erikson is at his most distant from Freud here – though the developmental outcome of the beginnings of conscience are the same. Whereas Erikson sees the third stage as being about expressing self whilst learning boundaries, Freud characterises the third stage as ‘Phallic’ and at least partly about the discovery of pleasure in stimulation of the genitals.

Freud’s Phallic stage and the ‘Oedipus Complex’ it supposedly triggers and the controversy around this concept are too big a topic for the scope of this book. However, a key issue for Freud here is whether the child is allowed to stimulate themselves without restraint. In other words, is the internal RED Id restrained by the external PURPLE taboos and BLUE morality of the child’s parents? If not, one of the consequences Freud postulates is that the child is likely to grow up vain, arrogant, reckless and inconsiderate because they never learned restraint at a critical age.

Certainly you can see that not being told to stop playing with yourself in public would hardly foster the conceptual development of what’s right and wrong. Effectively RED learns it can do just what it likes because it has no schemas in the selfplex which tell it it can’t do that!

For both Erikson and Kohlberg, the Latency years are about the development of discipline and the appreciation of right and wrong in terms of Conventional Morality (rather than simply what is punished or rewarded) – in other words, the increase of BLUE in children’s thinking. But does BLUE always gain dominance in a child’s thinking during the Latency period? Judging from the discipline problems in school classrooms right across the Western world, one really has to doubt this assumption of BLUE dominance as applying universally.

Muzafer Sherif’s Assimilation-Contrast Effect\(^4\) may provide us with some clues as to difficult Life Conditions which can hinder the development of the Q BLUE system.

Dr John Lochman has found that many young children who end up as bullies or who are otherwise difficult at school are angry. They perceive imaginary slights from others and see other children (and adults) as being more hostile towards them than they actually are.\(^5\) This

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is RED perceiving others and their actions in a Contrast Effect.

Since RED’s drive is to establish self – in face of enemies, if need be – the skewed Meta-Stating of the Contrast Effect will tend to give RED full play in the selfplex. Especially if there is a tendency to Psychoticism.

No wonder that for some children, the dominance of the BLUE vMEME in their psyche is quite some way off!

**What about the Memes?**

Since Graves sees vMEMEMES as being in symbiotic interaction with the Life Conditions in the Environment, this then raises the thorny issue of what memes we – parents, teachers, sub-cultural groupings and society in general – expose our children to.

I have a friend who is a primary school headteacher on a ‘rough’ estate in the East Yorkshire city of Hull. When three year-olds enter her school nursery, within days she reckons she “can tell nine times out of ten whether they will go on to university or end up at Her Majesty’s pleasure.”

Why? “Because they have their parents’ values”.

As Eric Fromm pointed out, parents “...in their own personalities... represent the social character of their society or class. They transmit to the child what we may call the psychological atmosphere or the spirit of a society just by being as they are – namely representatives of this very spirit.”

Subsitute Fromm’s ‘psychological spirit’ for Richard Dawkins’ meme and we understand the process of infection. Before Conventional Morality can be established, children take on their parents’ schematic values through PURPLE’s need for acceptance and RED’s desire to avoid shame.

Peter McNab has talked about the debilitating effects parents have on the development of their children through the family’s acceptance of limiting beliefs – particularly if they are at the level of Identity statements.

Parents who tell their children that their family are ‘thick’, ‘stupid’, ‘half-wits’, ‘bad’ ‘evil’, etc, etc, effectively condition those children for failure. Those who tell their children directly, individually, that they are like that all but damn them. The Identity schemas that RED will form in the selfplex from such memes are hardly conducive to the child developing into a productive, law-abiding, fulfilled individual....

And the damage can be done equally by siblings, other relations and

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417 ‘Towards an Integral Vision’ – Peter McNab (Trafford, 2005).
other children. Remember the story of ‘Roberta’ from Chapter 4?

Teachers, of course, are trained to avoid the use of such language; but I’ve heard teachers call students such names on a number of occasions in a number of schools.

Nonetheless, failure, disaffection and delinquency are not automatically predestined for children exposed to such memes. Many teachers hold the view that by secondary school it’s often too late; yet some students do undergo life-transforming experiences in their teens.

Let’s face it, anyone can have a life-transforming experience at any age. It’s not unknown for hardened criminals, who have spent most of their lives either engaged in crime or shut up in prison, to undergo major change.

But the earlier the intervention, the more effective it usually is – and the more misery it prevents.

The moral of the story? Parents – and teachers! – be cautious about what you say to your young children and do to them or in front of them. You are meme carriers. Be careful what you infect them with!

*How vMEMES learn – Part 1*

Before we leave this necessarily-brief look at how vMEMES influence the development of children, let’s consider the effect on learning styles.

Fig 71 summarises very basically the learning styles of each vMEME up to BLUE, with some indication of how the transition stages affect learning.

Parents need to recognise which vMEMES are dominating their children’s thinking in which Environments and facilitate that vMEME’s natural learning style.

For teachers, with classes of 20+, assessing which vMEMES are driving which students in symbiotic relation to mutating Life Conditions, can be a daunting task. However, increased familiarity with *Spiral Dynamics* matched to a deeper knowledge of the students in the class tends to make things easier as most people operate in predictable patterns most of the time.

Working with the Erikson and Kohlberg models, it’s fairly easy to anticipate which vMEMES should be dominating thinking – though patterns may change as the Life Circumstances change and assessment and application get harder as children age.

For example, in a class of 5 year-olds, you would mostly be dealing with PURPLE and RED – though there could be some emergent BLUE. It’s by no means impossible that you could be dealing with vMEMES
Knowing Me, Knowing You

higher than BLUE, though, generally speaking, it would be fairly unlikely.
| **PURPLE** | Through imitation and repetition  
Animistic analogies - fairy-tales, cartoons and animal metaphors  
Chants, dances, rhythm music, rituals  
Practical kinaesthetics  
Learning what the Tribe learns is a major driver  
The relationship with the ‘teacher’ is critical - that person must be a mystical, shamanistic figure |
| **PURPLE-RED** | Learning by modelling is still important - but satisfaction of the embryonic sense of self will also influence what is learned |
| **RED** | Instant results - reward or punishment  
No threats - only promises of certain outcomes  
Hands-on action learning - the opportunity to experience it for themselves  
What is learned needs to be immediately relevant to the circumstances the individual perceives themselves to be in  
Respect for the ‘teacher’ as a hero figure is important - but the teacher must also show respect back to the blossoming egos |
| **RED-BLUE** | What pleases (or is immediately relevant) is still central but there is also some desire now to know what the procedures for learning are - and that leads to WHAT should be learned |
| **BLUE** | Acceptance of Truth from the Higher Authority  
Prescriptive teaching/learning - following set procedures  
Right/wrong feedback - testing on the learning  
The work set will be done because it is ‘the correct thing to do’ - but don’t expect imagination in the work or more than is set |

*Fig 71: 1st Tier learning styles – part 1 (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)*
23. Teenagers, for Parents (and Teachers!)

Many people remember their teenage years with great affection. First loves, first sex, parties, all-nighters, underage drinking, gangs of mates, loony escapades, etc, etc. Yet it’s also often been said that being a teenager is the most difficult stage in life.


Erikson even phrases the critical issue for the \textit{Peer Relationships} (stage 5) as being: Identity vs Role Confusion – see Fig 72 which continues the match of Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and Clare W Graves from Chapter 22.

That may well be the critical issue of this stage; but is it really all ‘storm and stress’?\footnote{‘Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status’ – James Marcia in Journal of Personality & Social Psychology #3 (1966) and ‘Identity in Adolescence’ – James Marcia in ‘Handbook of Adolescent Psychology’ – J Adelson (ed) (Wiley, 1980).}

Certainly in his work on developing his model for the route to Identity Achievement\footnote{‘Relationships in Adolescence’ – John C Coleman (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).} – see Fig 14 – James Marcia could not sustain the idea that everybody experienced this as a crisis. He even found that some experienced a delay in Moratorium as positively beneficial.

With his \textit{Focal Theory} concept, John Coleman takes the view that most teenagers manage the challenges and transitions of adolescence without any great crises by focusing on one or two key issues at a time. To Coleman, the average teenager only finds the transitions significantly stressful if the challenges come thicker and faster than they can cope with.\footnote{‘Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status’ – James Marcia in Journal of Personality & Social Psychology #3 (1966) and ‘Identity in Adolescence’ – James Marcia in ‘Handbook of Adolescent Psychology’ – J Adelson (ed) (Wiley, 1980).}
Knowing Me, Knowing You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erikson/Psychosocial Development</th>
<th>Kohlberg/Moral Reasoning</th>
<th>Graves/Spiral Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer Relationships</strong>&lt;br&gt;13-18 years&lt;br&gt;Issue: Identity vs Role Confusion&lt;br&gt;Critical Event: Self-as-Identity&lt;br&gt;The teenager must achieve a sense of identity in occupation, sex roles, politics, and religion.</td>
<td>Stage 4.5&lt;br&gt;Difference between moral right and legal right. Recognition that rules should sometimes be broken.</td>
<td>ORANGE may emerge to pragmatise BLUE’s absolutism and to generate a sense of future.&lt;br&gt;RED will also need to be strong to assert the Identity of the individual.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Love Relationships</strong>&lt;br&gt;19-30 years&lt;br&gt;Issue: Intimacy vs Isolation&lt;br&gt;Critical Event: Intimate Relationship&lt;br&gt;The young adult must develop intimate relationships or suffer feelings of isolation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PURPLE with a new twist as a new kind of belonging is established in a different kind of relationship.&lt;br&gt;The health of PURPLE will be affected by experiences right through, starting with the Oral-Sensory stage.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 72: the work of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and Clare W Graves. Don Beck & Chris Cowan mapped to puberty and the teenage years*
So, just what is the nature of the adolescent and just what kind of experience is being a teenager for them?

*A vMEMETIC Transition*

Let’s assume a healthy pre-puberty childhood.

The infant will have developed secure attachments in the *Oral-Sensory* stage, thus building up *PURPLE* and meeting its needs. *RED* will have been running away in the background, becoming more prominent at times – eg: developing and taking pride in competence at bodily control in the *Muscular-Anal* stage.

Both assertiveness of self and childhood masturbation around the 4-6 years zone are generally acknowledged now – so let’s allow for the views of both Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. The positive outcome, working from either view, is some restraint of RED Id-like impulses by externally-imposed BLUE morality.

Then BLUE develops more strongly, often through the disciplines of school, during the *Latency* period.

But the key factor the best primary schools excel in is keeping their children feeling safe – in other words, fulfilling *PURPLE* needs. *RED* and latterly BLUE are there but the prime motivator in a pre-puberty child is *PURPLE*’s need for safety and belonging.

For an exercise, get parents to tell their 7-year-old they are going on holiday without them. Most 7-year-olds will be horrified by the prospect! However, most 15-year-olds would thrust their hands in the air at such a proposition and yell: “*YES! PARTY!!!*”

How come?

*RED*, which, in most children most of the time, has been playing second fiddle to *PURPLE* pre-puberty, now comes very much to the fore.

It needs to. Without that *Me!*-*Me!*-*Me!* burst of egocentric self-expression, the individual cannot move beyond the B *PURPLE* Life Conditions of dependency on the family.

For someone to be independent, there has to be a breaking free from dependency – and this is a prime function of the RED vMEME in adolescence. Looked at from an *Evolutionary* perspective, the individual has to break free from their parents so that they can become an adult in their own right and start reproducing.

How strongly RED propels people through adolescence clearly varies dramatically. Some remain close to their parents; others become problematic; others end up complete rebels and either breaking completely with their families or being thrown out! Some, of course, like ‘Bert’ and ‘Tom’ whose stories I recounted in Chapter 8, have great
difficulty in breaking away from their childhood family situations.

This wide range of variations in transition will be influenced largely by the Life Conditions each teenager experiences in each Environment. I would suggest that where someone tends to be on Hans Eysenck’s Psychoticism scale will also influence the intensity with which they experience RED being dominant in the selfplex.

The childhood development I presented at the beginning of this chapter was, of course, to some extent idealised, with PURPLE having its security needs met. What happens when PURPLE doesn’t have its security needs met? In many cases RED comes to the fore to compensate\(^4\); but this can set the individual off on the route to disaffection. In extreme cases this may be a significant contributing factor in the development of Reactive Attachment Disorder which we discussed in Chapter 12.

The transition from PURPLE dominance in the selfplex to RED dominance will occur at different paces from individual to individual which is certainly something our school systems in the Western world are poor at handling.

Consider the Year 6 classroom in most primary schools\(^5\). The children are taught almost all their subjects in the same classroom by the same teacher – a way of life most of them will have been used to since first going to school. In some schools, the class may have been taught by the same teacher since Year 3, the beginning of Key Stage 2. Primary schools can have as few as 30 children attending and rarely have more than 500.

This is a very safe B PURPLE Environment – and doubtless far too ‘safe’ for some whose RED is ready for adventure. (Year 6 often sees the first real large-scale assertions of self – and the disruptive behaviour which so often accompanies it.)

However, secondary school, with probably a minimum of 1,000 students on a much bigger site and having a different teacher in a different classroom for each subject is a very different scenario. Those new Year 7s whose RED is ready often thrive. Those who are still centred in PURPLE frequently find it a terrifying experience. (I have seen children faint and throw up in fright during their first few days in

\[^4\] As stated several times before, this is not the orthodox Graves/Spiral Dynamics position but is based on my own observations.

\[^5\] For non-UK readers, in our current system Year 6 is the last year of primary school and the last year of Key Stage 2, in which the child turns 11 years old; Year 7 is the first year of secondary (high) school and the first year of Key Stage 3, in which the child turns 12.
The corridors and classrooms of many secondary schools are not safe places – often not for teachers and Year 11s, let alone brand new Year 7s! Their RED had better get a grip pretty quickly if they are to survive psychologically in such ‘jungles’.

Small wonder that children’s performance dips so much from Year 6 to Year 7 that it is an ongoing area of concern for the Department of Education & Skills. Various initiatives have been tried in attempting to find an answer; but, until the importance of vMEMES is recognised, it is doubtful they will come up with a situation that works consistently for all the children.

For those children who come to secondary schools already disaffected, there is often little for them. Bored by subjects that mean little or nothing to them, taught all too often with methodologies more appropriate to ‘top sets’, it is small wonder their RED sometimes finds the best option is to cause a ruckus! As we discussed in Chapter 18, the punishments – usually detentions – the school then attempts to mete out often run into the brick wall of what Nicholas Emler calls ‘reputation management’. To maintain its embryonic drive towards self-assertion, RED will not allow itself to be shamed.

Of course, there are heart-warming stories of teachers who somehow or other find a common Value with a student on which to build a relationship and succeed in turning them around. Then there are students who just somehow undergo what Gregory Bateson called ‘a Level 3 learning experience’, from which they emerge with a different (vMEMETIC) outlook.

However, despite the fact that they harbour Life Conditions which induce the P RED vMEME, schools, by and large, are not good at handling it. And the more disaffected it is, the less idea they have as to what to do about it.

So, if schools tend to fail in dealing with RED, how should parents handle it?

Assuming that PURPLE is well grounded in the individual, then parents should feel free to encourage RED – within boundaries. Just as in


Erikson’s *Locomotor* stage – see Chapter 22 – self-asserting RED needs to know just how far it can push. So set limits which enable RED to express itself without undue risk. An analogy I like to use is that of building a large BLUE cage in which RED can play.

So, times to go to bed, times to come in, jobs to do (and rewards for doing them), homework done before being allowed out, defined amounts of money for spending, etc, etc, all need to be enforced in a fairly rigid manner. But as few rules as necessary and as much praise as possible. We are training a young ego here!

Be prepared for RED’s manipulations and deceits in its attempts to get its own way – and don’t take it personally! Try to self-actualise from YELLOW and give RED what RED needs positively; so that the line of growth towards BLUE can continue.

If the idea of *training* in this way seems abhorrent to you and disrespectful of the human being your son or daughter is, catch that GREEN before it ruins the both of you! RED needs fair but firm handling.

### Friends and Sex

Friends and sex – especially for girls – are probably the single biggest areas of concern for parents of teenagers.

Research consistently shows that teenagers are socialised more by their friends than they are by their parents or their teachers.\(^{427}\)

In breaking away from the family, the old B PURPLE Environment, teenagers still need to belong. Those needs haven’t gone away; but they are often now exercised in a different way.

Groups of mates mutate into gangs run by a PURPLE/RED harmonic. Such gangs are often ritualised, from dress, to greetings, to activities and can be highly territorial – all effects of the PURPLE vMEME. They are characterised by RED power plays which can be displayed in acts of physical strength or toughness, shows of intelligence or knowledge and, especially with girls, ‘sexiness’. The outcomes of such periodic power plays are changes in the gang’s power pecking order(s).

Obviously, not every gang indulges in drug-taking, gangbangs and

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pitched battles with other gangs – they may not even see themselves as a ‘gang’ – but the basic vMEMETIC structure of all gangs is essentially the same.

The more the PURPLE needs of gang members have not been met prior to joining the gang, the more unhealthy their RED is likely to be and, therefore, more suggestible to the kind of extreme activities which get some gangs into serious trouble and scandalise the media.

Equally, the more PURPLE needs have not been met at an earlier age, the more likely teenagers are to throw themselves into a sexual/romantic relationship as a way of fulfilling their belonging needs.

The more healthy a teenager’s PURPLE is, from way back into their infancy, the more healthy their RED self-expression is likely to be and the more amenable they will be to learning BLUE disciplines.

The spoiler in even such an ideal scenario is the individual’s tendency to Psychoticism. The compulsion factor this dimension produces can usurp even the most considered attempt to create positive Life Conditions for your child.

Parents, as always, have difficult choices to make in deciding just who your child should and shouldn’t associate with and how to limit or prevent an association. Trying to prevent association with the ‘undesirables’ can actually have the effect of driving your child towards them. A 1993 study by Andrew Fuligni & Jacquelynne Eccles found that peer orientation was higher when parents were perceived to be more authoritarian and the adolescents had less opportunity to influence decision-making about their own lives.\(^\text{428}\) Of course, RED would rebel like that and choose the PURPLE belonging Environment it felt most comfortable with.

However, parents can minimise confrontation with their teenage offspring by playing to the needs of the vMEMES which are dominating. So, for example…

- **PURPLE** may respond to an emotional appeal if it wishes to avoid creating distance with a parent to whom it is very close;
- **RED** may be malleable if you can phrase the requirement in terms of it doing what you want it to do will help it avoid shame;
- **BLUE** will do what is presented as ‘the right thing’ – provided the presenter is recognised as a legitimate ‘higher authority’.

There is much talk in some parts of the media these days of

exploitation of pubescent children by other parts of the media. The ‘sexualisation’ of children is good for newspaper and magazine sales. Especially if accompanied by a photograph of a 10-year-old girl in heavy make-up, high heels and a mini-skirt clutching some rapper’s CD single of ‘Blow Me, Bitch’.

What we are looking at is ORANGE commercialisation of RED’s emerging desire to self-express allied to BEIGE-level drivers to procreate. Like it or not, parents, by the beginning of their teenage years, most children are biologically capable of reproducing and unconsciously want to do so.

So RED’s self-expression reflecting these BEIGE urges should hardly be surprising. In boys, this will often take the form of establishing yourself as being powerful enough to attract females with whom to mate – remember that power can be manifested in a range of ways, from brute strength to intelligence. For girls, at an unconscious level, it means being better breeding material than the other girls – so that you can attract the most powerful males from whom to select. Hence, 14-year-old girls will show lots of cleavage and boys will engage in play fights in front of them.

Of course, we do not live in the Stone Age and life in the 21st Century offers much more than mindless breeding. If our young people are to make the most of what life has to offer them, then we need to expose them to memes that will lead them to greater visions than simply responding to that very powerful BEIGE/RED harmonic. They need to be given very clear messages grounded in BLUE discipline – as preparation for exposing them to ORANGE’s view of the world as one of endless possibilities.

Unfortunately, GREEN attempts to teach 14-year-old secondary school students to put condoms on bananas when BLUE’s law says sex below 16 is illegal. This is a case of mixed messages which RED will exploit in its desire to express itself through BEIGE cravings.

I don’t, for one second, advocate a return to the attempted full-scale repression of sexuality of the Victorian era. But we must get real: acknowledging what is natural – the desire to procreate and to self-express – while teaching restraint, responsibility and opportunity.

Some teenagers will have sex before 16, no matter what parents and teachers say and do. Some simply won’t. A significant number will be swayed by the memes we expose them to.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Teenagers and the Higher vMEMES

If you reference Fig 70 and Fig 72, in a healthy childhood development BLUE should have started to emerge in the Locomotor stage and then manifested itself more fully in Latency. Not as the dominant vMEME in the stack – pre-puberty that ideally should be PURPLE – but strong enough to enable the child to conform to basic school discipline and to learn in a directed manner.

BLUE needs to be pretty strong in the psyche by the time adolescents are studying seriously for their GCSEs. The amount of knowledge they have to take in and the techniques they are required to learn mean they need to have developed the directed, linear, sequenced modes associated with BLUE thinking. With a reasonable amount of intelligence and the ability to do exactly as the teacher tells them, most teenagers are capable of doing at least reasonably well in their GCSEs.

How many don’t is perhaps a reflection that BLUE may not have got as much of a hold as the Erikson and Kohlberg stages indicate it should have.

Adolescents, whose thinking is still dominated by RED, struggle to cope with the form of GCSE-level questions and answers. BLUE must lead them, both for the discipline to undertake the sheer amount of work and to follow the structural complexity of the projects and exam questions. How many students don’t do as well as they could have, because they did not follow the procedures for breaking apart questions and working out answers, is commented upon in exam board report after exam board report.

To do well at A-level requires a major leap into autonomous ORANGE thinking. The complexity of the issues raised and the way students are required to think is way beyond the directed BLUE thinking of GCSE. (In many ways it is closer to degree level.)

Lawrence Kohlberg concluded that many people never progress beyond Conventional Morality and thus would not be capable of engaging in the abstracted thinking associated with Post-Conventional Morality (Stages 5-6). In Spiral Dynamics terms, this is saying effectively that many people do not develop beyond BLUE in their thinking.

Certainly, I have seen some of my A-level students struggling to think at the level required. They can do what you tell them but they can’t yet think in a reflective manner for themselves.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Kohlberg’s latterly-added half-stage of 4.5\textsuperscript{431} could be seen as the work of the BLUE-ORANGE transition in that there is some questioning of the absolutism of (BLUE) Conventional Morality.

Going back to Fig 70 and Fig 72, on the assumption that (BLUE) Conventional Morality should take hold during the Latency stage, I have matched (BLUE/ORANGE) 4.5 to the Peer Relationships stage. One would hope that adolescents would be able to see that the world is not always black & white – either/or – but that often there are ifs, buts and maybes. However, this is sheerly fanciful if BLUE hasn’t taken hold and the individual is still dominated by PURPLE and RED thinking.

Unfortunately, I have to say that, from my own experiences – and I am sure there will be lots of secondary school teachers who will concur with this – many teenagers in the Peer Relationships stage have yet to get a solid grounding in the BLUE way of thinking.

This shows that, for all their pertinence, the Erikson stages need to be used with some care and cannot be applied absolutely.

Plus, of course, as noted earlier, many adolescents enter sexual/romantic relationships during the Peer Relationships stage (and sometimes even earlier). Thus, some of them begin the Intimacy vs Isolation challenge of Erikson’s Love Relationships stage even before they have settled into the BLUE way of thinking!

As Intimacy, in the way Erikson meant it\textsuperscript{432}, requires PURPLE to attach in a new belonging, one can but wonder at the chances of success in these relationships….

\textbf{Erica’s Story}

‘Erica’ was an attractive girl in my Year 9 tutor group and rather curvy for a 14-year-old.

One day as the class emptied out after morning registration, she asked if she could have a word with me before going to first lesson.

As soon as the classroom was empty, Erica burst into tears. When she eventually calmed down, I got the following story out of her….

Erica’s parents had divorced rather bitterly a few years before and had then battled for her, their only child, both legally and emotionally. Though she had kept in regular contact with her father since the separation, Erica had lived with her mother, ‘Joyce’ to whom she had


319
become closer and closer.

Some 6 months before the flood of tears in my classroom, Joyce had entered into a serious relationship with another, slightly younger man. After a few weeks, he had been introduced to Erica who told me she had done her best to accept him.

A week before the tears, Joyce had told Erica her boyfriend would be coming to live with them in their flat at the end of the month. The night before the tears, Joyce had told Erica that she (Erica) was so ‘fat’ she would never get a boyfriend and had proceeded to belittle her in other ways.

Erica was devastated that her mother, whom she loved so much, could have treated her so badly. Her self-confidence, never huge as long as I had known her, was knocked severely.

It was clear to me that Erica suddenly presented a challenge to her mother – and that that was the source of Joyce’s unanticipated verbal aggression. At an unconscious BEIGE level, Joyce recognised that a youthful and attractive girl was better breeding stock for the incoming male than a woman in her late thirties. Erica was now a rival whose potency to ‘steal’ her man had to be diminished.

The effect on Erica’s RED, already destabilised to some extent by the effect on her PURPLE of the parents’ separation, was profound.

The best I could do was put it to Erica that, with making such a big commitment, her mother was probably stressed and that stressed people sometimes say things they don’t mean.

I eventually got Erica to the point where I could send her to lessons. As she left the room, I said: “Clearly those Year 10 boys I overheard talking about you the other day don’t think you’re fat.”

She was flustered but her eyes brightened – and she demanded to know what they had said about her.

“Well, I can’t say,” I answered. “It wouldn’t be right for me to tell you what they said about how much they fancied you. Not right at all.”

Erica went out with a smile on her face.

Over the next 2 years Erica became a mild ‘problem’, as relations with her mother fluctuated rather wildly. Nothing terrible, as far as the school was concerned, just lippy and rude self-assertiveness.

Whenever the complaints mounted significantly, I got the Head of Year’s permission to put Erica ‘on report’ and insisted she came to me twice a day with her report card. Such a structured BLUE Procedures method worked. She always did exactly as I required and would behave herself with other teachers.

However, the school system required me to release Erica from
Knowing Me, Knowing You

‘report’ once she had behaved herself for 2-3 weeks. Almost immediately the complaints about her behaviour would start again – and within another 2-3 weeks I would have enough evidence to issue her with a report card again.

A cycle soon established itself: 2-3 weeks of good behaviour, off report, 2-3 weeks bad behaviour, on report, 2-3 weeks good behaviour…and so on and so on.

At that point in her life, Erica needed and responded to structure.

**How vMEMES learn – Part 2**

Fig 73 continues Fig 71 from Chapter 22 in providing a very basic outline of the learning styles of the higher vMEMES of the 1st Tier.

As indicated by the assignation of Kohlberg’s 4.5 to Erikson’s *Peer Relationships* stage, we would hope that ORANGE would be starting to emerge in the thinking of most young people by their mid-teens. Realistically we know that this is far from being the case.

However, that doesn’t mean you won’t find ORANGE and vMEMES beyond in a secondary school classroom. The reality is that we could take a class of middling ability 15-year-olds and discover all the vMEMES were active – even YELLOW, possibly even TURQUOISE!

In which case, how does a teacher teach effectively to 7 different core styles of learning? To move the students to optimum motivation, the teacher has to teach to their vMEMES as well as to their intellectual capabilities.433

Once again, this is an area requiring more research. But the potential to improve classroom discipline, the enjoyment of learning experiences and improving GCSE and A-level results all but demands that research be undertaken!

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433 Reputedly this is just what Don Beck persuaded the staff at Paul Robeson High School in inner city Chicago to do in the mid-1990s – resulting in some slightly significant gains in qualifications gained and some very significant drops in truancy levels. However, the experiment was discontinued when the principal left; and a detailed case study has yet to be produced.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLUE-ORANGE</th>
<th>Self-motivation starts to emerge - though learning procedures are still necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE</td>
<td>• Developing future sense with possibilities of multiple outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trial-and-error experiments to achieve anticipated outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to analyse and improve - particularly via technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete self-motivation to achieve the desired future outcome(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The ‘teacher’ is now a resource to be used</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORANGE-GREEN</th>
<th>Broader concerns now start to emerge and there is a need to make sure everybody is getting opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>• Bigger picture thinking and emotional responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is important can be subject to consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning from peers/group learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal development/development of self - within the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>The “teacher's” job is to facilitate the development of the group and individuals within the group</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 73: 1st Tier learning styles – part 2 (from the work of Clare W Graves, Don Beck & Chris Cowan)*
24. The Workplace, for Workers

‘Mike’ taught in a primary school. He liked kids and he loved his job.

The GREEN vMEME very much dominated his political and philosophical thinking; yet there was something of Don Beck’s RED-BLUE Zealot\(^ {434}\) in him too.

A strong Self-Referencer, he knew what was right for the education of the children at his school and he wanted everyone else to know what was right too.

Unfortunately, Mike’s new headteacher, ‘Raquel’, was more centred in nodal RED. Her interests lay not so much on what was right for the children but on what would establish and sustain her power over the school.

A ‘self-righteous upstart’ like Mike was both irritating and an easy scapegoat.

As so often happens when GREEN and RED form harmonics, BLUE’s Little Detail and Procedures Meta-Programmes were curtailed as being ‘bureaucratic and unimportant. So Mike was not particularly hot on paperwork.

Raquel could access BLUE concepts just enough to understand the importance of paperwork in the face of a looming OFSTED inspection. This gave Raquel the opportunity to roast Mike repeatedly and nastily for not having his lesson plans and assessments up to date.

The fact his young charges loved him, parents spoke highly of him and he consistently had fewer discipline problems than any other teacher in the school counted for nothing in Raquel’s eyes.

Mike ended up off work with stress the week of the inspection. The OFSTED inspectors, of course, found fault with his paperwork but were unable to evaluate his strengths as a classroom teacher in his absence. And Raquel was able to offload some of the inspection criticisms in the direction of the problems caused by this absent teacher.

Mike now does exactly what Raquel tells him while he looks for another job. The spark has gone out of his teaching; his class has discipline problems and projections for their Key Stage 2 SATS results\(^ {435}\)


\(^ {435}\) For non-UK readers, Standard Assessment Tests (SATS) are taken at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 – though there is currently talk of not having them at the end of Key Stage 1.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

have had to be revised downwards. Mike throws ‘sickies’ periodically just to get away from a place he now hates. His GREEN can’t believe that anyone (Raquel) could be so nasty to someone so well-intentioned.

‘June’ worked as a middle manager for a local authority business innovation unit.

Highly creative and daring in her thinking, she took seriously the credo handed down from the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) that such innovation units should be radical, original and unafraid of trying out new ideas.

Such a message could be construed as coming from an ORANGE mindset. However, to ‘Colin’, June’s very BLUE-oriented boss, the message meant promoting whatever the DTI said was the latest ‘best practice’ and ticking the tick boxes to show they had done just that. In the lack of any new DTI initiative, they were simply to carry on doing what they had done before.

Colin thrived in the BLUE bureaucracy of the local authority. June was looked upon as weird and ‘woolly’, introducing psychological and even ‘spiritual’ concepts to the business network she ran.

As June built up the network, the member businesses praised her repeatedly and reported improvements in their business performance. However, Colin noted that June was placing less and less emphasis on the DTI initiatives and more and more on the ‘weird stuff’. June was given a verbal warning and told to push only the DTI stuff.

“I’m told we’re to find new ways of improving businesses – to get them to think out of the box, to think more innovatively about how they do things…” June wailed to me. “I do that – and this is what happens to me!”

I explained that her ORANGE/GREEN thinking was way beyond the BLUE Procedures Meta-Programme of Colin. That the DTI credo on innovative ideas may have come out of ORANGE thinking but it was being applied through a BLUE mindset. That Colin had the BLUE monolith of the local authority bureaucracy backing him. That she had to conform – or, at least, appear to conform – or she would be squashed.

In vain.

June persisted with her ‘weird stuff’ and was put through a full disciplinary procedure that stressed her out so much she ended up taking 3 months off work. When she returned, she was demoted.

And since some of its members protested at her treatment, Colin terminated the business network.

A combination of luck, vivaciousness and sheer energy made
Tazmin a highly-successful business woman, owner of a medium-sized independent nursing home.

Her RED ran the home in a highly dictatorial manner and her staff feared her. She ‘stretched up’ to borrow just enough BLUE attitude to make others follow methodologies of a sort. That just about kept the nursing home inspectors off her back. However, she could also be charming almost to the point of being charismatic. Relatives loved her and the home was usually full, with a waiting list.

In the running of the home, most of the workload was actually carried by her deputy, Ruby. Ruby’s PURPLE made her loyal and longsuffering; her BLUE made her methodical and able to cover up most of the errors and omissions Tazmin wasn’t even aware of much of the time.

Tazmin found herself a new lover who persuaded her to enter a partnership with him and some others in a new, very large nursing home in a neighbouring town. She was to be its director and manager.

When she showed me the business plan, I cautioned Tazmin that the income projections were rather optimistic and that there looked to be too little set-up working capital. When Tazmin told me Ruby would run the first home in her absence, I responded that I doubted Ruby was suitable for that position. At least, not without substantial development both personally and professionally. Tazmin’s RED didn’t want to know on either issue. She would do what she wanted to do!

Definitely on the introverted side, with her head mostly run by PURPLE and BLUE, Ruby had a hard time controlling staff who were used to being either charmed or terrorised. She decided that an ISO 9000 quality system would be the way to run the home and to win favour with the inspectorate.

Unfortunately the staff had little time for documented procedures; and, freed from Tazmin’s iron grip, tended to do as they pleased. To make things worse, when Tazmin did make an occasional visit, she would instruct staff to do things in contradiction to Ruby’s procedures. Her RED also demeaned Ruby’s procedural form of management both to her face and to her staff.

Ruby started to become depressed.

What really drove the wedge between Tazmin and Ruby, though, was the fact that while Ruby was trying to implement procedures, occupancy was dropping. Ruby lacked both the business acumen to appreciate the criticality of occupancy levels and the skills to charm visitors into placing their ailing aged relatives in the home.

With her new business venture in danger of failing financially, Tazmin needed her first home to be secure. Yet Tazmin couldn’t divert
her attention from the increasingly-precarious situation her new home was in to sort out the old one. So the pressure was put on Ruby to raise occupancy. No help was provided. Just pressure.

Ruby ended up off work with Depression for several months, during which she resigned from Tazmin’s employ.

‘Adrian’ worked as the stores manager in ‘Brentbros Ltd’, a machine parts distribution company. His strong RED made him a commanding figure in the warehouse while there was just enough BLUE in his vMEME Stack to enable him to organise the stores to some degree. Especially as his assistant, ‘William’, did most of the work – and took most of the blame when things went wrong.

Since William was dominated by PURPLE and decidedly Phlegmatic, Adrian’s way of doing things worked for him year after year.

It didn’t bother Adrian that most of the Brentbros staff actually disliked him, as long as they did what he told them and chatted with him when he wanted to talk. It didn’t even matter that ‘Delia’, the daughter of Brentbros owner-manager ‘John’, detested Adrian for his bullying manner, his inadequate communication to her accounts department and his evasion of accountability. John’s PURPLE had a soft spot for Adrian who had been with him since he started Brentbros – long before William joined the company or Delia entered the business.

However, William underwent some substantial and very dramatic changes in his domestic life that impacted through many other Environments in his vMEME Stack. It looked to me as though he went through a Quantum Leap (discussed in Chapter 9). Not only was his RED asserting itself but his BLUE started to kick in with ideas of how to improve efficiency in the warehouse.

Naturally, Adrian’s RED resented William’s RED asserting itself – but BLUE was much stronger in William than it was in his supervisor. There was even a hint of ORANGE on William’s horizon. William now stood up to Adrian who found his put-downs returned with equal ferocity. Moreover, as I had been doing some coaching with William, I encouraged him to take the ideas Adrian had disparaged to John. He was suitably impressed and started working with William to develop them.

Delia seized on the changes in William to make him – and not Adrian – her principal point of contact in the warehouse. The sales manager soon followed suit, as did the delivery people.

Effectively Adrian became isolated. Only John – out of his PURPLE’s loyalty – even bothered talking to him. Adrian began to show all the signs of significant stress and started taking time off work.
At my recommendation, John created a division of roles between Adrian and William that effectively put the latter in charge of the warehouse and left the former with a specialised function. There was some ego-enhancing status to Adrian’s new role but he would have to work hard to achieve it.

The Workplace is a Dangerous Place

Indeed it is! And the most dangerous factor is something the health & safety ‘gurus’ are only just beginning to recognise: people. As Mike, June, Ruby and Adrian all found out….

Many people in the Western world spend more time with work colleagues than they do with their partners or children. The majority of people at work depend on their workplace for their living. So there is a sense in which workplace relationships are among the most important relationships in the lives of many people. Yet psychologists Michael Matteson & John Ivancevich have identified that these relationships – more than, say, the tasks involved, long hours or the physical environment – are the most common source of workplace stress.

Robert Karasek, one of the foremost researchers in this field, has repeatedly pointed out that interpersonal relationships are both the key source of job satisfaction for most people and the prime source of stress-related illnesses. In other words, if we get on well with the people we work with, it adds significantly to our enjoyment of living; if we don’t….

Moreover, the likes of Bruce Margolis & William Kroes and Stephanie Booth-Kewley & Howard Friedman have identified that the people who usually get stressed the most in the workplace are the middle

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436 In 1995 John Walker, a social worker with Northumberland County Council, became the first person in the UK to successfully sue his employer for damage – £175,000 for 2 nervous breakdowns – caused by stress at work.

437 ‘Managing Job Stress & Health’ – Michael T Matteson & John M Ivancevich (Free Press, 1982).


managers. Senior management usually have great authority (the ability to make decisions) while the workers, as trade unions have proved on numerous occasions, can muster great power (the ability to make decisions). The proverbial ‘piggy in the middle’ is often left without either enough authority or enough power to carry out the role smoothly.

All too often people are naïve about the workplace. They expect people to behave in a ‘decent manner’ and to work together with the common aim of doing the job well, in the interests of the organisation and its customers/clients.

They get Flamed, Manipulated and Accommodated into so-called Compromises that give them very little in return for what they give out or have to put up with.

Then, of course, there are the workplace predators – the Flamethrowers and the Manipulatives – who are out to use everybody else to get their way.

And, in between, there are the agents of the organisation, the Zealots and the Ideologues, ever ready to punish those who fail to live up to what the organisation (or their perception of the organisation) requires.

The workplace can be a great source of satisfaction and fulfilment. It can also be a place of real psychological danger.

If you find that you’re not enjoying work – but you like the work! – then it may well be that you need to take a closer look at the people dynamics in your workplace.

To survive and prosper in the workplace, you need to understand the power structures – eg: who’s got it! – both formally and informally, Who’s allied to who? – and what do they want out of their workplace Environment?

For example, you might find there are introverted ‘craftsmen’ running off harmonics of PURPLE, RED and BLUE who take real pride in what they do. They just want to be left alone to get on with doing their jobs the best they can. On the other hand, there’s the ORANGE-driven career exec who just has to find their way to the top and will use anybody in any way they can to get there – Robert Blake & Jane Mouton’s Manipulative! Then there’s the guy with a solid harmonic of red/GREEN who despises the organisation’s rules and policies because they prevent people being creative and showing initiative.

Similar to the way we used this idea in Chapter 8, imagine yourself

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441 The terms ‘authority’ and ‘power’ are used here in the quite specific way that Ichak Adizes uses them – eg: ‘Corporate LifeCycles: how Organisations grow & die & what to do about it’ (Pearson Education, 1988).
above your workplace – going *meta* to it. Look down on the people who shape that Environment – including yourself – and ask who’s doing what, where, when, how and, most importantly, why? And how can *you* use that to get what *you* want?

With such information, you may want to devise a *Well-Formed Outcome* – as described in Chapter 16.

If this all sounds a little Machiavellian, then it might need to be. Think back to Stephen Covey’s Circles of Influence 

442 - see Fig 47. You can either let your Circle of Concern impact upon your Circle of Influence and reduce it – be a victim! Or you can take at least some control and attempt to expand your Circle of Influence.

If you tend to the conformist/self-sacrificial side of the Spiral, then you will most likely find this approach harder. But, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has pointed out 

443, one of the key benefits of memetics is that it enables us to understand our Environment that much more – and, from that, understanding, to shape it more to our liking.


The 4Q/8L (4 Quadrants/8 Levels) model – see Fig 74 

444 – developed by Don Beck & Ken Wilber provides a powerful tool for recognising what’s going on in organisation by mapping the 8 Gravesian levels onto Wilber’s 4 Quadrants.

Put simply, Wilber sees the Upper as Individual, the Lower as Collective, the Left as Intangible and the Right as Tangible.

Thus, in 4Q/8L, the Upper Right (Individual/Tangible) is the brain as a physiological organ capable of producing the vMEMES in the mindset of an individual – the Upper Left (Individual/Intangible). The individual then has to deal with the Life Conditions – how people behave – Lower Left (Collective/Intangible) in the structure in which they operate – the Lower Right (Collective Tangible).

Effectively, this take us back to Chapter 8 and our considerations of how individuals interact with the Environmental Culture and the Environmental Structure – see Fig 22 – and the impact of *Reciprocal Determinism* – see Fig 23. However, 4Q/8L provides us with some different perspectives on these issues.

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442 See: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* – Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989).
444 Graphic adapted with permission from *Stages of Social Development: the Cultural Dynamics that spark Violence, spread Prosperity & shape Civilisation* – Don Edward Beck (p10, presentation materials, 2000).
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Fig 74: 4Q/8L (from the work of Clare W Graves, Ken Wilber, Don Beck & Chris Cowan; graphic copyright © 2000 Don Beck & Ken Wilber, Denton, TX USA – all rights reserved)
Knowing Me, Knowing You
Knowing Me, Knowing You

So, firstly map yourself onto the Upper Left. What vMEME(S) dominate(s) in your psyche? Then ask:-

- How well does your mindset match what the Environmental Structure (Lower Right) is?
- How well do you fit in with the prevailing shared mindset of others – the memes of the Environmental Culture (Lower Right)?
- How well does the Environmental Culture (Lower Left) fit with the Environmental Structure (Lower Right)? In other words do people behave as they are meant to?

For example, schools tend to be very BLUE in structure in that there are lots of rules (Lower Right). However, many teachers operate from a GREEN mindset (Upper Left). This creates a culture (Lower Left) which undermines the structure of rules. So, if you were our 15-year-old Street Tough from Chapter 4, your RED (Upper Left) would be able to have a field day breaking the rules which won’t be enforced.

This gives us further insight into why there is so much poor behaviour in so many classrooms throughout the Western world.

If we go back to Mike, from the beginning of this chapter, his GREEN (Upper Left) was operating in the Environmental Structure (Lower Right) of a RED-run ‘feudal empire’. Ruby’s BLUE (Upper Left) tried to turn a part-collapsed feudal empire into a BLUE bureaucracy (Lower Right). Adrian found his RED (Upper Left) isolated by a cultural harmonic of PURPLE and BLUE (Lower Left).

As another example, someone led by BLUE (Upper Left) would find it very difficult in an ‘anything goes’ RED Environment (Lower Right) populated by ORANGE-led manipulative achievers (Lower Left).

So, when we take the Gravesian point of view that vMEMEs work in symbiotic interaction with the Life Conditions, how well matched are you? And how able are you to adjust to changes in the Environment?

Of course, you have to know what to adapt to – the Delta insight of Fig 25 – and how to do it. So, awareness and learning can have a profound impact in helping you understand the process of adaptation – hence this book.

However, if you have poor flexibility because you are unable to access the higher vMEMES – even though the Life Conditions predicate them – then you may need to consider what’s happening in the Upper Right. Of course, this is where the genetically-determined temperamental dispositions which seem to influence vMEME development are rooted.

Don Beck has expressed concern for some time about the effects of
pollutants and poor nutrition – what we take in from the Environmental Structure (Lower Right) – on the brain’s ability (Upper Right) to develop vMEMES (Upper Left).\textsuperscript{445} Since ‘we’ create these problems, this is Reciprocal Determinism in the extreme!

**Workplace Strategies**

Once you can understand what’s going on, that gives you some choice as to what to do about it.

The simplest thing to do – though not always the easiest from a moral standpoint – is just to fit in.

In a RED-fiefdom, accept being a serf and the game of favourites which the ‘king’/‘queen’ and their ‘lords’ play. If you want to prosper, make yourself a favourite of someone firmly in the power pecking order. But make sure that someone is not going to fall out with the ‘king’/‘queen’ – otherwise you might end up culled along with them!

If the workplace is a BLUE bureaucracy, at least appear to conform. Don’t give the agents of the ‘Higher Authority’ any reason to punish you for your ‘sins’.

In an ORANGE meritocracy, you know it’s a case of who’s using who to get ahead. In which case, to survive, make yourself useful to someone who’s getting ahead. If you, yourself, want to get on, be prepared to use others if you have to. However, from a 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier perspective, don’t just discard them when you’ve used them. You never know when you might need them again!

If it’s a very politically-correct culture, feed GREEN’s perception of how to treat people properly. If you don’t, you may well find yourself ostracised.

The problem with the above strategies is that they assume that the Lower Collective is harmonious.

What if there is conflict between those who say what the Environmental Structure is and how the majority of people who work there behave? What if the Environmental Culture is not dominated by a single way of thinking but the Lower Left is, in fact, being torn apart by vMEME Wars?

You may decide to stand above the proverbial fray; but you are

\textsuperscript{445}Various postings to the *Spiral Dynamics* e-mail list 1999-2002 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamics and the *Spiral Dynamics-integral* e-mail list 2002-2004 – see: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spiraldynamicsintegral.
likely to suffer from Muzafer Sherif’s *Assimilation-Contrast Effect*\(^{446}\) anyway, as discussed in Chapter 18.

If you decide to take sides, then you need to take note of 2 key factors:-

- Where in the Upper Left, Lower Left and the Upper Right are the more complex vMEMES? All things being equal, they will ‘outthink’ lower vMEMES.
- To think in William Moulton Marston’s terms of favourable and unfavourable Environments\(^{447}\), whom do circumstances favour?

Even with such considerations, there can be no guarantee that you will pick the ‘winning side’.

These two factors also need to be taken into account if you decide you are going to change something in either the Environmental Structure or the Environmental Culture to make Life Conditions more favourable to you.

If you do decide you’re going to change the situation, then everything we’ve discussed in Chapters 8-12, 17 and 18 needs to be taken into account in devising your strategies. Again, framing your strategies through a *Well-Formed Outcome* may be helpful in deciding just what will work and how.

Changing people – especially if their dominant vMEMES are in peak nodal form and their Environmental Structure provides them with lots of power – can require huge amounts of dissonance.

And, unless their thinking gravitates into the 2\(^{nd}\) Tier, you’re not going to be able to do much about Choleric or Melancholic dispositions anyway.

Where people find their particular workplace situations chronically stressful, I usually advise them to change their job.

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25. Troubleshooting My Relationships

People like John Slater are unusual. Although he tried marriage – 3 times! – and had a go at various occupations, he chose to end up living alone in a cave on the seashore.\(^{448}\)

There are a few genuine hermits around – folks who really don’t want the company of other folks for any great length of time. They prefer remote isolation, usually out in the wilderness, and find any prolonged contact with other humans undesirable and sometimes difficult.

However, for most people, dealing with others – parents, children, partners, friends, family, work colleagues, strangers on the street, etc, etc – is not only an intrinsic part of daily life but it is, in fact, desirable. In part at least, the vast majority of us define ourselves in terms of our relationships with others.

Think of the Identities we assume in different Environments – eg: husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, parent, child, boss, employee, teacher, student, friend, citizen…. The majority of our Identities relate in some way to relationships with others.

Many of our challenges, confrontations, satisfactions and contentments are in some way related to others.

Roger McGuinn of the Sixties rock group, The Byrds, when explaining their seemingly-endless shifts in personnel, once reputedly said: ‘The Africans have a saying: ‘Being married is like asking for a fight.’ Well, being in a band is like that – asking for a fight.’\(^{449}\)

What McGuinn was enunciating is the inevitability of disharmony and conflict in any relationship.

Consider:-

- differing schemas worked by differing vMEMES/harmonics of vMEMES;
- differences in temperament;
- problems in attention and memory;
- gender differences in processing.

These all make some degree of disharmony unavoidable.

\(^{448}\)John Slater’s unusual life was documented in ‘Eccentrics’ – D Weeks & J James (Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1995).

Knowing Me, Knowing You

So don’t be surprised if your relationships have problems. To all intents and purposes, that’s normal!

Ichak Adizes writes: “Living means continuously solving problems. The fuller one’s life, the more complex the problems one must resolve.... To solve problems and have no new, increasingly complex problems emerge is equivalent to dying.”

In other words, the only people without problems are dead people!

However, while Adizes emphasises the normality of having problems, he is also at pains to stress the need to avoid problems becoming pathological.

So successful relationships of whatever type must have within them strategies for resolving at best and managing/controlling at worst disharmony and conflicts.

As we noted in Chapter 18, Adizes makes the important point that tensions in relationships are often natural and cannot as such be resolved. Or, if they are resolved, the resolution will only be temporary because the tension will naturally reoccur as Life Conditions change.

BLUE/ORANGE thinking in industry and commerce has spread in varying extents to many personal aspects of Western life. So, almost like the quality professional, we seek the perfect permanent way of doing things – of being. However, in many instances, there isn’t a perfect permanent solution and we would be better teaching people how to recognise needs, negotiate in an appropriate manner and at least balance the current demands.

That there must always be static, permanent solutions – if only we can find them! – is a 1st Tier delusion! Real solutions depend on understanding and then mutating in response to natural ebbs and flows.

It’s perhaps better to think of solutions as ‘working solutions’ or ‘works in progress’, since it will be rare a solution is truly ‘final’.

To enable people to get more out of their relationships, we have to find more ways of enabling them to access the full range of vMEMES and to self-actualise into 2nd Tier thinking, where appropriate.

Perhaps one of the reasons divorce rates in the Western world are soaring is that, GREEN having removed most of BLUE’s ‘moral’ societal pressure on couples to stay together, we have yet to teach marrying/cohabiting couples strategies for living together that enable them to self-actualise beyond their own position.

So many relationships end because the participants don’t know how

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

to manage their differences.

As a society, we can’t follow John Major’s infamous mantra of going ‘back to basics’\(^{451}\). As we said earlier, we can’t put the proverbial genie back in the bottle. However, we can teach people how to manage and adjust their relationships in Life Conditions that are not always supportive.

**21 Tips for Managing Relationship Disharmony**

The following are by no means exhaustive but make use of some of the key applications of what we have covered.

1. When commencing a new relationship of whatever kind, it’s always best to identify mutual (commonly-shared) Values that will enable all the participants to get something positive from it. The more you want out of a relationship, the more you need to make sure the values of the other(s) are compatible.

   To remind us again of St Paul’s saying: “Be not unequally yoked.” (2 Corinthians 6:14)

2. To have effective strategies for dealing with disharmony, you must have a good idea of the worth of the relationship to those participating in it.

   If the relationship isn’t worth enough to its participants, it will collapse because people walk away from it, rather than work to resolve disharmony.

   Therefore, if you want the relationship to survive disharmony, you must make sure it is of sufficient worth to all the participants – whatever their vMEmE Stack is.

3. When you are dissatisfied with a relationship, check whether the cause of the dissatisfaction is due to you, the other person(s) or both of you/more than one of you. When doing so, beware of your own attribution style and the attribution style of the other(s) – as discussed in Chapter 13. Who’s blaming who?

\(^{451}\)‘Back to basics’ was Prime Minister John Major’s theme at the 1993 Conservative Party Conference. It focussed on a return to ‘traditional values’ (PURPLE and BLUE) in the areas of law & order, education, public probity and family life. Major’s campaign foundered on a series of ‘ministerial sleaze’ revelations – including several Cabinet Ministers having extra-marital affairs. Ironically, Major himself was later revealed to have been an adulterer.
4. Be supportive of your partner(s), especially when they feel challenged or inadequate. Remember Stephen Covey’s concept of the ‘emotional bank account’ and keep investing. You never know when you will need to make some withdrawals – ie: you need the support of your partner(s).

    Men especially need to be supportive emotionally to the women in their lives. Reassurance of emotional worth is often needed before working out a plan of action.

5. Recognise the temperamental dispositions of yourself and your partner(s). Try to manage any unpleasant aspects of your own disposition and make allowances for your partner(s).

    For example, I recognise that I can be rather Choleric when not abstracted into 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier thinking – so I tend to make jokes about it. It prepares my wife for such behaviour when it happens and enables both of us to take some of the ‘emotional heat’ out of the situation.

6. Be careful of projecting something you dislike about yourself onto the other(s) and then finding fault with them for it.

    Sort yourself out before you start trying to sort others out.

7. Don’t beat your head against a brick wall trying to get someone to become something they can’t be or are not ready to be.

    For example, it’s completely unreasonable to expect GREEN thinking from somebody who’s never climbed the Spiral beyond RED.

    As for temperament, you’re stuck with the Introversion-Extroversion factor even into the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tier.

    Work with what is – as far as you can see it – rather than idealised schematic notions of what should be.

8. Think before you act!

    Before you tear into your partner(s), define your outcome. Just exactly what is it you hope to achieve?

    Putting an annoying partner down might be good for your RED ego; but what will it do for the health of your relationship?

9. Make allowances for attention, memory and data processing

\textsuperscript{452}See: ‘The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People’ – Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989).
problems.

There may be no malice in the other(s) not paying attention or forgetting, etc. What you easily Meta-State as a ‘snub’ of some kind actually may be due to the limitations of the human information handling systems.

Especial consideration needs to be given to these limitations in male-female interactions. Women need to make allowances for men often being unable to do more than one thing at a time.

Also be aware of the Assimilation-Contrast Effect skewing both your own Meta-Stating and that of your partner(s).

10. Remember you and the other(s) are functioning off Meta-Declared maps, NOT territory.

‘Respect the other person’s map of the world’ is one of the founding presuppositions of NLP Richard Bandler & John Grinder developed from the linguistic studies of Alfred Korzybski. Even if it’s nonsensical to you, it’s their reality. So you have to work with it.

To break out of the limited horizons of your own map and gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of others, use a self-actualising tool like the Meta-Mirror.

11. Don’t let little gaps grow into huge gulfs between you and your partner(s).

Because we Meta-State, little differences can easily become distorted into big ones – with all kinds of schematic perceptions and other ‘little hurts’ added in to create an enormous muddle.

It’s better to sort out little problems as they occur, rather than let them fester.

To quote from the Old Testament: “Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that are ruin the vineyards...” (Song of Solomon 2:15)

12. Accept that relationships of whatever kind carry within them the potential for stress – and frequently do produce stress! Use your understanding of stress – see Chapter 14 – both to help you

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Knowing Me, Knowing You

manage your stress and to help the other(s) manage theirs.

If you and the other(s) can approach the difficulties less stressed and more calm, you’re more likely to arrive at workable solutions.

Remember some stress – Eustress\textsuperscript{455} – is positively enabling!

13. Set the negatives in the context of positives. People, particularly if they tend to run BLUE Move-Away-From Meta-Programmes, tend to concentrate on the negatives. Get a sense of balance and greater commitment to the relationship by emphasising the positives for all participants.

14. Ask whether Nominal Level adaptation is appropriate – do the Identities match the Environment? Can inappropriate Identities be moved through work at the Values & Beliefs level – eg: if you love me, you’ll see yourself as my wife/husband? If inappropriate Identities can’t be shifted, walking away from the relationship may be the best course.

15. Question whether the Life Conditions in that Environment are conducive to the responses you want from the other(s) – another Bandler & Grinder presupposition is: ‘The meaning of communication is the response you get’.

Bearing in mind the principles of Reciprocal Determinism, if Behaviour is not as you would want it from the other(s), what can you do to make the Environment more favourable?

16. Remembering that vMEMES have needs, consider the ‘health’ of the vMEMES in the relationship.

\textit{How is \textcolor{purple}{PURPLE} doing? Are we loyal and safe with each other?}

\textit{How’s \textcolor{red}{RED}? Can we express ourselves in this relationship?}

\textit{Is there any fun to be had?}

\textit{How’s \textcolor{blue}{BLUE}? Do we understand our expectations of each other and what this is about?}

Etc.

17. Identify which vMEMES are driving both you and the other(s), what conflict modes are being used and select your conflict management style on that basis.

\textsuperscript{455} \textit{Stress without Distress} – Hans Selye (Lippincott, 1980)
Knowing Me, Knowing You

**Collaboration** may be a laudable aim if you and the other(s) are functioning in the 2nd Tier but it’s unlikely to work below ORANGE. For example, RED simply won’t stand for anything that allows someone else to gain power (unless it perceives it gains more power in the process) – though it might be willing to accept a **Compromise** if it knows it can’t beat you. PURPLE doesn’t expect any voice as such in decision-making – remember the partial match with William Moulton Marston’s Submission! – so **Competition** may actually be the best way of dealing with its **Avoidance** style.

18. Use a tool such as *A Well-Formed Outcome* to reality-check your objectives and to anticipate how you can align the objectives of the other(s) and compensate where possible for their losses.

19. Distinguish between what’s wrong (Behaviour) and the person (Identity) – unless there is a justified need to beat the other person.

   Destroying someone’s sense of Identity should never be attempted unless you are sure you can build them back up with a new positive, stronger Identity. Only then can it be justified ethically. Such a strategy should only be implemented with extreme caution. It is difficult to do and, in the unlikely event such a strategy really is required, it needs to be planned carefully.

20. If the relationship has value but you and the other(s) really can’t find a workable position, don’t be afraid to use a counsellor or mediator of some description. Often a fresh pair of eyes, unencumbered by emotional baggage…

   Men generally find it harder to seek help from people outside the relationship – especially when it’s a male-female relationship.

21. Recognise when a relationship is at its end. Don’t keep on trying to save something that can’t be saved. Rather, work on a strategy to end the relationship as gracefully and as positively as possible for all concerned.
The Value of Relationships

For all their complications and the stresses they bring, relationships are a necessary and invaluable part of life. Society simply cannot function without relationships.

Men and women need each other for sex, making babies and the heightened emotional intimacy that goes with a successful sexual and parenting relationship. Friends need each other to confide in and share activities. Children need school teachers; and, without children, teachers are redundant. Employers need employees to carry out work; and workers need employers so they can earn a living. Doctors need patients as much as patients need them. Police officers need lawbreakers to justify their existence. Whether lawbreakers need police officers is a moot point; however, the vulnerable certainly need them!

From the merely functional – working for my employer is simply about earning money to buy food and pay the rent – to the emotionally complex - I tell my best friend my deepest secrets – we need relationships.

Clearly, then, it is beneficial to look after our relationships as much as we can, for the benefit of all participants.

A number of studies have shown how much emotionally-close relationships and support networks of friends and associates contribute to satisfaction with life and personal well-being, both psychologically and physiologically.\(^456\)

However, the more emotionally-involved the relationship, the more complex the ‘looking-after’ is. Except in times of severe economic recession, I should be able to leave one job I’m not happy in and find another which will provide at least a basic living. Divorcing an ‘unsatisfactory’ spouse and finding a ‘better’ partner is, for most people, a far more daunting consideration.

And children…? Such is that BEIGE/PURPLE driver of genetic heritage that parents will often put themselves out at considerable cost for offspring they will actually acknowledge in their more lucid moments to be nothing short of loathsome!

Relationships are incredibly complex affairs of varying and often shifting patterns. Even the ‘happiness-at-work’ condition has been shown to be highly dependent on how well you get on with your work

colleagues.

Relationships need nurturing and looking after – a little like a garden. What is good and wholesome needs water and nutrition so that it will grow stronger. What is threatening – the weeds – needs neutralising or eradicating.

‘One-size-fits-all’ solutions are dangerous and can often reinforce negative perceptions when they fail. What is needed is an analysis which respects the uniqueness of each interaction in each relationship and takes into account the Life Conditions, the vMEMES and the Meta-States. Only then can solutions, from complete resolution to termination of the relationship, be designed which address the needs of all the participants.

With the maps, the models and the tools outlined in this book, you can now set out to manage and hopefully develop your relationships positively, ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’.
Concluding Words…?

So, there you have it.

Up to 8 hierarchically emergent ‘mini-selves’ (vMEMES) running a selfplex of biologically-embedded ideas (schemas) which shape our interaction (via Meta-Programmes) with the external world (memes in the Environment) to make meaning (Meta-States). And all of this is influenced by genetically-determined temperament – especially before the emergence of the 7th (YELLOW) self.

And that’s just you!

Everyone else has – or, except for those with brain damage or deficiency, has the potential to have – the same set-up as you. Only it will be structured differently, according to what nature birthed in them and the experiences they have undergone (Life Conditions). So some will be quite like you –and some will be very different. With a possibly infinite number of variations in between.

At least, now you have a pretty good understanding of why you are like you are and why they are like they are. And what you might be able to do about it.

The question is: what are you going to do with all this information?

Christopher Cooke, one of the trainers who trained me, once told me: “Vision without Action is just a dream. Action without Vision passes the time. Action and Vision can change the world.”

Hopefully, as you’ve worked your way through the extensive body of knowledge in this book, you’ve calibrated yourself, others you interact with and the relationships you have with them.

Now, with the understanding you have gained, you are in a position to make changes and improvements to your own life and to your relationships with others. You may be able to use some of the strategies I’ve outlined in ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ to do that. It could be that, with this understanding, you can make better use of strategies you’ve got from elsewhere. Or, from the understanding, you can develop completely new strategies that fit your Life Conditions better.

It could be that you simply want to share the understanding with others to help them take greater control of their lives.

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457 Hidden Resources (Change Management) Ltd course, hosted by Business Link Wakefield & District in Ossett, near Wakefield, UK, in May 1998. The origin of the statement is unknown.
Knowing Me, Knowing You

To learn more, in addition to all the works referenced in the text, I have placed a list of ‘web resources’ at the end of this book. To look at broader applications of *Integrated SocioPsychology*, there is a wide range of materials on www.integratedsociopsychology.net - including contributions from others working towards an integrated approach to the behavioural sciences. The site includes articles on practical applications of the approach, technical articles and ‘Viewpoints’ on current hot topics.


Training and coaching programmes can be customised for organisational in-house workshops.

If you need help with either an organisational issue or a more personal matter, I can be contacted on (+44) (0)1423 819170 or e-mail: keith@integratedsociopsychology.net. To learn more about the services I provide, visit www.keitherice.co.uk.

I must stress that I am far from being the only consultant/therapist with this level of knowledge and understanding. You may well be able to find others who are closer to you or whose style or expertise is more suited to your particular needs/preferences.

**The Bigger Picture**

*Knowing Me, Knowing You* and the *Integrated SocioPsychology* approach have immense implications for politics, education, business, policing, health services, community relations and just about every other aspect of what it is to be human and to be part of a society.

The singular approach of ‘one size fits all’ of whatever flavour is demonstrated to be flawed. How can one size possibly fit 8 ‘mini-selves’ related to 3 dimensions of temperament and Meta-Stating differently from millions of available memes?

Politicians, business leaders, police chief constables, headteachers, regeneration project managers, armed forces commanders and anyone else with responsibility for other people all need to work with the maps of human diversity that *Integrated SocioPsychology* provides.

They must focus on ensuring all needs at all levels are met as far as possible in ways appropriate to the recipients. For example, no more failed back-to-work schemes from BLUE/ORANGE mindsets and enshrining BLUE/ORANGE memes targeted at people whose thinking is centred in the PURPLE/RED zones!

With the information provided in this book, there can be no more
excuses for repeated failures. Now, we must hone our understanding to be ever more precise in the design of our interventions, strategies and therapies.

I am greatly interested in the design of more effective social engineering, business support and education projects and would like to hear from those interested in using the integrated approach.

The great ‘get-out’ for researchers in the behavioural and health sciences when faced with the inexplicable has frequently been ‘individual differences’. This is now more than partly explained. Many individual differences are simply the work of different vMEMEs influenced by temperamental dispositions and using different schemas.

I am greatly interested in working with academics to carry out research to verify and strengthen the integrated approach. This book also acknowledges the need for further research in several areas. Call me!!

To clinical psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists of all persuasions, I say: you work with some of the most vulnerable people in society but many of the assumptions about human nature your disciplines have worked with in the past are revealed now to be flawed.

Please – please! – use the knowledge and understanding provided through Integrated SocioPsychology to apply your skills and expertise with greater precision.

There is a saying to the effect that great knowledge brings with it great responsibility. To all readers of this book: you now have great knowledge; use it wisely to make a positive difference both for yourselves and for others.

With the knowledge you now have, how can you not want to make a difference?

I’ll finish here with some excerpts from a song by Paul Kantner of Jefferson Airplane/Jefferson Starship, one of the most radicalised of his generation of songwriters….

“So there she sat with a diamond bullet in the centre of her heart
Not a mile from here there are people livin’ ten to a room
Not a mile from here and a few streets further on
They’re sleepin’ in doorways – boxes – some of them children

...her eyes compelling
Compelling me to dreams
‘Go out and change the world’ (she said)
Compelling me to action
Knowing Me, Knowing You

...and I’m drawn to action”
Copyright © 1995, 1998 Little Dragon Music

Go out and change the world!

458 Adapted with permission from the album, ‘Windows of Heaven’ – Jefferson Starship (CMC International Records, 1999).
Web Resources

In addition to the materials referenced in the footnotes throughout this book, readers are encouraged to visit the following web sites to further their knowledge of aspects of Integrated SocioPsychology…

- Integrated SocioPsychology
  www.integratedsociopsychology.net
- Dr Susan Blackmore
  www.susanblackmore.co.uk
- Meme Central
  www.memecentral.com
- H J Eysenck (tribute & resources site)
  http://freespace.virgin.net/darrin.evans/
- Robert Dilts
  www.nlpu.com
- Encyclopaedia of Systemic NLP & NLP New Coding (online)
  http://nlpuniversitypress.com
- Clare W Graves (tribute & resources site)
  www.clarewgraves.com
- Spiral Dynamics
  www.spiraldynamics.com
- Spiral Dynamics Integral (Dr Don Beck)
  www.spiraldynamics.net
- NVC Consulting (Christopher Cowan & Dr Natasha Todorovic)
  www.spiraldynamics.org
- Inscape Publishing/DiSC
  www.inscapepublishing.com/prod_disc.asp
- Team Resources/DiSC
  www.nsvight-consulting.com/teamresources/training/disc.htm
- Insitutes of Neuro-Semantics (Dr L Michael Hall)
  www.neurosemantics.com
- Rodger Bailey/LAB Profile
  www.labprofile.com
- Thinking Styles (Fiona Beddoes-Jones)
  www.cognitivefitness.co.uk
- Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
- Dr Ralph Kilmann
  www.kilmann.com
Index

This is an incomplete index of topics and psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, neuroscientists and biologists whose work I have drawn upon for ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’. The only footnotes indexed are authors whose work I have used but not named in the main text. No charts or diagrams are referenced.

1

11 September 2001..............53
1st Order Change118, 122, 127, 143
1st Tier ..... 80, 96, 97, 98, 100, 131, 136, 147, 193, 196, 202, 213, 243, 246, 290, 293, 321, 336

2

2nd Order Change ...............143
2nd Order Evolution 118, 122, 124, 125
2nd Order Revolution .... 124, 126

4

4 humours...............130, 131, 135
Choleric130, 131, 135, 137, 190, 301, 304, 334, 338
Melancholic...28, 130, 131, 135, 137, 182, 190, 334
Phlegmatic...130, 131, 135, 233, 326
Sanguine ..........130, 131, 135
4 Quadrants............... 48, 70, 329

A

A Well-Formed Outcome 217, 222, 223, 329, 334, 341
abnormal behaviour...............63
Abramson, Lynn .................178
Adizes, Ichak............... 245, 336
adrenaline 35, 158, 187, 189, 190, 191
Afghanistan ........................242
Ainsworth, Mary...........81, 82, 302
Alam, Faria...................... 273, 274
alertness......................... 191, 269
Allen, M G..........................39
Allison, Ralph.................... 170
Altman, I & D Taylor........ 261
amygdala 11, 17, 35, 54, 55, 86, 92, 110, 268, 301
androgens ....................... 37, 258
animal rights activism .......... 93
Archer, R L......................... 261
Argyle, M........................ 342
Argyris, Chris..................... 118
As If Frame...................... 204
ascending reticular activating system 36, 54
Assimilation-Contrast Effect 243, 252, 305, 334, 339
Atkinson, Richard & Richard Shiffrin..................... 172, 225
Attachment Theory .............. 278
attachment types ............... 82
Ambivalent ...................... 82
Avoidant ......................... 82, 83
Secure .......................... 82, 286
attitude ................ 19, 67, 93, 110, 169, 248, 280
attribution ...... 86, 87, 176, 177, 178, 179, 182, 183, 197, 262, 337
Attribution Theory 176, 177, 178, 262
autonomic nervous system
parasympathetic branch ...... 189
Knowing Me, Knowing You

body language. 22, 23, 24, 204, 213
Boeree, George C.................. 39, 42
Bond, James........................... 280
books................................. 1, 16, 25, 259, 262
Booth-Kewley, Stephanie &
Howard Friedman.............. 190, 327
Bosma, F.............................. 300
Bower, G H, J B Black & T J
Turner................................. 24
Bowlby, John.................. 169, 278, 303
brain .... 3, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 25,
26, 30, 35, 36, 42, 47, 48, 54,
70, 78, 103, 104, 109, 129, 143,
166, 171, 172, 187, 258, 264,
329, 333, 344
brain damage..................... 126
Branson, Richard.................. 93
Britain................................. 3, 9, 25, 78, 279
Buddhism............................ 3, 102
bureaucracy.............. 88, 324, 332, 333
Bush, George W............... 15
Buss, David........................ 33, 284

C

Cameron-Bandler, Lesley........ 206
Carter, Sue & Lowell Getz...... 278
celebrity sex...................... 273, 274
central nervous system ........ 36
cerebellum............................ 13
cerebral cortex .... 11, 13, 17, 36, 54,
129, 131, 258
frontal lobe..... 11, 17, 54, 92, 131
Chandler, Michael.............. 310
change .... 19, 20, 26, 27, 29, 46, 47,
48, 51, 55, 56, 60, 87, 105, 109,
110, 115, 117, 118, 123, 125,
127, 141, 154, 186, 189, 193,
196, 198, 242, 245, 250, 252,
289, 307, 334, 336
Channel 4.......................... 274
Charles & Diana.................. 277
Charvet, Shelle Rose .205, 206, 212
Chihal, Jane......................... 270
childhood.... 32, 45, 246, 288, 312,
313, 318
children.26, 28, 32, 81, 85, 86, 114,
194, 195, 212, 236, 262, 275,
276, 285, 289, 291, 295, 296,
297, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307,
309, 312, 313, 314, 316, 317,
318, 327, 342
China.............................. 91, 224, 251
Chomsky, Naom................ 206
Christianity .... 3, 15, 154, 250, 275,
277
chromosomes.................... 277
XX................................. 258
XY.................................. 33
XYY................................. 33
Circle of Concern..... 177, 178, 182,
329
Circle of Excellence.......... 29
Circle of Influence .... 177, 178, 329
Clark, Margaret & Judson Mills291
cognitive construct............. 16
Cognitive Triad. 178, 179, 182, 184
Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy
.................................. 140, 183
Coleman, John............... 310
communication .. 22, 224, 230, 259,
260, 281, 302, 340
Comparison Level ................. 290
Comparison Level Alternative.. 291
complex-equivalence............ 174
complexity ... 53, 58, 65, 70, 90, 91,
96, 101, 103, 106, 136, 140,
176, 211, 250, 252, 281, 318,
334, 336
compulsion 95, 136, 137, 138, 171,
316
concordance rates........... 276, 277
conflict management.198, 230, 340
conflict modes.. 198, 230, 231, 242,
291, 340
Accommodation .. 236, 237, 238,
240, 251, 253, 291, 300
Avoidance... 231, 233, 246, 291,
341
Collaboration........ 239, 241, 253,
256, 341
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Conciliator (Compromise) 238, 239, 241, 243, 244, 253, 291, 341
Flamethrower (Competition) 234, 235, 236, 239, 243, 244, 247, 250, 291, 292, 328, 341
Ideologue ......236, 243, 244, 328
Moderate ......147, 237, 243, 244
Pragmatist (Opportunism) ....91, 135, 238, 239, 243, 244, 250, 291, 328
Zealot (Paternalism) ....147, 154, 157, 236, 244, 248, 323, 328
conformity .....65, 88, 90, 115, 258, 279
conscience ........63, 162, 169, 305
conscious awareness ...16, 19, 217, 225
consciousness .....6, 14, 56, 61, 101, 167, 172, 189, 225
consequences ...28, 63, 84, 87, 105, 111, 126, 158, 197, 239, 247, 280, 283, 305
Conservatives .................25
Constanzo, P R & M E Shaw ....315
control ..37, 71, 106, 178, 198, 261, 262, 269, 283, 284, 304, 329, 344
Cooke, Christopher ..............344
Cooper, H M .........................266
CORAL vMEME ............70, 103
corpus callosum ...............259
cortisol ................................187
counselling ...................7, 122, 124
counsellors 5, 58, 94, 109, 289, 341
Coursesen, Jerry 85, 92, 233, 268, 301
Covey, Stephen ....1, 177, 178, 216, 270, 329, 338
Craik, Fergus .......................227
cross-cultural studies ...........33
Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly ....21, 30, 97, 189, 293, 294, 329
culture 4, 49, 59, 99, 123, 297, 332, 333

D
Dalton, Katharina ..................269
Darwin, Charles ....................276
Davidson, Richard ..............131
Dawkins, Richard .............61, 72, 306
Deeper Level Adaptation. 105, 106, 115, 186, 196
DeKlerk, F W ......................71
Dell’Ohio, Nancy ............273, 274
DeLozier, Judith .......29, 48, 217, 254, 256
Department of Education & Skills ................................314
Depression .7, 21, 29, 78, 168, 171, 178, 182, 281
Descartes, René ...........12, 13, 14
deviation .....................90, 251, 252
Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders ...........269
Diathesis-Stress .............277, 279
Dilts, Robert ..2, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 90, 109, 244, 254, 256
Dimensions of Personality 2, 34, 46, 129, 131, 135, 136, 157, 196, 200, 206, 216
DISC ..........44, 135, 141, 157, 172
Compliance ...44, 132, 135, 157, 213
Dominance ....44, 132, 135, 157, 213
Inducement ...44, 132, 135, 157, 213
Submission ....44, 132, 135, 157, 213, 341
discipline ..51, 52, 53, 85, 193, 194, 249, 305, 317, 318, 321
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>92, 93, 240, 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disorders</td>
<td>7, 36, 39, 168, 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dispositionalist</td>
<td>176, 177, 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative Identity Disorder</td>
<td>169, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dissonance</td>
<td>26, 115, 117, 118, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 154, 186, 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distortion</td>
<td>39, 98, 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>5, 222, 345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divorce</td>
<td>78, 160, 257, 273, 281, 290, 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dualism</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck, Steve</td>
<td>273, 290, 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysmenorrhea</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3, 15, 251, 286, 288, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easthope, Anthony</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egalitarianism</td>
<td>241, 251, 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego</td>
<td>62, 63, 64, 65, 162, 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkind, David</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emergence</td>
<td>65, 66, 85, 86, 87, 90, 92, 93, 95, 114, 122, 125, 128, 132, 136, 137, 143, 147, 162, 170, 171, 194, 246, 268, 297, 301, 304, 307, 309, 318, 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emler, Nicholas</td>
<td>248, 314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional connectedness</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional distance</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional meaning</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional response</td>
<td>11, 17, 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional state</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empedocles</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Culture</td>
<td>107, 109, 110, 125, 282, 291, 329, 332, 333, 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Structure</td>
<td>107, 109, 110, 125, 282, 291, 329, 332, 333, 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmentalism</td>
<td>93, 251, 266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erikson, Erik</td>
<td>113, 297, 300, 303, 304, 305, 307, 309, 310, 312, 315, 318, 319, 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eriksson, Sven Goran</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>15, 94, 280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eustress</td>
<td>188, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>33, 36, 39, 42, 46, 128, 132, 136, 137, 141, 168, 178, 192, 206, 216, 301, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eysenck, Hans J.</td>
<td>2, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 43, 44, 46, 54, 67, 129, 131, 135, 136, 137, 140, 157, 158, 168, 190, 196, 197, 200, 206, 247, 258, 267, 293, 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eysenck, Michael W</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falklands War</td>
<td>21, 33, 80, 81, 84, 113, 162, 222, 223, 280, 295, 306, 312, 315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>26, 184, 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>24, 35, 82, 95, 136, 137, 138, 162, 171, 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feelings</td>
<td>37, 47, 167, 202, 205, 254, 260, 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>femininity</td>
<td>37, 136, 260, 265, 266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feminism</td>
<td>92, 166, 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fight-or-flight response</td>
<td>35, 110, 158, 191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Five ........................................ 274
flatlanders .................................. 14
flexibility ... 97, 207, 242, 293, 294, 332
Flowers, Vince ............................. 70
Football Association .................. 27, 273
Fore .......................................... 252
Foreclosure .................................. 59, 112
Frank, Robert ............................... 269
Freedman, D G & B Keller ............ 32
Freeman, E W, S J Sondheimer & K Rickels .......... 270
Freud, Anna ................................. 7, 289
Freud, Sigmund 5, 7, 62, 63, 65, 88, 137, 159, 162, 165, 166, 169, 195, 238, 272, 297, 300, 303, 304, 305, 312
Freudian .. 2, 66, 161, 167, 183, 289
Friedman, Meyer & Ray Rosenman ........................................ 189, 190
Fromm, Eric .................................. 306
Fuligni, Andrew & Jacquelynne Eccles ......................... 316
fundamentalism .................................. 15, 53

G
Galen, Claudius .................................. 130
gametes ........................................ 275
Gamma Trap .... 123, 124, 125, 126, 184, 191, 197
Gates, Bill ...................... 91, 93, 250
Geier, John ................................. 44
Geller, Uri ..................................... 14
gender .... 78, 93, 261, 262, 263, 264, 269, 296, 335
gene 17, 30, 72, 262, 275, 276, 277, 279, 295
General Adaptation Syndrome ..189
genetic replication ..................... 72
 genetics .... 25, 32, 39, 46, 126, 166, 167, 200, 247, 275, 276, 281, 344
Genome Lag ............................... 187
genotype ...................... 200, 259, 297
Gestalt Cycle .... 115, 123, 124, 126, 187
Giannini, A J, W A Price, R H Loiselle & M D Giannini .... 269
Gilligan, Carol .............................. 296
God ........... 3, 4, 43, 49, 53, 102, 162
Goffman, Erving ......................... 50, 61
Goldstein, Kurt ............................ 95
Goleman, Daniel ......................... 6
Gore, Al ...................................... 15
Gorton, Steve ............................... 49, 162, 165
Gottesman, Irving I .................. 38, 166
Graves Model ............................. 2, 65
Gravesian .. 67, 70, 71, 97, 137, 171, 212, 329, 332
GREEN vMEME71, 72, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 102, 113, 136, 147, 156, 157, 158, 166, 168, 179, 183, 204, 205, 211, 213, 230, 236, 238, 239, 240, 241, 243, 249, 251, 252, 253, 257, 264, 265, 266, 267, 280, 281, 282, 283, 291, 293, 315, 317, 323, 324, 328, 332, 333, 336, 338
Grinder, John 26, 29, 161, 202, 204, 254, 256, 339, 340
Group-Splitting Hypothesis .......... 37
guilt ............. 88, 113, 147, 160, 175
Gur, Ruben ................................. 258
Gurian, Michael ......................... 259

H
Hall, L Michael ... 2, 172, 175, 183, 202
Hall. Granville Stanley ............. 310
hallucinations ......................... 38
Harris, T O ................................. 315
Harvey, O J ..................... 76, 81
Hatfield, Elaine ......................... 290
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Haynes, H, B L White & R Held ..................................................300
Hazan, Cindy & Phil Shaver ......81, 278, 286, 303
Head, Henry..............................................17

Heard, Gerald........................................76
Heat magazine ..............................273
Heider, Fritz..............176, 178, 262
Helmholtz, Hermann von ......14
Hepper, Peter ..............................300
Herold, Max..............................49, 50
hierarchy. 48, 53, 55, 65, 128, 195, 250, 296
Hierarchy..............72, 78, 136, 257
Hierarchy of Needs ....72, 95, 102, 127, 246, 278
Higher Authority......236, 246, 250, 333
hippocampus..............................35
Hippocrates..............................130
Hoffman, Martin ..............266
Holmes. Gordan Morgan.........17
homicide...............................168
hormones ....37, 49, 110, 162, 165, 166, 187, 258, 267, 268, 269, 278, 279
Hornner, M............................266
hostility..........................37, 100, 190, 254
Hughes, Charles ..............70
human behaviour ..........2
human nature ....1, 2, 13, 80, 346
Hunt, David ......................76, 81
Hypnotherapy ........124, 125, 138
hypothalamus..35, 54, 55, 110, 187
275, 276, 282, 306, 310, 335, 340, 341
Identity crisis ..............310
Identity Diffusion.........58, 113
immune system ..............187, 189
Impulse Control ........37, 46, 190, 206, 233, 246, 263, 291, 301
In Time.................................91, 159
India.................................251
infants ......22, 32, 81, 82, 286, 298, 301, 302, 303, 304, 312
infidelity ...........272, 273, 276, 282
inhibition ..............36, 129, 156
Inner Child Therapy.........288
innovation..........................281
Instability34, 35, 37, 39, 42, 45, 46, 131, 132, 137, 142, 159, 190, 197, 206
integral self...10, 11, 19, 32, 42, 79
integrated approach ....1, 2, 65, 345, 346
Integrated SocioPsychology 2, 3, 4, 5, 139, 345, 346
interconnectedness.......49, 96, 101
internalisation ....16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 111
Introversion 33, 36, 39, 42, 46, 128, 131, 132, 136, 137, 142, 158, 168, 178, 183, 190, 192, 206, 216, 249, 301, 325, 328, 338
Iran.............................................15
Iraq..............................................85, 158, 242
Islam.................................3, 15, 53, 275
ISO 9000 ......................................211, 236

I

Id 62, 63, 64, 65, 84, 88, 89, 90, 112, 137, 159, 162, 165, 167, 169, 183, 272, 305, 312
ideas .....16, 19, 21, 22, 25, 30, 324
Identity....50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 85, 105, 106, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 123, 125, 139, 162, 165, 170, 186, 234, 237, 240, 241, 244, 252,

J

Jahoda, Marie ..............171, 196
James, Tad & Wyatt Woodsmall92, 184
James, William ..............200
Javitt. Daniel & Joseph Coyle..167
Jefferson Airplane/Jefferson Starship.................346
Jesus.................................235
Johnson, Susan...............278, 282
Johnson, Ulrika...............273
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Jones, Edward & K E Davis ....176
Joseph, Rhawn ..................260
Judaism ........................................ 3
Jung, Carl Gustav ....17, 33, 37, 39, 128, 167, 265

K
Kagan, Jerome ...32, 35, 39, 43, 44, 46, 301, 302
Kama Sutra ..........................272
Kant, Emmanuel ..............16
Kantner, Paul ..................346
Karadzic, Radovan ..............123
Karasek, Robert ................327
Karney, Ben & Tom Bradbury ...293
Kilman, Ralph ..................237
Kinds, Egbert ..................49
Kinnock, Neil ...................25
Knowledge ... 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 107, 112, 113, 125, 126, 186, 257
Kohlberg, Lawrence ....101, 103, 195, 296, 297, 303, 304, 305, 307, 309, 310, 318, 321
Korzybski, Alfred ..........26, 183, 339

L
Labour ................................25
language22, 28, 202, 203, 254, 259, 304, 307
Lavan, Ian ..................125, 126
Lazarus, Richard ...191, 192, 194
learned helplessness ............178
learning.... ....118, 122, 126, 137, 307, 309, 321
Learning Loops .....................118
Double Loop learning ........122
Single Loop learning ........122
LeDoux, Joseph .............35, 54
Levels of Learning ..........48, 118
Level 0 ..........................122
Level 1 ..........................122

Level 2 ..........................122, 126
Level 3 ..........................124, 126, 166, 314
limbic system ....11, 13, 35, 54, 55, 92, 159
limiting beliefs ..............28, 306
Linton, Martin...............25
Lochman, John ..............305
Loehlin, J C & R C Nichols ....32
Loevinger, Jane ..............72
Love Quiz ...........81, 278, 286, 303
Lynch, Dudley ...............70

M
Macfarlane, A J ..................300
MacGeorge, Erina ..............261
Maitland, K A & J R Goldman ...195
Major, John ..................337
Mandela, Nelson .......71
Manic Depression ..............169
Marcia, James 58, 59, 60, 112, 113, 310
Margolis, Bruce & William Kroes ..................327
marriage 78, 94, 257, 273, 275, 277, 280, 281, 286, 287, 335
Marston, William Moulton .. 44, 45, 72, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 141, 157, 158, 170, 192, 194, 213, 334, 341
masculinity 37, 136, 258, 260, 265, 266
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Maslow, Abraham....72, 78, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 126, 136, 170, 246, 257, 277
Maslowian ........ 161, 193, 246, 280
Matteson, Michael & John
Ivancevich..................................327
McCartney, Paul .........................93
McGuinn, Roger .......................335
McGuire, M & A Troisi.........188
McNab, Peter ...6, 48, 49, 195, 212, 223, 306
Mead, Margaret.........................260
medication ............ 47, 171, 196
medulla.................................36
Meilman, P W..........................58
memeplex .................................. 15, 25
memetic battleground.............25, 42
memetic reinforcement ..........25
memetically vulnerable ..........28
memics.................................15, 21, 30, 71, 329
memory 17, 54, 172, 225, 227, 259, 335, 338
long-term memory ...... 225, 227
Multi-store Model of Memory ..................................225, 227
short-term memory ....... 224, 225, 227
Working Memory Model ....227
men...21, 37, 72, 78, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 271, 274, 275, 277, 280, 281, 284, 338, 339
menstrual cycle ......................49, 267
mental health problems..28, 37, 43, 63, 162, 165, 166, 170, 171, 247
mental maps..........................182
Meta-Mirror..... 109, 254, 255, 256, 289, 339
Meta-Model29, 183, 184, 190, 191, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 212, 213
Meta-Programme ...84, 88, 90, 117, 154, 205, 206, 207, 211, 212, 213, 227, 245, 250, 252, 291, 323, 324, 340, 344
Meta-States.. 2, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 190, 191, 192, 197, 200, 202, 203, 204, 216, 222, 224, 225, 245, 255, 263, 306, 339, 343, 344, 345
Metcalf, Andy & Martin
Humphries.........................275
Microsoft.........................91, 93, 250
Windows......................... 91, 250
midbrain.................................36
Middle East.........................3, 288
Miller, George A..............224, 225
Milojevic, Slobodan.................. 123
mind.12, 19, 48, 49, 62, 63, 65, 79, 242
mind virus.............................15, 277
Miners Strike..............................9
Mistaken Belief Visualisation....83
Miyake, Kazuo, Chen Shing-jen &
Joseph Campos......................301
Moghaddam, Fathali..............286
Moir, Anne & David Jessel.....258
monogamy.....................274, 275, 276
monozygotic twins...........200, 276
moodiness..........................269
moral reasoning .....................296

Conventional296, 305, 306, 318, 319
Post-Conventional...............296
Pre-Conventional.......296, 303
morality structure.................93
Moratorium.....................60, 112, 310
Morningstar, Jim.................70
Moses.............................87
mother 32, 262, 282, 300, 301, 302, 320
motivational systems.............65
movies...........................16, 25, 262
Knowing Me, Knowing You

multiple Identities ..............................60
Multiple Personality Disorder...170
multiple selves ......................10, 62
Murdoch, Rupert ......................25
Murray, Henry .........................71

N

Neuro-Linguistic Programming3, 4, 6, 26, 28, 29, 45, 46, 47, 48, 84, 92, 109, 124, 126, 138, 140, 161, 205, 207, 217, 256, 289, 339
Neurological Levels .. 2, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 90, 105, 106, 125, 172, 175, 196, 244, 257, 275, 291
neurological systems 65, 66, 78, 83, 103, 136, 171
neurology........48, 53, 102, 126
Neurology.........................4, 35
neuronal activity.................47
Neuroscience ..............2, 11, 171, 258
neurosis ..............36, 39, 43, 45, 304
Neuroticism ......34, 35, 36, 43, 136, 137, 140, 162, 171, 190, 197, 216, 249, 269, 291, 301, 302
neurotransmitters......110, 162, 165, 166, 187
New Guinea ..................252, 260
Nominal Level Adaptation .....105, 106, 115, 186, 196, 340
noradrenaline ....35, 110, 187, 189
North America ..............15, 94
Now magazine ..................273

O

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder .........................167, 168, 304
Oedipus Complex ..................305
oestrogen .................49, 267, 268
Olcott, Henry Steel .............14
Old Testament ..................339
One True Way ....88, 93, 154, 179, 237, 253
one-size-fits-all ...........5, 343, 345
Ortiz, Peña de ..................17
Osborn, Alex ..................221
oxytocin..................278

P

Palios, Mark ..................273
Palmonari, A, M I Pomerberri & E Kirchler ..................315
Papez, James W .................35
Parks, Penny ..............83, 288
Parsons, Talcott ..................260
Pavlonian ..................300
Pavlov, Ivan ..........129, 131, 137
Pease, Allan .................23
peers ..................24
Penfield, Wilder ..............17
Perектueuch ..................87
Perceptual Positions ........ 254
Perls, Fritz ..................115
permissiveness ...............93
personality 8, 13, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 46, 128, 140, 154, 169, 170, 200, 231, 303, 304

k
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Lloyd &amp; Margaret</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phantom Limb Syndrome</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phares, Jerry, Elaine Ritchie &amp; William Davis</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenotype</td>
<td>200, 259, 297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips, Angela</td>
<td>260, 261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philosophers</td>
<td>64, 72, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>10, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physiological arousal</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piaget, Jean</td>
<td>16, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineal gland</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinker, Steven</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure Principle</td>
<td>62, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol Pot</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollack, J M</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polygyny</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popper, Karl</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pornography</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porrit, Jonathan</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posh &amp; Becks</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postrational thought</td>
<td>14, 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>25, 49, 51, 54, 84, 85, 106, 112, 147, 149, 162, 204, 233, 234, 236, 244, 248, 249, 250, 315, 317, 328, 334, 341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power pecking order</td>
<td>84, 248, 252, 315, 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predisposition</td>
<td>38, 43, 277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreMenstrual Dysphoric Disorder</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreMenstrual Syndrome</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preModern</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presuppositions</td>
<td>13, 19, 26, 49, 293, 340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Directive</td>
<td>171, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem families</td>
<td>85, 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem-solving</td>
<td>95, 241, 261, 262, 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures</td>
<td>83, 89, 139, 318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progesterone</td>
<td>49, 267, 268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projection</td>
<td>7, 289, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promiscuity</td>
<td>273, 274, 276, 277, 279, 281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestantism</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proverbs</td>
<td>23, 117, 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prozac</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>10, 37, 39, 64, 167, 183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalysis</td>
<td>124, 162, 165, 166, 288, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytic Theory</td>
<td>63, 64, 162, 165, 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological growth</td>
<td>46, 47, 81, 136, 297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological health</td>
<td>50, 114, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological maps</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological thought</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychologists</td>
<td>5, 6, 33, 34, 39, 60, 62, 64, 67, 72, 162, 165, 166, 191, 253, 260, 273, 278, 327, 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 24, 34, 39, 64, 183, 200, 275, 276, 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviourism</td>
<td>2, 45, 46, 47, 124, 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Psychology</td>
<td>28, 45, 46, 47, 122, 124, 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolutionary Psychology</td>
<td>33, 80, 260, 264, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 282, 284, 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic Psychology</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Psychology</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychosis</td>
<td>39, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punishment</td>
<td>24, 154, 236, 248, 314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPLE vMEME</td>
<td>71, 72, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 96, 106, 107, 112, 113, 114, 115, 123, 131, 135, 136, 137, 141, 143, 147, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 166, 169, 170, 175, 179, 190, 192, 194, 202, 204, 211, 213, 223, 231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowing Me, Knowing You

Q
Quantum Leap ..........124, 126, 326
Querleu, D, X Renard, F Versyp, L Paris-Delrue & G Crepin......300

R
racism ......................71, 72, 93, 251
radio .........................16, 25
Randi, James .................... 14
rapport ..................204, 260
rationalists ......................14
Reactive Attachment Disorder.169, 247, 313
Reality Principle.............63, 238
Reber, Arthur S & Emily 10, 19, 32, 43, 47, 50, 60
Reciprocal Determinism......2, 110, 111, 115, 126, 186, 195, 198, 329, 333, 340
RED-led bosses............... 94, 249
reductionists.................. 14
Regan, Pamela .................. 268
reinforcing effect........... 28, 45, 140
relationship problems ........... 7, 263
Communal........... 291, 292, 293
Exchange ....... 292, 293, 294
romantic relationships ...82, 221, 272, 273, 286, 287, 289
sexual relationships .....246, 272, 279
workplace relationships ...... 327
religion ........3, 4, 15, 21, 87, 110, 162, 166, 250, 253, 269
reputation management .... 248, 314
reward ....... 141, 161, 248, 249, 303
Rhine, J B .................. 14
Ridley, Matt .................. 30, 276, 317
Rogers, Carl .................. 60, 122, 170
Roman Catholicism........ 88, 162
romantic love ....257, 275, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 284, 289
Rosengren Annika, Kristina Orth-Gomer, Hans Wedel & Lars Wilhelmsen.... 342
Rotter, Julian .................. 176
Ruble, Diane .................. 270
rules 83, 87, 89, 234, 235, 236, 237, 248, 249, 279, 315, 328, 332
Russell, Bertrand ........... 48, 53
Knowing Me, Knowing You

S

Saddam Hussein......................... 85
Samuel, William ........... 252, 262
Sandberg, Avery A, G F Koepp, T
Ishihara & T S Hauschka ........... 33
Sasse, Georg, Hansjakob Muller,
Ranajit Chakraborty & Jurg Ott
............................................ 279
Saudi Arabia ................................ 15
Schaal, B, L Marlier & R
Soussignan .................................. 300
schema................... 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 25,
26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 42, 51, 54,
55, 56, 60, 71, 84, 85, 105, 111,
113, 127, 140, 158, 160, 170,
172, 175, 179, 182, 184, 186,
196, 200, 202, 216, 224, 227,
245, 252, 253, 254, 270, 288,
289, 300, 305, 306, 335, 344,
346
maladaptive schema......... 28, 29
maladaptive schemas .. 162, 165,
166
script schema.............. 23, 24
schematic control ............. 24
schematic distinctions........ 21
schematic evaluation .......... 44, 203
schematic goals................. 72
schematic maps.................. 27
schematic patterns............. 26, 87
schematic structure......... 30, 45, 47
Schizophrenia ....37, 138, 166, 171
Catatonic Schizophrenia ...... 167
Double-Bind Theory....... 166
Paranoid Schizophrenia ...... 167
Schizophrenias .......... 166, 167
Schoë, Donald......................... 118
school .......... 51, 85, 87, 122, 194, 305,
307, 312, 313, 314, 318, 321
Schroeder, H M......................... 76, 81
science i, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 19, 32, 33,
35, 49, 101, 268
scientifically unfalsifiable..... 19
Second Gulf War............. 85
Seidler, Victor.................. 262, 275
self .......... 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21,
26, 27, 32, 39, 42, 47, 48, 50,
60, 62, 73, 79, 80, 84, 85, 86,
128, 147, 162, 174, 186, 194,
198, 275, 306, 312, 313, 320
Self-Actualisation .......... 95, 96, 97, 98,
99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 109,
126, 139, 170, 197, 202, 241,
253, 289, 293, 294, 315, 336,
339
self-disclosure............. 260, 261, 263
self-esteem28, 78, 84, 86, 114, 182,
248, 262, 281
selfplex................ 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 26, 29,
32, 42, 44, 47, 48, 50, 54, 56,
60, 61, 79, 84, 85, 105, 113,
114, 137, 139, 158, 170, 172,
174, 186, 193, 200, 204, 205,
206, 227, 288, 293, 294, 305,
306, 313, 344
Seligerman, Martin ........ 138, 178
selves 10, 21, 78, 79, 155, 186, 196,
246, 345
Selye, Hans.................... 188, 189
Sensitivity Hypothesis...... 302
sex ...13, 37, 80, 84, 87, 166, 221,
257, 268, 269, 272, 274, 275,
277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 284,
287, 290, 295, 310, 315, 317,
342
sex industry ......................... 274
sexual fidelity ................. 272
Sherif, Muzafer........ 243, 305, 334
Shwarzenegger, Arnold........ 262
sinners............................ 88
situationalist........ 176, 177, 178, 182,
262
Sizemore, Chris.................. 170
Skills .......... 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57,
107, 125, 126, 186
Skinner, B F......................... 248
Skinnerian.................. 141, 248, 249
Positive Punishment ........ 248
Positive Reward ............ 141, 249
Slater, John.................... 335
Social Exchange Theory..... 290
Social Learning.................. 24, 111
social releasers.........................303
socialisation .... 259, 260, 264, 267, 275, 284
Sociobiology.................... 278, 279
sociologists ................ 50, 260, 275
Sociology................................ .... 4
solutions .... 95, 241, 336, 340, 343
soul............. 3, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20
South Africa....................... 71, 243
Spangler, Gottfried................... 302
Spanish Inquisition..................... 88
Specific Seratonin Reuptake
Inhibitor ............................. 47
Spector, Tim .............276, 277, 279
speech....16, 28, 202, 203, 205, 206
Spiral Dynamics-integral............70
spirit ......3, 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 49
spiritual beliefs.......................3
spiritual concepts ............13, 14, 15
spiritual self. 13, 15, 19, 20, 32, 42, 79, 104, 105, 186, 200
spirituality............. 4, 13, 15, 49, 101
Spirituality............................. 3, 49
St Paul ............................... 337
Stability .... 34, 37, 39, 45, 46, 131, 132, 206
Stalin, Joseph.......................88
Steed, Nicholas.......................65
Stern, Daniel................... 302
Sternberg, Robert.....284, 287, 288, 292
Stevens, A & J Price ..........37
Stopes, Marie Carmichael ......268
Strange Situation..................... 81
strategic thinking....... 52, 76, 90, 91
stress ......45, 53, 94, 123, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 262, 293, 327, 339
suicide .47, 124, 168, 269, 281, 310
Superego...63, 64, 65, 88, 137, 159, 162, 165, 167, 169, 183
Swanson, Larry........... 143, 156
Switzerland.........................279, 280
T
Tannen, Deborah............260, 261
Tasaday .............................. 252
Taylor, Elizabeth............273, 280
Teasdale, John .......................178
teenagers...26, 28, 84, 87, 114, 147, 246, 296, 307, 310, 312, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 321
television ...... 16, 25, 267, 273, 274
temperament 32, 33, 39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 56, 115, 129, 130, 131, 132, 137, 141, 142, 200, 206, 293, 294, 301, 302, 303, 335, 338, 344, 345
temperamental characteristics 34
temperamental dispositions...33, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 105, 131, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 157, 158, 172, 186, 192, 196, 200, 206, 245, 332, 338, 346
temperamental similarity ......32
temperamental types.32, 33, 231
Temperament Hypothesis........301
temperamental self............. 79, 142
temptation.................. 51, 282, 283
tensions.....................241, 245, 336
Terrible Two’s ....................86
testosterone......... 37, 258, 267, 268
Thatcher, Dennis.............9
Thatcher, Margaret9, 162, 165, 266
Thatcher, Mark..........10, 162, 165
The Beatles......................21
The Byrds......................335
The Sun.........................25
The Truth.......................2, 87
therapists.. 5, 47, 83, 109, 140, 184, 288
therapy....3, 7, 8, 45, 46, 47, 82, 87, 117, 124, 125, 137, 288, 289
Thibaut, John & Harold Kelley.290
Thigpen, Corbert & Hervey
  Cleckly........................170
Thomas, Alexander, Stella Chess &
  Herbert Birch..................32
Thomas, Ken......230, 231, 233, 234,
  235, 236, 237, 239, 240, 241, 242, 251, 256
thoughts ... 12, 37, 47, 64, 167, 171,
  183, 202, 205, 212, 254, 260
Tice, Diane ....................191
Tighe, Virginia.................14
Timelining .....................92, 184
Todorovic, Natasha...........207
tradition ..................3, 88, 280, 295
Transactional Model..........191
Transcendence .................96, 103
Trauma Resolution Experience.83
Triangular Theory of Love ....284,
  287, 292
Tudjman, Franjo................123
TURQUOISE vMEME ....96, 100,
  101, 102, 103, 136, 147, 242, 321
twin studies...................32, 36

U

Unconscious Mind 56, 92, 161, 217
United States of America.....53, 85, 158, 242

V

Values.....50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56,
  57, 59, 60, 61, 67, 87, 97, 105,
  106, 107, 109, 110, 112, 115,
  125, 175, 186, 244, 257, 282,
  314, 337, 340
Van Damme, Jean-Claude.......262
vasopressin ....................278, 279
Vicarious Reinforcement........24
Visual Squash..................161
vMEME..71, 72, 78, 79, 80, 83, 84,
  86, 87, 88, 90, 92, 93, 98, 102,
  103, 106, 107, 112, 113, 115,
  117, 122, 124, 125, 128, 131,
  132, 135, 136, 137, 140, 141,
  142, 143, 154, 156, 157, 158,
  159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 169,
  170, 171, 172, 175, 178, 179,
  181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 189,
  192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197,
  198, 200, 202, 204, 205, 206,
  207, 211, 212, 213, 222, 223,
  227, 229, 230, 231, 241, 242,
  243, 245, 246, 250, 252, 253,
  254, 256, 264, 268, 272, 282,
  283, 288, 291, 292, 295, 296,
  297, 300, 306, 307, 309, 314,
  321, 329, 332, 334, 335, 336,
  340, 343, 344, 346
transition stages.....65, 143, 307,
  309
vMEME harmonic...87, 94, 113,
  118, 127, 156, 157, 158, 159,
  160, 175, 197, 213, 230, 237,
  241, 247, 251, 257, 262, 263,
  279, 280, 286, 287, 292, 300,
  304, 315, 317, 328, 332
vMEME Stack.....111, 118, 162,
  165, 222, 326, 337
vMEME wars......159, 161, 166,
  197, 230, 333
vocal tones........................23
Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation
  Model ..........................293
Knowing Me, Knowing You

W

Wade, Jenny... 6, 212, 264, 265, 266
Walby, S..........................265
Weber, Max..........................77
Weiner, B, I Kukla, L Reed, S Rest
& R M Rosenbaum...............178
well-being... 3, 47, 89, 92, 142, 162,
170, 196, 235, 342
Wenzlaf, Richard.................191
Western world 3, 13, 15, 26, 87, 91,
93, 160, 251, 257, 272, 274,
275, 277, 279, 280, 281, 285,
288, 295, 305, 313, 327, 332,
336
Wilber, Ken ... 5, 13, 14, 15, 19, 49,
97, 101, 103, 104, 128, 329
Willis, Bruce.........................262
Wilson, I............................14
Wilson, R S..........................32
Wizemann, Thereza & Mary Lou
Pardue..............................258
women.. 21, 37, 166, 257, 259, 260,
261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266,
267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 274,
275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 284,
285, 338, 339, 342
workplace.213, 237, 327, 328, 333,
334
World Trade Organisation... 87, 240
World War II.......................285
worrying..............................45
worthlessness.........................7, 28
Wright, P H..........................260
Wundt, Wilhelm.....................130

Y

YELLOW vMEME..95, 96, 97, 98,
99, 100, 101, 109, 136, 139,
147, 171, 197, 202, 253, 264,
315, 321
Yelsma, P & K Athappily........288
Yugoslavia..........................123
My interest in the behavioural sciences dates back to 1972 and my university foundation year course in Psychology and Sociology. And, of course, Child Psychology was an important component in the teacher training I undertook 1975-76.

For better or for worse, I didn’t stay in teaching long – being seduced into the world of industry & commerce and ending up as the National Administration Manager for Britain’s largest freight forwarding operation.

At the end of the 1980s I was headhunted into a company being set up to enter the boom in management consultancy & training.

I wrote almost all of this company’s training courses. During this period, my interest in Psychology was revived via their use of the DISC Inventory, based on the work of William Moulton Marston.

I also became involved in organisational development. Between 1993 and 2002 I assisted 26 companies to achieve either ISO 9000 and/or Investors in People accreditation. Through Enterprise Support Ltd, I was also given the Department of Trade & Industry’s highest commendation for assisting a client with business planning.

In 1998, via the Business Link in Wakefield, I got the opportunity to undertake extensive training in Spiral Dynamics with the model’s developers, Dr Don Beck & Chris Cowan.

To describe this as a major life-changing experience would not be an understatement!

I subsequently undertook further training with Beck & Cowan and am one of around about 20 people in the UK who studied Spiral Dynamics to Practitioner Level 2 with them.

I have since worked directly under Don Beck and remain in contact with Chris Cowan. (In April 2001 Beck used some of my materials as part of his keynote presentation to the World Education Fellowship Conference in Sun City, South Africa.)

Spiral Dynamics led me to commence studying Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) – first to Diploma Level, then to Practitioner and Master Practitioner qualifications. (At Master level my teachers included Penny Parks and Dr L Michael Hall.)

As Spiral Dynamics and NLP wrought significant changes in my own life, so a passion grew to promote study of these disciplines into all areas of life. This passion is about developing our understanding of why we think and behave as we do. Thus, to increase choice and enhance our
decision-making abilities.

My business as an independent consultant & trainer (since January 1997) has swung increasingly towards working with people in terms of management development and coaching, recruitment, performance management and appraisal, and training in communication skills, auditing techniques, sales and customer service.

In 2003 I accepted a part-time post teaching A-level Psychology at Vermuyden School in Goole, East Yorkshire. Revisiting much of the material I had first looked at 30 years before both reinforced just how powerful Spiral Dynamics and NLP are and gave me access to a further ‘kitbag’ of supporting models and therapeutic tools.

As my knowledge has broadened, so I have also become increasingly aware of just how ineffective the behavioural sciences are in making a real difference to people’s lives. In large part, this is due to the fractured and competitive nature of the constituent academic disciplines.

Accordingly, I – in collaboration with others – have started to look at how to align and develop the behavioural sciences around Spiral Dynamics, under the umbrella term of Integrated SocioPsychology. This is a radical direction to take and one which will transform our approaches to Psychology and Sociology, both at the ‘popular’ and academic levels.

While I have written much for the Integrated SocioPsychology web site – www.integratedsociopsychology.net – both about the theories and models and their applications in the ‘real world’, ‘Knowing Me, Knowing You’ is my first major venture into print.

My work life these days is divided between teaching and organisational & management development, with a smattering of personal therapy. However, I anticipate the teaching commitment reducing as the promotion and development of Integrated SocioPsychology takes greater priority.

To find out more about what I’ve done in the past and the services I offer now, visit my web site: www.keitherice.co.uk.

On a personal level, I live in the North Yorkshire town of Harrogate with my gorgeous wife, Caroline, and our magic(!) cat, Artemis.