

**Memetics and Spiral Leadership:
the New Direction for Management in the 21st Century**
by Caleb Rosado

As the world enters the Third Millennium, the challenges it will face in the 21st century will dwarf those of the 20th. This does not mean that its present challenges and conflicts will go away, but that a new mindset and mode of leadership is needed to address the tidal wave of change that is coming. No longer can world leaders at all levels of administration afford to merely engage in “problem-solving.” That approach is too “piece-meal,” and will bury the leader that gets stuck in that mode of thinking and behavior. The dynamic waves of change call for “change-anticipation” as a new way of thinking about the future, so that what appears to be problems on the horizon, can be turned into challenges that create new opportunities for business and growth.

How do leaders move in their thinking from “problem-solving” to “change-anticipation”? By looking below the surface of human thinking to the operative value systems beneath all decision-making and action. Let me illustrate with some present “problems” the companies faces as we enter the 21st century.

- The need for inclusive leaders whose vision encompasses the needs of the entire company, not just the interests of select segments of the same.
- The ever-expanding world of the Internet.
- Liberal versus conservative policies for a global economy.
- The debate over the rise, fall, and resurgence of global capitalism.
- The widening role of women in business leadership.
- Intercultural competence in the midst of political upheavals that can undermine global markets.
- The present state of race/ethnic and gender relations in the business world.
- Moving global workforce diversity management beyond surface issues of race, color and cultural preference to awakening the natural flows of human systems.
- The challenge of moving beyond civil war and civil rights to civil transformation.
- The low levels of confidence in leaders in general.
- The shallow understanding of global cultures that result the exporting of capitalism to markets in countries that do not understand levels of trust for doing international business.

Each of these is of such import to one segment or another of companies as to have the potential of creating rifts and warring sides. Yet to focus on these issues is to do problem solving, which often only generates more heat than light. When one considers how much energy, emotion, and economics people invest in these concerns, one would think people were caught up in a life-and-death struggle with the ultimate outcome being eternal life or eternal damnation. And, indeed, for some people this is their perceived outcome.

The above issues, however, are merely surface symptoms of deeper level decision systems out of which these surface controversies emerge. Leaders and employees alike need to look below the surface in all of these areas to the underlying “value” and “belief systems” operating within the various groups or persons, if they really want to gain a handle on the present

and future controversies raging within corporations. Any hope for the survival of some businesses in this new millennium from destructive, self-serving forces within can only come by looking below the social whirlpools, the ideological differences, the attachments, the meanings, which are merely the surface ripples of deep-level currents of what we call ‘culture.’ These deep cultural currents are the value systems from which surface conflicts emerge.

How are these deep-level value systems formed? Why does each see the world differently? What happens when they clash? How can everybody be absolutely ‘right’ in their own eyes? Why is it that one group so quickly assumes that right is on their side, while demonizing the other side? How do leaders manage all this complexity and diversity of thinking? The purpose of this article is to explore a new global dynamic process for leadership in the 21st century. But first, a framework for understanding—Spiral Dynamics, a scaffolding for aligning human systems— which draws from the seminal work of Dr. Clare W. Graves, late professor of psychology at Union College, NY, and whose emerging Theory of Levels of Existence is the basis of this article. Graves was a contemporary of Abraham Maslow. And though they were close friends, they did not always agree, as Graves found that some of Maslow’s conclusions were simply too limiting and not encompassing enough of human development. Yet, because Graves published very little, it is Maslow’s ideas that have won out. Yet, in the Third Millennium it may very well be Clare W. Graves who will have the last word, as his ideas are beginning to catch on because of their value to understanding both micro and macro systems. In the end, before his death (1970), Maslow confessed that Graves’ ideas were the more correct one. Dr. Clare W. Graves died in 1986, and his research, summarized in a seminal article in *The Futurist* (April 1974), has been passed on to the world by two of his students Don E. Beck and Christopher C. Cowan in their important work, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* (Blackwell, 1996).

Value Systems as Cultural Currents:¹

Culture is not a single point of view, with a uniform set of beliefs. Culture is more like an archeological dig, consisting of many layers, strata, or levels, each with a different worldview, bottom-line, perceptions of right and wrong, belief systems, ethical business practices, and understanding of the world and mission of business. A “belief” or “value system” is a view of the world, a mindset, an organizing framework for deep-level decision-making at the bottom-line—the threshold of no negotiation. Each cultural layer or level of human existence represents a value system, or to use a term coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976 which will have common usage in the 21st century—a “meme,” rhymes with theme and gene. Memes are to culture what genes are to biology. Memes are ideas, beliefs, values, units of cultural information, that like contagious viruses, spread from brain-to-brain through thought-contagion by word-of-mouth, media, technology, CNN, cyberspace, human action, and use the human mind as a host. The Disney mouse ears, for example, is a meme, conjuring up images of magic, fantasy and childhood. Satellite television, such as CNN, is a global memetic medium infecting the world with cultural and news viruses that influence values and behaviors. Just as genes carry the informational codes for our biological DNA, so also memes supply the informational codes that determine our “cultural DNA.”

Mememes operate at two levels—at the surface level, the memes or ideas that impact our thinking, and at the deep levels of worldviews and decision-making, the value systems or ^vMEMES. (The superscript “^v” stands for “values”, thus, value-memes or ^vMEMES.) Values

Systems are complex Coping Systems—decision making motivators and ways of thinking—that emerge in response to Problems of Existence. There are nearly 6 billion people in the world today, and though we all come from some 100,000 genes—ALL of us—we share only a few basic Value Systems. Graves’ research identified a spiral of eight value systems which collectively comprise the Spiral Dynamics of human development and existence (see table). For simplification of understanding, we can color-code them. The significance of the colors is only to identify the systems and has no deep symbolism beyond that.

THE SPIRAL-LIKE STRATA OF HUMAN VALUE SYSTEM CULTURAL CODES

MEMES	COLOR	THEME	FOCUS	THINKING	VALUE SYSTEMS—BOTTOM LINES	LIFESTYLE
Level 8	TURQUOISE	WholeView	“We”	Holistic	Harmony and Holism	Lives for Wisdom
Level 7	YELLOW	FlexFlow	“Me”	Systemic	Natural Processes of Order & Change	Lives for Mutuality
Level 6	GREEN	HumanBond	“We”	Humanistic	Equality and Human Social Bond	Lives for Harmony
Level 5	ORANGE	StriveDrive	“Me”	Materialistic	Success and Material Gain	Lives for Gain
Level 4	BLUE	TruthForce	“We”	Absolutistic	Authority, Stability, “One-Right-Way”	Lives for Later
Level 3	RED	PowerGods	“Me”	Egocentric	Power, Glory, Exploitation, No Boundaries	Lives for Now
Level 2	PURPLE	KinSpirits	“We”	Animistic	Myths, Ancestors, Traditions, Our People	Lives for Group
Level 1	BEIGE	SurvivalSense	“Me”	Automatic	Staying Alive, Reactive, Basic Survival	Lives for Survival

These eight MEME codes or value systems serve as cultural magnets around which our “stuff” clusters and our life is aligned. When something is not right at the surface level—the level where we express ourselves in relation to others—or when our priorities are distorted or our lives are out of balance or businesses, nations and cultures clash in warring factions, we need to carefully examine what is happening below in these deep bio-psycho-social currents. These determine *how* people think and respond to the world around them and not just *what* they say or do. Strain between these systems is the home of all human conflict. These MEMES are the sum total of the invisible, cultural, and spiritual forces that drive our perceptions, influence all of life’s choices, lifestyles, and sense of what is right, wrong, and appropriate.

Notice how the Focus alternates between dominance of an individualist me-oriented *express-self* (warm colors) and a collectivist we-oriented *sacrifice-self* (cool colors) life focus. Note also the differences in thinking and what is valued in each system as they flow from survival (Automatic), to safety and security (Animistic), to raw power and instant gratification (Egocentric), to purpose in life (Absolutistic), to strategies for success (Materialistic), to equity and consensus (Humanistic), to alternative forms (Systemic), to harmonic systems (Holistic). The levels are open-ended. There is no final stage of development. The lower levels, however, have no understanding of what the higher levels consider to be of importance. The higher levels often lose contact with the operating principles which make sense to the lower levels.

What moves one from one level to the next is when old explanations and experiences no longer adequately explain one’s reality as a result of changes in one’s Life Conditions (determined by time, place, problems, and circumstances), which now exceed the parameters of one’s present worldview. These levels are “systems-in” people, not permanent “personality” types. And like Russian Matroshka Dolls that also are “systems within,” when one’s cup overflows one then moves to the larger, more encompassing system. Previous value systems, however, do not go away; they just shift down the spiral. And, if changing Life Conditions warrant, we may return to these previous systems. When disaster strikes, for example, we are

immediately reduced to Beige. It is this interaction between our “real life” experiences and our mind/brain capacities that causes these value systems to awaken, ebb, and flow. Without our latent mental capacities, the *world outside* has nothing to trigger (the situation of the mentally impaired such as those suffering from Alzheimer’s disease). Without the stimuli from outside, *systems within* may not have cause to be awakened (the case of the Amish and persons living in “closed” communities). Thus, *both* nature and nurture are important.

Persons or groups who exist or existed at any given level are not “better people”; they are simply different. The point is what is “appropriate” given the level of complexity of life experienced at that level of existence. [See sidebar for an explanation of the 8 Value Systems.] The higher one moves up the spiral, or the strata of our cultural dig, the more complex are the life conditions. Such is the flow of The Spiral-Like Strata of Human Cultures (see table and graphic).

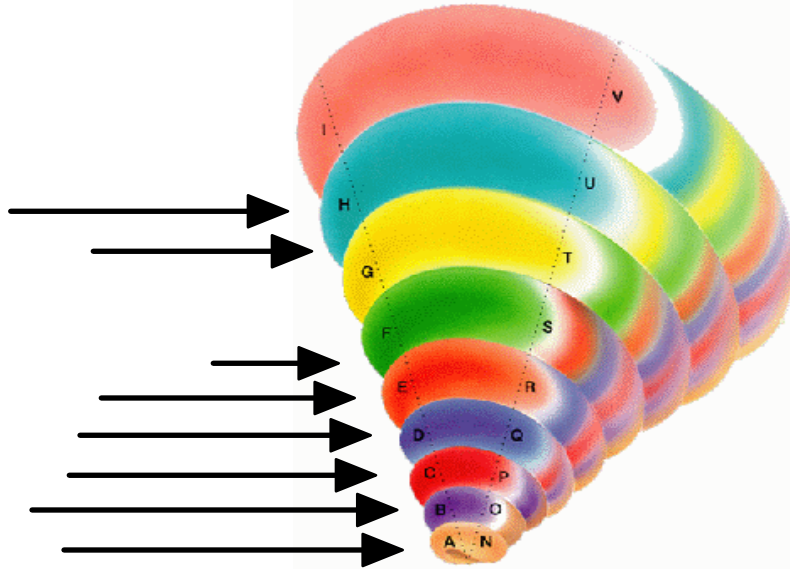
THE SPIRAL-LIKE STRATA OF HUMAN CULTURES

Level	Name	Bottom-Line Value Systems
8 th Level	Global Unity	Harmony and Holism
7 th Level	Integrated Flows	Natural Processes of Order & Change
6 th Level	Collective Communities	Equality and Humanistic Sensitivity
5 th Level	Corporate States	Success and Material Gain
4 th Level	Ancient Nations	Patriotism, Stability and Sainthood
3 rd Level	Feudal Empires	Power and Glory/The Imperial Self
2 nd Level	Ethnic Tribes	Myth, Ancestors, and Our People
1 st Level	Survival Bands	Staying Alive—Food/Water/Sex

Don Beck realigns this table by showing how the values of the First-World are found at levels 6th and 5th—Communities and States; the Second-World at levels 4th and 3rd—Nations and Empires; and the Third-World or less-developed societies at levels 2nd and 1st—Tribes and Bands. Or to express it in another form, Communities are Post-Modern; Nations and States emerge into Modernity; and Empires, Tribes, and Bands are Pre-Modern.

If one pictures an ascending colorful spiral that swirls up from Beige Bands and Purple Tribes, and with each level widens its arcs as it rises to Green Collective Communities, Yellow Integrated Systems and beyond, the following graphic emerges. The ninth level, Coral, resides in the dim unknown.

THE SPIRAL-LIKE STRATA OF HUMAN CULTURES



Implications for Leadership:

What does this understanding of human development have to do with the importance of leadership as we begin life in the Third Millennium? Much. All of these levels & stages, with their respective value and belief systems, exist in the United States as subcultures and define differences in all areas of life, from religion, to sport, to political affiliations, to business, to lifestyles. New Orleans, for example, is full of Nations, Empires, and Tribes, and one can find Survival Bands every night on Bourbon Street. Dallas is a Corporate State; the Twin-Cities was a Collective Community, at least until the new Minnesota Governor from the Empire of the 'wrestling world' rose to power. And in Los Angeles one can find the entire spiral in their brightest colors.

American corporations and businesses, from the local level to transnationals, are far too diverse for any one single style of leadership or mode of management. Trying to manage this vast diversity by forcing everyone into a one-size-fits-all approach is what generates much of the conflict in the business world. It also gives rise to a lack of confidence in corporate leadership from the employees.

Traditional leadership theory usually focuses on "styles" of leadership, whether autocratic, persuasive, participative, or delegative. Other theories push a "situational" leadership depending on the situation at hand and the responses of the led. Still other efforts call for a "servant" model of leadership. Servant leadership in most human systems, however, even the church, has become an oxymoron. What passes for "servant" leadership most of the time is essentially a politically correct Green label for a recycling of old behavior that continues to practice closed Blue autocratic, one-size-fits-all mode of leadership under the guise of being inclusive. What the corporation often does is to rely on a hierarchical, autocratic [Blue] organizational culture, to set up leaders as 'lords' and 'princes,' who then baptize this lordship by calling it "service." So much for "servant leadership."

Yet, all three approaches fail to take into account the deep level belief systems that govern a people's way of life. People at different levels of existence operate with totally different belief systems, worldviews, and levels of complexity of thinking. When they encounter each other on business or politically-related issues, it is as though they are coming from different

perceptual planets, where they speak a ‘foreign’ language. The result is that they end up talking past one another. Add to this the fact that people are only able to understand up-to those systems which have become operational in their life. Anything at a level higher than their own, they will reinterpret so that it comes out the way their system of thinking understands it. Thus, communication between levels, when the issues are non-negotiable, is often difficult. “Higher” does not necessarily mean “superior,” but “appropriate” to the milieu or Life Conditions of the person or group.

The concept of “stages” or “levels” of development does not always rest easy with people. This is because as Clare Graves explains, people do not see their striving in life “as merely a stage they are going through, but as the ultimate, the permanent goal of all life.” Once people feel they have attained this “ultimate,” this “permanent goal” or understanding “of all life,” and their Life Conditions are relatively stable, they tend to believe they have “arrived” at “truth,” and become satisfied and complacent with the extent of their knowledge. Result? They become conservative and cease to grow. Conservatism in corporations is *a sign of stagnation and decline*, and develops *when people stop being innovative* due to their contentment with what they already have achieved. When someone comes along and says, “There is *another* level or stage of development,” people, sensing that the security blanket of their worldview is being removed, will experience anger, frustration, or excitement, depending whether they are operating with a Closed, Arrested, or Open mindset. At each level, then, a person can be at an Open state of thinking (one Value System dominates yet is open to any information that may enter their perceptual field); at an Arrested state (only information up-to the Value System that is currently operating will be accepted, information that is from any later Value System will not be accepted); or at a Closed state (no information will be accepted that does not conform to the current Value Systems; generally only one Value System is operating).

Modes of Leadership, “Closed” Value Systems, and Listening to Others:

At this latter state, each Value System manifests a different attitude and behavior when listening to the other and in respecting an other’s worldview. Each MEME level also expresses a different mode of leadership

Beige and Purple levels value members of their own group. They live in a world of fear of strangers—of others who are different. They have no reason to listen to or to accept the experiences of any human being outside their own group—people who are different. Purple is a communal-collective system where listening to others within the system may be important, but not outsiders who are different. And for these two systems almost anyone is an outsider. Tradition and the received wisdom from “the gurus” and spiritual leaders is what matters here. *Leadership is tradition-driven.*

Red trusts no one but themselves. They are reluctant to listen to the signals from any source except from within themselves. They don’t even begin to value the experiences of others and have no desire to listen to or to accept what others have to say—unless it can increase their own power over others and/or enable them to survive in the had/have/have-not world in which they live. Red is an individual-elitist system where self is primary—at the expense of others. *Leadership is power-driven.*

Blue has a need to listen only to the right authority. Absolutistic thinking does not tolerate viewpoints other than those of the right authority. The worldviews of others that are different from the worldviews of Blue are, at the most, tolerated, but not accepted—not even for others. When you already have the “truth” it is a waste of time to listen to another’s “truth.”

Blue is a communal-collective system in which there is only listening to and acceptance of those of the same “ism.” Blue reflects a self-righteousness from the right, with a guilt-driven, “only-one-right-way” mode of thinking. It is this form of leadership that causes more problems in the business world than perhaps any other, resulting in a state of non-confidence in leadership, a lack of commitment to the institution, and a voting on the part of the employees and customers with their feet and finances, as they put their efforts and resources elsewhere. *Leadership is order-driven.*

Orange may listen to others but primarily to gain any kind of information that will enable Orange to better manipulate others in the “real” world of competition. Orange is Machiavellian. Machiavellians use their rational-calculating minds to manipulate, to win over others. And they know that this cannot happen if they become involved with caring about others, allowing themselves to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others, to actually accept the worldviews of others. StriveDrive means to be driven to succeed—if necessary—over others. Orange knows that to become a caring person showing emotions is a waste of time. And time is money. Orange is an individual-elitist system where self is primary—not others. The larger share of American businesses are here, so also are the nova-rich. The wheeling and dealing for power and material gain prevalent among most business leaders is also found here. This mode of leadership can be very cut-throat and arrogant, because it is primarily self-seeking. Many persons whose life is oriented around this ^vMEME compensate for such materialistic values by adhering to a conservative political ideology. This is an example of the fulcrum principle, where extremes have to be counter-balanced. *Leadership is success-driven.*

Green is the first system which begins to accept others. One of the most important needs which Green has is to know the inner world of others and to share their own inner world with others. Green must be successful in interpersonal relationships. To do so means that authenticity, congruence, honesty and trust must exist for self and others. Between individuals or within the group Green listens deeply to the experiences of others—to their worldviews. Green listens deeply to others because this is how the system operates. But even in this system there is only the beginning efforts to accept the worldviews of another. Green can accept the worldview of another as long as that worldview produces behavior which is acceptable within the group community. In this communal-collective system others are primary but the others must accept the worldview that is the consensus of the community. Even a general definition of empathy is inadequate. Empathy is the intellectual identification with or vicarious experience of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. It is one thing to be deeply empathetic, to know and to appreciate the thoughts and feelings of another. But it is an entirely different matter to accept those thoughts and feelings as right and good for the other person. This is why “political correctness” is such an issue for Green. Green leaders and laity can be very intolerant, especially when things do not go their way. Green often reflects a self-righteousness from the left, a rigidity of equity. *Leadership is people-driven.*

From a quick examination of these six Value Systems, it is easy to see where much of the conflict in the corporate world and in society comes from. When one connects power to all of these Value Systems, one can quickly see that when systems clash, everyone sees Red—they move to a state of siege-mentality, shut down, protect power, and prepare for the worst by taking a defensive posture. Power is the most seductive force in the world, greater than money, food, or sex. Friedrich Nietzsche, in his book *The Dawn of Day*, declares. “Neither necessity nor desire, but *the love of power*, is the demon of humankind. You may give humans everything possible—health, food, shelter, enjoyment—but they are and remain unhappy and capricious, for the demon

waits and waits; and must be satisfied. Let everything else be taken away from humans, and let this demon be satisfied, and then they will nearly be happy—as happy as humans and demons can be.” Power in its essence is “the capacity to act.” Power can be exercised either as coercion, against people’s wishes, or as choice, without violating free will. Sometimes leaders have to use both forms. True Power, however, seldom exercised by humans, is one that leaders need to develop. *This is the capacity to know that you can but you don’t.*

A spiral understanding of the human systems also enables us to understand that while wars are fought on different levels, they are fought for different reasons, depending on the dominant ^vMEMES.

^vMEMES

VALUE SYSTEMS AND HUMAN CONFLICT

- 6th Level: Communities fight *humanitarian wars* against those who commit ‘crimes against humanity,’ over issues of justice, equity and fairness, and to protect the victims.
- 5th Level: Commercial-driven States fight *competition wars* to advance their spheres of influence, access market niches, and preserve their status-conscious image.
- 4th Level: Ancient Nations fight ‘*holy*’ wars for righteousness sake, safeguard beliefs, protect the institution and preserve it’s way of life, and defend law, order, and rightful authority.
- 3rd Level: Empires fight *imperialistic wars* to dominate, gain the spoils, and demand the right to power and privilege.
- 2nd Level: Tribes fight *inter-/intra-group wars* to protect the family, traditions, sacred truths, and cultural norms and folkways from outsiders and/or ‘outsider’ influences.
- 1st Level: Bands fight *survival wars* to gain food, water, safety, and sex. No ideological struggle here.

The solution to all these power struggles, self-canceling modes of leadership, and conflicting worldviews does not come from these first six “subsistence” levels, the First Tier, *the memes of the flesh* preoccupied with their own self-interests. The solution comes from the next systems or levels that are now beginning to emerge in the world and among some corporations. These are levels at the Second Tier, the “being” systems, levels 7 and 8, *the memes of the spirit*.

Yellow is the first system to listen to and to accept another human being’s worldview simply because that worldview is important to the other human being. This constitutes a major shift in the way human beings interact with each other—a valuing of the other in a manner that we have not historically seen. Yellow is not frustrated with ambiguity and can actually enjoy ambiguity. Yellow is an individual-elitist system and it is the beginning system of the 2nd Tier. Yellow is the first system that not only values self but it also values others. Yellow listens to others because what the other is expressing is important to the other, not because the other is a member of my group (Purple) or because there may be a power gain for self (Red) or because one must be kind to others even though there is no intention of accepting what the other is expressing (Blue) or to enable self to win over others (Orange) or in order to determine whether or not the other is acceptable in the group community (Green). Yellow values *being*, for every person has a right to be. Yellow also flattens the organizational pyramid to eliminate redundant levels in order to share power and decision-making with those who are closest to the problems. The result is ownership at all levels because the focus is on competency and on who can best do the job irrespective of who they are, either by gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, or beliefs. *Leadership is process-driven.*

The worldview of Turquoise is still in development, but its focus is on the holism, harmony, and the interconnectedness of all life-forms.

Spiral Leadership:

In light of these ^vMEMES or Value Systems reflective of different levels of existence in business and in society, what kind of leader will our nation need for this new millennium? What kind of leaders Americans elect in the year 2000? This is the crucial question in people's minds as we begin the 21st century, in view of past disappointments. We, obviously, do not want to elect leaders that brings embarrassment on him or herself and the nation or organization before the watching world. Thus, the person must be an *ethical* individual, who understands the difference between wrong and right, appropriate and inappropriate behavior. With high ethics also comes an understanding that proper ethical conduct does not mean "not getting caught," but being above the very possibility of suspicion. It is leadership-by-example that is needed.

On the other hand, we do not want a leader who is "closed," rigid, or "arrested"—one who operates only on the basis of one Value System and is unable or unwilling to explore options other than those that conform to it. The world has seen far too many leaders (read "dictators") operate with such a mindset. They often surround themselves with like-minded persons, thereby perpetuating groupthink—a rejection of critical judgment for the sake of group harmony.

We also don't want a leader that is a "Flatlander." A "Flatlander" is a person who approaches life and decision-making with a "one-size-fits-all" mindset. The term comes from Edwin Abbott's 19th century classic, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884), where he describes a people that can only see life in two dimensions—left and right, front and back. They have no sense of up and down, the vertical dimension, but live life solely on the basis of the horizontal, in a flatland. Life is a matter of rigid categories, simplistic types, and a series of boxes with preassigned labels. In Flatland "human relations" means finding the right category or box for people and putting them in it, based on the appearances of their outlines. In spite of all the advances of knowledge Flatland still exists. And its inhabitants—Flatlanders—still roam the earth pigeonholing people on the basis of color, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, culture, beliefs, or some other easy marker.

What the nation and corporations need is persons at Yellow. Yellow is the first ^vMEME in our human repertoire to recognize the elegance of the *whole spiral* and to act on the idea that *diversity in thinking* may be the greatest diversity of all, above the diversity of race, gender, culture, class, or age. What you have at Yellow is a "Spiral Leader." *A Spiral Leader is a person who able to see the whole spiral of human differences within the organization and in society, and knows how to communicate with people at their respective levels of existence globally, while keeping the well-being of the whole—the nation/business—in mind.*

Yellow or Spiral Leaders understand power. They know what power is, how to create it and use it. But they also know how limited is its usefulness. A Spiral Leader is not caught up with status, but is focused on competence—on who can best perform the tasks before the organization. Social cultural barriers that divide that groups and create conflict at the first six levels, such as the memes of race, ethnicity, gender, age, beliefs, lifestyles, etc., are of no concern here. For the Spiral Leader the question is: Who is the most competent person to do the needed tasks.

Spiral Leaders also model two additional life principles. The first one I call the "Human Relations Principle of Leadership," and it is rather self-explanatory. *Be careful how you treat*

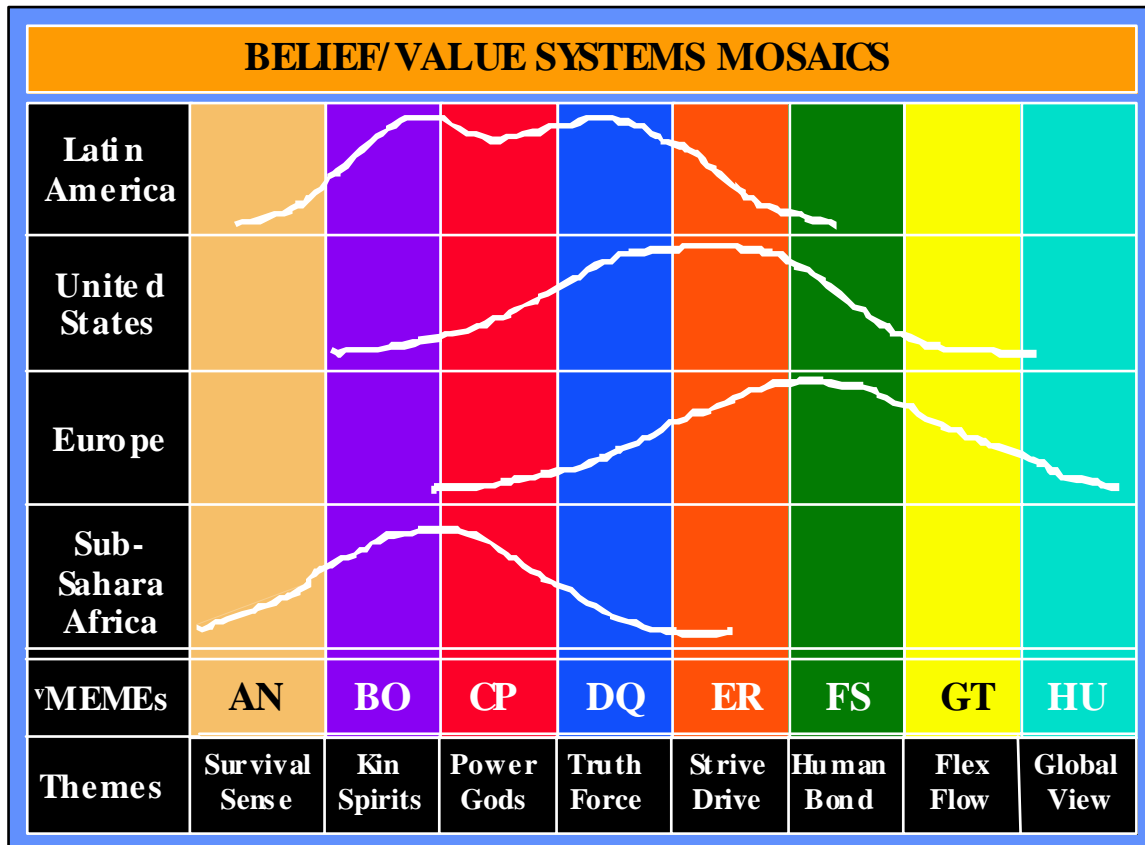
people when you are at the top, you may meet them on your way down. The second principle Spiral Leaders live by is the “Sabbath Principle.” It was first given by Jesus 2,000 years ago when He declared: “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NRSV). Here is the principle: *The institution exists to meet the needs of individuals and not individuals the needs of the institution.* In other words, the needs of employees come before the needs of organization, since the employees *are* the company. Blue leaders are focused on the needs of corporate systems; Spiral Leaders on the needs of corporate staff. Seldom has this principle been followed by institutions, even the church, which more often than not take a self-serving and self-perpetuating approach to management. Yet the practice of both of these principles is what gives rise to the highest confidence in leadership. The reverse is also true. Malpractice in this area can cause the stock market of leadership confidence to crash.

The implications of all this for a given company at all levels are quite profound. Take a large corporation, for example. At this level one can find a varying degree of positions on most everything from idea input to product output, and more. All of these memes often clash in board meetings and company policies, to customer treatment, which can result in factions and schisms. A manager that fails to recognize such diversity of thinking, and operates with a Flatlander perspective will only worsen the problems. Thus, there is a great need for “spiral managers” who understand, respect, and value the diversity of thinking in his/her staff and employees. Here lies a most important principle in diversity management, which will be the new frontiers of mission for corporations in the Third Millennium. *The key to successful diversity management lies in understanding the diversity of Value Systems operant in the company.* This diversity of “thinking systems” has a far greater impact on a multicultural corporation than the diversity of races, ethnicities, and cultural expressions could ever have. People from the same culture, ethnic group, or race, for example, often have differing ^vMEMES or Value Systems, while other people from different groups often share the same ^vMEMES. Since ^vMEMES are deep decision systems *in* people, not types *of* people; colors *in* people, not colors *of* people; they transcend race, gender, ethnicity, age, class, culture, and national origin. Spiral Leaders understand all this. Flatlanders, on the other hand, will not recognize this deeper diversity, and will resort to surface categorizations and labeled boxes based on belief, biological, and cultural markers.

Corporations at the national and transnational levels the church need “spiral presidents or executives” who understand the diversity of thinking of their constituents. Different sections and regions of the country reflect different value systems. The Southern part of the United States, for example, is more Purple, Red, and Blue; the West is more Orange and Green, and Red in Hollywood; while the Northeast reflects both Orange and Purple ^vMEMES; and the Midwest is Blue and Orange. Yet even within these broad areas can be found the whole Spiral of value systems as a continuum of mixes and mergers. Some companies are most open to women in leadership, others see such action as incompatible with their old boys culture; some companies make every effort to be inclusive, other only comply minimally to keep the legal dogs at bay. Some managers are closed, others are open, and some are arrested. The company president that fails to recognize such diversity will have limited success in this new millennium. The higher one moves up the leadership hierarchy of the corporation, the more diversity of ^vMEMES will one encounter, and therefore the greater the need for Spiral Leaders. In this new millennium the corporations and the nation will need a whole array of Spiral Leaders—spiral CEOs, spiral management, spiral administrators/educators and spiral staff, even spiral employees.

Management is also different at each level of existence and must meet the needs of people at their respective levels of need. The work of Habitat for Humanity, FEMA, and relief

agencies, for example, is with people at Beige, seeking to stay alive. International corporations must therefore understand the operational value systems, both in the company and in society in order to have any semblance of relevance and opportunity for success [see Mosaic graphic²]. The bell-shaped lines in the graphic depict the value systems operative in the various societies. Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa, for example, are dominated by Purple and Red ^vMEMES; while the USA is more at Orange and Green, and Europe, especially Northern Europe is more at Green and Yellow. The multinational corporations, however, in many of these continents tend to operate at a Blue ^vMEME with a Flatlander perspective.



However, we need to understand that a strong, healthy Blue ^vMEME is *foundational* to the entire spiral. It provides the anchors of law, order, good authority, responsibility, and righteousness without which the corporation or nations stand weak. If we lose this crucial system, we lose direction, our moral compass, the inner core, and the essential foundation of the more complex systems. This is the problem in America and in the world today. The result is the proliferation of the violence and moral decay we are seeing. On the other hand, in a closed mind, the Blue ^vMEME can become an unhealthy system with rigid authoritarianism, that is judgmental, self-righteous, exclusive, and guilt-driven. Thinking within the “natural flows” of systems is the essence of Spiral Dynamics. Not the labeling of people as this or that, or showing considerable pride in claiming to have “arrived” at a certain stage of self and moral development. Spiral Leaders understand all this. They see the whole spiral of human need and meet people at their respective levels of existence, awakening in them the “natural flows” of the next level of development.

The Kind of Leaders Nations Needs to Elect:

The kind of leaders corporations and nations need for the 21st century will be ones who are not “arrested” nor “closed” at any one level. But as Spiral Leaders they will be one who understand the whole spiral of human development, and are able to speak the “psychological languages” of people at those levels, and enable them to see the next step they are to take in their personal growth. What this means is that such a leader understands the “5% Rule of Change.” As Ken Wilber declares in his latest book, *One Taste: The Journals of Ken Wilber* (Shambhala 1999): “A good rule of thumb is that people are not going to expand their present views or outlooks by much more than 5% at any given time. So if you are trying to push a very big picture at them they are probably going to shut down, and maybe get angry . . . Remember that belief systems are not merely beliefs—they are the home of the ego, the home of the self-contradiction. When you challenge any belief system, the separate-self experiences that as a death threat.” Thus, such Spiral Leaders know how to “read” his audience. This is an example of “speaking” the “psychological languages” of people. Such leaders will model a form of leadership, which, as stated previously, *we have not historically seen*. President Clinton came the closest of anyone to possessing this unique ability. Unfortunately, the negative side of Red ^vMEME became his downfall.

Drawing Outside the Lines:

As we enter the Third Millennium, a new type of leader is emerging, one who knows how to “draw outside the lines”—operate outside the traditional boundaries of a “we-have-always-done-it-this-way” mindset. It means that the way of thinking which created the problems we are experiencing cannot be the same thinking that seeks to solve these problems. In other words the solutions to the current problems that human systems—from individuals, to organizations, to nations—are experiencing cannot come from the same level of existence and ^vMEMES where the problem is located. This is because the present modes of thinking, worldviews or coping systems are far too narrow or closed and cannot address the opportunities posed by the emerging challenges of societal change. Albert Einstein recognized this dilemma when he declared, “The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far, creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as they were created.”

As we head into the 21st century, it is dawning on many thought leaders that there is no *single* future for America, just as there is no single level of existence at which all of humanity is located. Thus, what lies before us is a situation of *multiple futures* or *realities* rather than just one. Failure to grasp this vision of futures will result in a recycling of old problems and an implementing of trite and tired solutions, and incompetent styles of leadership. Spiral leaders understand this are ready to take their companies and nation to its next level of development. And this understanding will far outweigh political party affiliations and divisions. Welcome to the future, America!

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¹ The basic framework for this article comes from the seminal research of Dr. Clare W. Graves (Union College, NY), “Human Nature Prepares for a Momentous Leap, *The Futurist*, April 1974, and his students, Don E. Beck, Chris C. Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change* (Blackwell, 1996), and an e-mail the author received from William Lee, another former student of Graves. Richard Dawkins’ concept of memes is from his book, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford 1976). Additional thoughts come from Beck’s article, “Turbulence in the Balkans, a Paleo-Cultural View,” e-mail to author April 20, 1999.

² This graphic is adapted from a similar graphic in Don E. Beck and Graham Linscott, *The Crucible: Forging South Africa’s Future* (New Paradigm Press, 1991). The letter scheme at the bottom of the graphic [AN, BO, CP,] is the code Clare Graves used to identify the various Value Systems. Now these same systems are identified through a color scheme [Beige, Purple, Red, etc.], as it is easier to remember and is not hierarchical.