

## **Spiral Dynamics and Camphill Development**

*“And if any man works for the community, he must perceive and feel the meaning and value of this community, and what it is as a living, organic whole. He can only do this when the community is something other and quite different from a more or less indefinite totality of individual men. It must be informed by an actual spirit in which each single person has his part ... The whole communal body must have a spiritual mission, and each individual of it must have the will to contribute towards the fulfilling of this mission. In every single member down to the least, this Spirit of Community must be alive and active.”*

Rudolf Steiner: Anthroposophy and the Social Question

### **Purpose**

This paper is written following the Annual meeting of the Association of Camphill Communities OCC in Dunshane, where Andrew Plant's "Communities in Transition" paper was the central theme. Our conversation returned over and over again to the significance of Values. Andrew's paper refers to the Spiral Dynamics model of organisational development. Since I am a Senior Practitioner in the SD method, and see it as having much to offer to Camphill as it evolves, I would like to describe the way in which its viewpoints support the developing conversation and assist our understanding of how to work in the rich territory of Value systems.

### **What is Spiral Dynamics?**

I would like to start by saying what it isn't. There are many systems which describe the development of organisations, or of individuals in terms of a sequence of stages, or a set of typologies. The most familiar in our context is that of Margarete van den Brink, but there are many others from Maslow, Kegan Cook-Greuter, Barratt, Torbert, Lievegod ..... which have more similarities than differences and all of which are potentially useful as lenses through which to look at communities, personal development and leadership. Spiral Dynamics can appear to be another set of descriptions for such developmental stages, and compares well with all the others, but it is in fact quite different, and the differences contain the secret of its power to help us. It is not without cause that philosopher Ken Wilber called it "A Theory of Everything", even if that is beyond any claims I would make.

The word "Dynamics" contains the key to what it is. The originator of the theory, Clare Graves had a much more elaborate description. He called it an "emergent, cyclical, double-helix model of adult bio-psycho-social development". That might sound over-the-top and possibly confusing, but actually describes the theory very well. Taking it word by word:-

*Emergent* – Personal and Social development is a progression from simple stages towards increasingly complex ones. Life emerges and evolves.

*Cyclical* – The developmental process follows repeating patterns which build on one another, the way natural systems do. Think of the Goethian Mallow leaf here.

*Double-helix* – The cycle builds on two parallel spiral helices which are in a step



relationship to one another like the handrails of a spiral staircase. One rail contains the life conditions which are affecting the individual or the social group. The other rail contains the Value systems which people hold, that enable them to adapt to those conditions. The treads are the "stages" that we see, but the treads could be placed anywhere between two rails

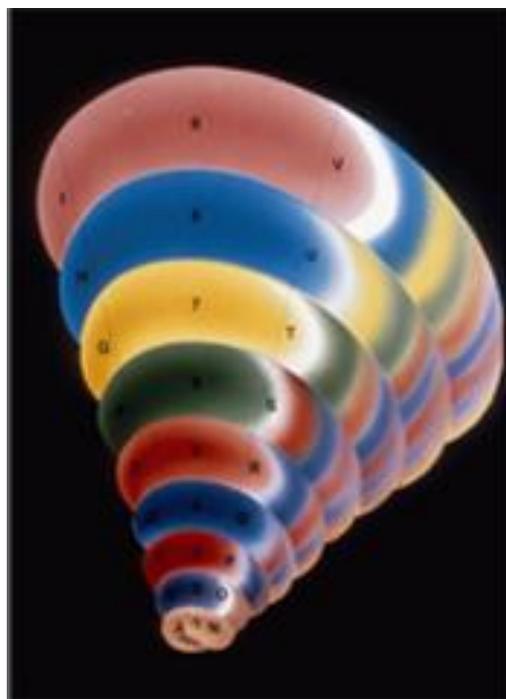
*Adult* – The emergence of values systems is more clearly demonstrated in adults and was scientifically validated there. However there is a significant parallel with childhood developmental stages too.

*Bio* – The values systems have a relationship with our physiology. This is the area which to date is least explored, but our endocrine chemistry is shown to change in ways which relate to our value systems (both as cause and as effect)

*Psycho* – The values affect our world-views. Again this is true of both individuals and organisations

*Social* – The value systems have enormous influence on the way we operate collectively. Taken together, these drive the appearance of the stages which other models identify.

How would the Spiral Dynamics model show up in Communities?



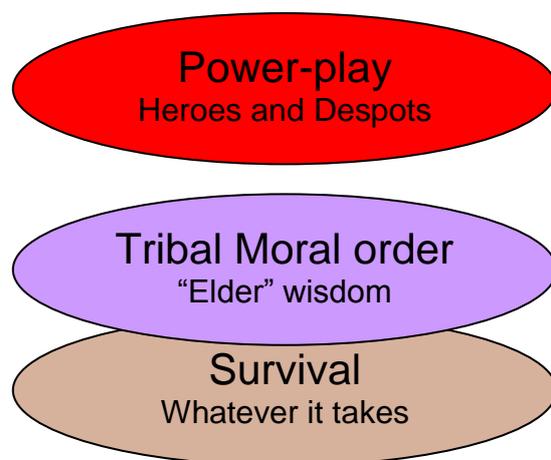
Let me try to present a much simplified answer to this question. It refers to the diagram of the spiral and to the stacked disks representation of the first seven stages which follows. Note that the colours that denote each level are purely for ease of reference and do not have any other symbolic meaning nor relate to any other system.

Development is viewed as a progression from bottom to top. The lowest level (BEIGE) represents the early state of humanity, a nomadic survival band state which is pre-community and is now scarcely present anywhere on Earth. But it is represented in dependent individuals in infancy and mental illness and its values would be triggered in conditions where basic needs (Food, water, shelter) are threatened.

Level 2 (PURPLE) represents a gathering into what we think of as tribal societies. The life conditions show the shift from mere survival into relative safety, and the cultural values are intended to preserve this. Its key features involve the authority of elders, systems which value kinship, and high levels of conformity to social norms. Mystical beliefs, shamanistic practices, animist views of the Divine and seasonal rituals often feature. It is equivalent to the stage of infancy where the child is strongly bonding with its parents and siblings. For a community too, it is often an early phase, strongly reliant on its founders and on the practices which develop during the formative years.

A PURPLE culture can be very stable, but eventually the founding beliefs may show failure to adapt to altered environments or changing times. A tribe may struggle when climate is hostile and there is a need to relocate. Other tribes or social changes may bring pressure. Equally there is an internal dynamic. The strong pressure for conformity may prove unacceptably restrictive to those with strong and independent spirits. This is like the next stage of child development, where a healthy ego begins to push against the family boundaries in order to discover its own individuality. For the community, there is a continual demand that traditions and practices should be re-evaluated: do they still serve a purpose or are they becoming an impediment to emergence?

All of the "cool" colours are representations of social forces – the "we / our" impulse. A glance at the spiral will reveal that these alternate with the "warm" colours, the forces of individualisation and counter-social thrust which are the "I / my" side of the balance. This oscillation continues level by level.



The RED third level which emerges from PURPLE constraints values the healthy ego and treasures the individual who may take heroic and pioneering courses, or be the strong leader who guides the tribe through difficult times into new pastures. But RED values can also turn unhealthy. Its impulsive nature can

work for good or ill. Every layer has its shadow side and the third layer can see the development of autocracies and empires, with dominant and exploitative behaviour. It may also throw up those who exploit the community for their own more selfish needs to be met, just as unconstrained infants can become dominant when parents are unable to provide firm boundaries. The RED dynamic is essential in healthy humans and healthy communities, but must always be managed against the development of individual or mafia-like interest groups.

As societies grow in numbers or complexity, the tensions of RED conflict become unacceptable. Perpetual war brings a hunger for peace and order. The competing personal interests are insufficient for stability. Society hungers for an overarching goal to which all may adhere. It seeks rules and principles which members are expected to abide by, and the fourth level BLUE systems come into being, with a search for purpose. BLUE calls for systems to maintain and arbitrate on fairness. At the large scale this stage sees the development of organised religious systems like Islam or Christianity and brings legal structures. The feudal structures morph into ruling classes whose interests the law typically represents. For a child likewise it is the stage where explicit rules are learned, and it is recognised that hierarchies exist.

A community also will have its rules, policies and procedures. There will be basic internal standards which have to be met, and some degree of job role distinction is inevitable. Typically this is an area where Camphill is hesitant as it seeks to enable each human to flourish. We will return to this challenge, and to the tensions which the Camphill ethos generates around it.

As with PURPLE, the conformist requirements of BLUE can become an unhealthy constraint. Where a healthy BLUE may have democracy, tolerant religions and benign use of law, an unhealthy BLUE can produce the Russia of Krushchev and Brezhnev, the inquisition and the Ayatollahs, and police states of all kinds. The predominant value is order, and the purpose which that order supports may come to seem more important than the people. But even without these toxic extremes, the rules of one era may be slow to respond to change as the next comes along. Pressures rise in which individuals once again seek to express their personality, and groups look for strategic advantages. They seek loopholes in the law and strive for the status of personal achievement. In Community, this assertiveness of individuals can bring new initiatives, expansion phases and the founding of off-shoot communities. It can support the adoption of new methods and technologies. Camphill also finds external BLUE challenging, and has to deal with a continual tension between internal freedom to live and work out of our core Values when surrounded by external regulation. The conversation at the 2008 Rotterdam International Dialogue was highly representative of this.

The new assertive phase, of strategic, achievist drive is given the colour ORANGE. It is colour of the industrial revolution and colonialism. Camphill thus has its own ORANGE growth and development as it expands across the globe, and as it combines into an over-arching movement. In areas where Camphill has protected its identity, it explores the balance between freedom and legal constraint. This also has ORANGE features, because the integrity of the movement has the qualities of a "brand", where the values are embedded in an external image through which we seek to have those values recognised. It is another way in which increased size and complexity are expressed. It can also be a way that we strategically express back into BLUE regulation the message that we have our own way of meeting their targets. Instead of being a constraint, the BLUE system becomes a platform on which we use ORANGE to demonstrate our excellence, and show how Community is our means of delivery of quality care. ORANGE is motivated by trophies so we have to be conscious

about whether those trophies are of real meaning and value. There are less healthy forms of ORANGE that have led to the recent collapse of economic systems, when BLUE rules were flouted or ignored and the risk-taking switched from healthy and strategic to mindless and corrupt. Our culture has demonstrated what happens when money and goods becomes the trophies. But we need ORANGE. It is the engine which generates surplus. The financial resources which pay for care in USA and Europe typically come from the ORANGE commercial engine. ORANGE is also the emerging young adult, breaking away from parents and finding their own place in the world, a new generation bringing the future towards us.

As with all of the warm systems the outward dynamic of ORANGE can bring fragmentation. It generates conditions in which identity becomes diffuse and it has a materialist, technological streak which can overbalance against real human values. The outer self thrives but the inner self begins to suffer. Out of this discomfort emerges the next cool system, which has been denoted by GREEN. It is important to emphasise here that SD use of GREEN is not the same as ecological green, but that there is significant commonality. The reason for this is that SD GREEN level is very aware of the need to share, and this sharing extends to an understanding of the world's resources. However these relationships are even more central to the levels after GREEN.

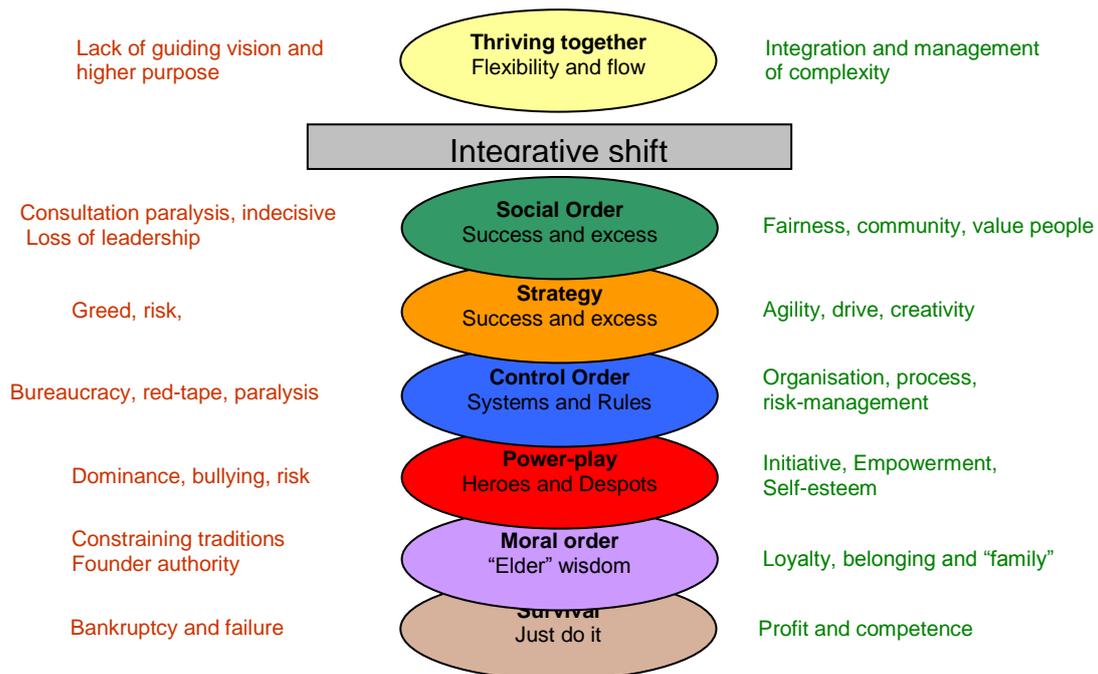


Where ORANGE is very dynamic and encourages rapid decision-making, often individuals or by smaller groups, GREEN is communitarian by nature and highly motivated by consensus. In this sense Camphill has a strong GREEN core. Any group that likes to sit in circles is likely to be showing strong GREEN, though it should be noted that this is also underpinned in Camphill by PURPLE values of respect for natural rhythms, elder wisdom and spiritual tradition. GREEN values motivate us towards inner peace and spiritual exploration, but it also has a tendency to express in New Age ways, to cherry-pick from the buffet of traditional

knowledge and seek microwaved enlightenment. Spiritual development can be confused with personal growth and emotional psychology. Protection of our own and others' feelings can inhibit sensible and rational judgement. GREEN organisations may tolerate behaviours which become damaging to the community rather than risk the discomfort which comes when we challenge individuals and expect them to be accountable. In referring earlier to Camphill's occasional discomfort with BLUE, this is found in the GREEN value system's distaste for structure and rules. It is easy to confuse accountability to rules and legality with the deeper need to be accountable to each other. Sometimes distaste for the former masks avoidance of the latter. GREEN's search for inner peace also rests on BLUE's creation of outer peace. Lack of accountability can sometimes be a covert RED behaviour, which is camouflaged in GREEN freedom. Undetected or unaddressed this can be very damaging to the community. Similarly the expression of personal self in community can dominate at the expense of the spiritual disciplines which BLUE would seek to have. The Camphill spiritual study groups (the historical "bible" evenings) are an expression of healthy BLUE support of inner discipline and a balance of the personal with the communal in spiritual exploration.

### The great leap: transition to integral community

After the sixth level, Spiral Dynamics identifies a major transition. The next shift is not merely another level, but a shift of perspective. While all six of the Value systems we have discussed retain the capacities of their predecessor stages, those who are in one system struggle to see the value of the others, which become almost invisible. As examples, BLUE and ORANGE tend to dismiss PURPLE systems as primitive, naïve and unscientific. GREEN thinks that BLUE is rigid and ORANGE money-grabbing. BLUE and GREEN cannot see any positive values in RED and forget that when a fireman rushes heroically into a blaze, that is also a manifestation of the RED value system. BLUE and ORANGE both respond to GREEN as ungrounded and unrealistic, which is why my son's primary teacher, when told that we would be moving him to a Waldorf school, dismissed them as "hippies".



Complex and large-scale societies cannot be organised from the fragmented thinking just described. Integration becomes essential and for this reason the transition that occurs after GREEN is such that from the seventh level, all of the previous stages are visible and all are seen and valued with greater objectivity. By its nature, Spiral Dynamics could not be articulated until the new YELLOW level of values began to emerge in our human portfolio. While it may be felt that high-level views have shown up in individuals such as the prophets and masters since long ago, the emergence of YELLOW in larger numbers of the population dates back only around fifty years, and even now it is estimated that just a few percent of the Western world have a YELLOW centre of gravity. For reference, the USA and Europe overall are at various levels of transit through the BLUE-ORANGE and ORANGE-GREEN stages, with Obama's approach visibly in the latter. Many areas of the world are still in warlord-dominated RED (look at Afghanistan or Somalia) and in RED-BLUE (much of the Middle-east). One aspect of the struggle in Palestine is that it is not simply between Jew and Arab, but between Israeli ORANGE and the RED of Hamas and the BLUE of Fatah. They are value systems conflicts which prevent the tolerant sides of either religious background from expressing itself, and ensure too that the Islamic side speaks with mixed voices.

This paper is not about large-scale psychology, but the comments above may be used as an indicator that when we are dealing with conflict in community it is a clash of value systems and perspectives – often in disguise. This is as likely to be true whether we are dealing with individual conflict or with the deep discussions that are taking place in Camphill just now regarding its identity and the way in which its core ideals will be expressed in the world. For this reason learning how to see our communities and our movement through a YELLOW lens has the potential to help us understand all of the balances that must be achieved, if healthy emergence is to follow. The balances required are partly described in the diagram above, and all must be kept healthy. Use of the tools that Spiral Dynamics provides for analysing a community allows us to see objectively what is present, and will reveal some of the more subtle aspects which would otherwise remain hidden. We can then open up conversations that might easily have been missed.

In this we are beginning to see the specific qualities of the seventh YELLOW stage of development. Yellow integrates multiple viewpoints. This is an essential capability if we are to understand a world that becomes daily more complex. We are asked to manage communities which operate from strong traditions in a regulated world, contain passionate idealists with healthy individuality, have a mix of employed and intentional community members, are undergoing growth and combining into larger and more complex organisations (CVT and the Sheiling Trust being examples) all of which aspire to consensual and spiritually aware ways of life. All of the value systems are present in this description and all need their health to be supported if the Camphill organism and those who live and work in it are to continue to flourish and to grow further. YELLOW values provide the toolset to support this. From an anthroposophical view it also has great respect for natural systems and forms and is the first stage since the time of Newton to have the capability to understand Goethian science. It does not seek to impose hierarchies, but finds models of flexible and complex flow. YELLOW recognises the value of competence, attitude (EQ/Emotional Intelligence) and knowledge ahead of rank and power. It is both pragmatic and spontaneous.

The discussion of levels and stages has a potential to mislead. In the Spiral Dynamics model, people, groups, organisations, countries may all be perceived as having reached an identifiable "stage", but the system recognises that we are

more complex than that. We may hold values from several of the stages at once. We may apply different value sets to different contexts. So in all cases there is a "stack" which covers several levels. When we identify a "stage" what we are seeing is a dominant level, or the centre of gravity for a personal or community stack. Each of the transitions as the centre of gravity shifts (BLUE to ORANGE, ORANGE to GREEN etc. has its own characteristics of entry and exit. Accomplishing these is eased by recognition, and by specific management approaches.

When we say that stages are developmental, it needs to be understood that we never lose the capacities from earlier stages. The stages emerge in response to the demands of changing life conditions. If conditions change back, we revert to the use of earlier sets of capacities, underpinned by different values. For example when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, there was a lot of BEIGE response, and several layers of civilisation disappeared overnight, even if only for a few days. Perhaps more importantly each stage relies on the health of a previous stage to provide it with the platform for growth. When a stage is incomplete, or is later allowed to deteriorate, something will collapse, and force the re-building of that platform. This recognition is central to the work of the YELLOW viewpoint in maintaining individual social and community health.

The power in this model comes from our ability to identify what Value systems are in operation, and which value systems are naturally seeking to emerge, as the community develops. These are human capacities and life forces which cannot be constrained. They grow like grass through concrete. When we are conscious of the life conditions and Value systems which are next on the horizon we can assist the emergence through understanding, visioning and even training. Similarly when a community shows signs of stress or collapse, we can identify earlier stages which have become weak, and we can underpin them. We can also identify where individuals are most at odds with the surrounding conditions and values of the whole, and help them understand why and how to change in ways that will help them on their own developmental journey. The development of the community and the health of the individual are inseparable, in line with the social ethic.

### How could all of this help in the development of Camphill communities?

The integral viewpoint which emerges with the YELLOW value systems provides a means to understand the internal community dynamic in all of its aspects. It provides a lens through which to view the balance of values that will be present in each of the community members.

Externally it enables us to see the Camphill journey as it relates to the surrounding culture, and to recognise how our own perspectives may completely fail to recognise the impulses which are driving others. At the Association of Camphill Communities we were presented with some descriptions of the Camphill communities in Southern Africa. In one of them, financial control had clearly broken down, and money was disappearing. It is natural and correct that the first response to this is one of improved financial control. But this scenario can also be viewed through the Spiral lens. When we are used to setting up Camphills in cultures that already have strong BLUE ordering systems we can expect these Values to be in operation, and probably ORANGE and GREEN also. In many parts of Africa we move into a culture where there was once a tribal PURPLE cohesion which has now become fragmented, and where an opportunist RED, "me-first"

Value system is strong. It is to be anticipated that the respect for law in BLUE, or the fairness motivation in GREEN may be weak or absent. Imposing control is an essential first step but is only one part of the journey. The bigger win comes when those who are operating to RED value systems can connect with the order and higher purpose that BLUE offers. These can then be internalised and work to the benefit of others. Rather than merely suppress unhealthy RED or push it outside of the community, it is channelled into better paths.

Every one of the aspects of transition that Andrew Plant's paper presents us with can be informed by a view through the Spiral Dynamics lens and the resolutions helped by the integral perspective. Let me just give two examples.

*Professionalism* – A BLUE value which can be challenged from PURPLE (that's not our way) from RED (Restricts my freedom to practice as I see fit) from ORANGE (constrains my options to develop) and GREEN (unnecessary bureaucracy). At YELLOW, professionalism becomes just one of the many positive approaches that support quality, in just the way that the Ways To Quality model presents.

*Community* – This may be seen from a clan / tribe model (our identity and traditions as distinct from the rest of the world) in PURPLE, as an ordered structure with management systems in BLUE (which may be sought by regulators) and from the egalitarian sharing of GREEN. We may need to encompass aspects of all of these, at the same time as allowing individuality at RED and the entrepreneurial spirit of the community shop / café at ORANGE. RED is not interested in community except for its own ends. And ORANGE is more interested in the entrepreneurial aspect of the shop than its community worth. This also embraces the area of "Gemeinschaft vs Gesellschaft" - the distinction and balance between moral community bonds and socio-economic association. YELLOW will view community as an integrating force and as a means to create coherence throughout the first-tier dynamics, in shared ideals, effective organisation and social expression. It will value all of the threefold aspects of society, and work for their healthy expression and integration. (For completeness, I perceive it as possible to map a three-fold perspective of the spiral, but unhelpful to do so here.)

The SD lens makes sense of the various models of community stages, providing them with a deeper logic. It also shows just how natural and organic the emergence of such phases can be, and helps us see them as an expected sign of our healthy development which we can work with confidently and with navigational assistance.

Our view of leadership can also be informed – that the YELLOW lens would recognise that leadership takes many different forms which are appropriate for different times and circumstances, and in which many or all may exercise some form of leadership. Instead of a debate about whether leadership is good or bad, we start to engage with a sense of what kind of leadership is needed. We know that consensual circles are not the appropriate format when the fire alarm is sounding. With the SD model we can extend that common-sense and find the approaches that match varied context.

It will hopefully have been clear in the oscillation from cool to warm colours, that the social and counter-social forces are always with us, and always in flux. The dynamic we observe is that of riding a bicycle. You cannot balance when static, but when in motion it can even be fun. Individual freedom is not at stake, but operates in conjunction with other forces.

I hope that I have said enough to indicate the richness of this perspective and its power to help us find our path through complexity and change. I would like to think that some of what I have said has already begun to generate fresh insights. We can all feel the growing complexity and its potential to outstrip our comprehension. It is easy to know that change is inevitable. It is often easy to recognise that change is needed. What is more difficult is to answer the more meaningful questions – WHO should lead WHOM to change FROM WHAT, and TO WHAT? I hope that it is obvious that Spiral Dynamics comes with no predefined solutions, but instead with a capability to respond to the unique needs and context of every community, in new cultural and geographic adventures and also at our corporate levels in the neighbourhoods, regions and worldwide. I hope that I have said enough to indicate the flexibility and potency of this system, its ability to incorporate our ideals within its perspectives and its capacity to provide supportive enablers for whatever is waiting to emerge.

It would give me great pleasure to see Spiral Dynamics in use and assisting in the special work of the Camphill movement. There are multiple approaches to making that happen. At the overview level that it would be valuable for carrying groups and boards alike to be trained to have an understanding of the principles and to extend the richness of their own thinking. At the detail level there are toolsets which enable us to map the values profiles of every individual in a community, and through them to understand the overall community profile in order to develop its roadmap. There are many levels of engagement in between, with mixes of facilitation, consultancy and training which would vary from community to community depending both on their needs, their constraints and on their interest or capacity to develop their own capabilities. I would be very happy to talk about the possibilities, and I have SD colleagues in other territories who would no doubt offer the same if it is wanted there.

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