

SPIRAL DYNAMICS

Tracking the emergence of v-memes as organising principles in human nature

The word "meme" was introduced by the British biologist Richard Dawkins to describe cultural information that is passed from one person to another, distributed through social systems, much as genes are distributed through biological systems. Spiral Dynamics combines this idea with Dr Clare Graves' important work on value systems, to make v-memes.

Beige v-meme Survival Band, instinct driven
Automatic/Instinctive: "I survive". Biology driven, sensory. Humans as smartest of animal species.

Transition: awareness of distinct self, awakening of cause and effect, concerns with threats/fears, survival requires group effort.

Purple v-meme Tribal Order, safety driven
Animistic/Tribalistic: "We are safe". Mystical spirits, signs, and nests for safety. Individual subsumed in group. Powerful shaman/chieftains.

Transition: emergence of dominant ego, self more powerful than group, confronts adversaries and dangerous forces to control, niches are limited.

Red v-meme Exploitive Empire, power driven
Egocentric/Exploitive: "I control". Power impulses and displays, hedonism and immediate sensory satisfaction, spontaneous, guilt-free, daring.

Transition: recognition of mortality, quest for meaning and purpose in life, extended time-frame/future, consequential thinking arises.

Blue v-meme Authority Structure, order driven
Absolutistic/Saintly: "We are saved". Only one right way to think/be, finds purpose in causes and dedications to crusades, guilt-based obedience to higher authority.

Transition: aspires to better life now for self, challenges higher authority to produce tangible results, seeks one best way among many options.

Orange v-meme Strategic Enterprise, success driven
Materialist/Achiever: "I improve". Search for best answers and ways to advance, goal-oriented planning and strategies to do better, economic focus of competition.

Transition: discovers material wealth does not bring happiness or peace, renewed need for community, sharing, and richer inner life, sensitivity to have, have-not gaps.

Green v-meme Social Network, people driven
Relativistic/Sociocentric: "We become". Consensus-seeking spirituality, egalitarian and humanitarian, tolerance/acceptance of a range of differences.

Transition: overwhelmed by economic and emotional costs of caring, confronted by chaos/disorder, need for tangible results and functionality, knowing moves above feeling.

Yellow v-meme Systemic Flow, process oriented
Systemic/Integrative: "I learn". Big-picture views of living systems, integrative structures and forms in evolutionary flows, understands chaos and change are natural.

Transition: senses order within chaos, search for guiding principles, whole-earth problems arise as technology connects everybody, spirituality back with physics.

Turquoise v-meme Holistic Organism, synthesis oriented
Globalist/Renewalist: "We experience". Synergy of life forms /forces, planetary concerns rank above group interests, reordered world for new meanings & good of the commons.

Transition: the next system will be a new form of expressiveness, extended to the planetary level. Global problems will appear to require unified control, a new way of being to fit a world where collective living has changed the milieu.

The next tier begins with a coral meme...

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