

An Already Victorious Position An Impersonal Perspective on Education An interview with Mats Edin¹

By Nick Drummond, Nordic Integral
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www.nordicintegral.com

Summary

In this interview, the first in a series, we begin to explore the question, "What is integral education?" in order to better understand the context of education in Sweden and Scandinavia and the important challenges being faced in the postmodern pluralistic world we are living in. Mats Edin brings to the question more than twenty years of experience in education and work as a school psychologist in Sweden. He gives clear examples of Sweden's very advanced GREEN postmodern culture and some of the caustic effects it has on teaching and education. This experience is then combined with our knowledge of the psychological developmental theories and models such as developed by Andrew Cohen, Ken Wilber, Don Beck, Clare Graves, Carol Gilligan, Lawrence Kohlberg and Robert Kegan. In exploring the question, "What is integral education?" Mats Edin starts off by making the distinction of needing to recognise that a genuine second tier response should be based on an emotional recognition of what it means to be aligned with the *authentic self* in an *evolutionary* context – i.e. the need for a moral compass. This perspective begins with an emotional and experiential recognition of the evolutionary impulse and of seeing ourselves as an expression of that and not separate from it. This is a very important distinction because it critically questions as to whether or not we, as educators, are supporting this evolutionary process occurring in our students and ourselves. By refusing to recognise it and that, "*We have to align ourselves with it – right now!*" we choose to see ourselves as being separate from it and thus generate more problems than we solve, thus seeing ourselves as being a victim to the events that unfold.

A second tier response to integral education is also an awareness for using an integral map, i.e. a recognition that hierarchies fall into four major classes (the four quadrants of individual, collective, interior, exterior), that development entails distinguishing different levels of interior depth (such as Spiral Dynamics), and that there are different lines of development (such as moral development and values development). Our understanding of where we are in our own development will in turn affect what we see and what we do, i.e. how we respond in our relationship to the people and events around us as well as to our own emotions and thoughts. It thus implies that we, together with key stakeholders, be genuinely interested in where we are on the integral map so that our actions be as integrated, focused and coordinated as possible in order to facilitate a more integrated mesh like response towards the complex situations we now face. Mats Edin also shows how each of these integral models, perspectives and transformative processes point in the same one direction – to the enormous and yet

¹ Mats Edin is Chief Psychologist for the Western inner-city school district in the City of Malmö, Sweden. tel/work +46-40-345347, mobile +45-26810176, e-mail mats_edin@hotmail.com

untapped human potential that lies within all of us. All we need to do is answer "yes" on using the integral keys to unlock it. For as Mats Edin says, *"In the end we have to make the choice ourselves and that decision only takes a split second no matter whom we are."*

1. An impersonal perspective

ND: Lets begin by exploring what integral education could be in terms of an impersonal perspective. What does impersonal mean and how can it affect how we discuss things?

ME: My use of the term "impersonal perspective" comes from the work of Andrew Cohen. To simplify what this means, Andrew Cohen basically makes the distinction that we are, all too often, conditioned to respond to our own life, as well as life in general, from a very limiting personal perspective or context, where we see ourselves as being separate from all that is happening around us. We see ourselves as being special, personal, separate cases to events occurring around us. While at the same time we have the choice of choosing to respond from a vastly more extensive impersonal perspective where we choose to see ourselves as not being separate from everything around us, not even for a moment. There is no in between. And the quality of our response, i.e. the moral depth behind our actions, will be very much influenced by which perspective we actively choose to take. This is a very important distinction because it critically questions as to whether or not we are actively supporting a positive evolutionary process from occurring between us or not. Thus a personal response to the question will not recognise the need for supporting an already existing positive potential between people, i.e. the moral context is very shallow. In fact in using a personal perspective we become more and more interested in ourselves and nothing else. The result is very narcissistic, negative and destructive.

Let me illustrate this with a simple example. About six months ago I was together with a difficult group of twelve-year-old boys. I distinctly made the rule that we were not to discuss private and personal things. Despite this being very different to how we usually engage in discussion, the boys understood this rule. I explained the necessity of this rule by saying that, often when we become private and personal we end up in conflict or conversing in a way that leads nowhere positive. This means you either start hurting other people or you become boring to listen to. In addition nobody outside the context can relate to what it is you are talking about.

ND: How does it sound when one is focusing on the personal?

ME: You more or less see yourself as being a victim of circumstances with no need to take responsibility for your words or behaviour. You become nagging, complaining and arguing. You take a position, hold on to it, and become stuck in it. It's like you know that you are right, when in fact it's flavoured with your own preferences. One twelve-year-old boy explained it by saying, "It's like you telling me, 'well you never do this, and I always do that...'" It's like listening to a couple in a bad marriage. The discussion is characterised by prejudicial labelling of everything. And actually you don't realise what is happening until you explore the opposite, which is talking about things in an impersonal, unbiased or not private way. And actually we got an experience of that in this group of twelve-year-old boys. Then suddenly somebody can't stand it any more or just doesn't get it, so he starts talking personal once again, which means starting to complain about some things or attacking someone in the group verbally. Then I ask the group what is happening here and one of the boys, who is not normally very interested, recognises what is happening and answers, "It was too private."

I ask him to explain more and he adds, "They started arguing with each other and fighting. It wasn't nice it was boring."

It's really amazing listening to them because I know this is not said to make me happy. It's this boy's true and honest experience.

2. Mirroring the teachers self-image or ego

ND: It seems then that the teacher plays a very crucial role in influencing where the focus of communication amongst their students is placed – personal or impersonal. The fact that many teachers are unable to distinguish this difference, has this to do with the relationship between what you call the teachers self-image or ego and the effect it has on how they relate to their students?

ME: That's exactly right. Let me explain using some practical examples. In my job as chief psychologist I'm often called in to give classroom management consultations to teachers, and sometimes students, whereby I observe what goes on in the classroom between a teacher and their group of students. I succeed in becoming more or less neutral after a while, sitting there taking notes, observing what happens. Sometimes some of the students ask me who I am and what I'm doing there, but they're not really that interested. They are mostly very preoccupied with themselves, and after a while they totally forget about me and they keep doing what they were doing. I'm pretty certain that they behave more or less in the same way when I'm not there and reports from teachers and students confirm this.

The students exhibit a lot of antisocial behaviour, what I would call becoming totally limitless, have no regard for authority, throwing rulers, sticking pens into themselves and one another, chewing gum, insulting each other, walking around, assaulting someone, as well as sexual harassment, which occurs a lot. Generally behaving very aggressively. I keep writing my observations – page after page, after page, after page. Then after this class session of forty to fifty minutes has ended I talk to the teacher and I ask her or him, "How do you think it went?"

"Oh, it was pretty good. Pretty well much as it usually is."

"Did something special happen?"

"No, I don't think so."

So then I might ask, "But did you not notice that 'N' jumped out of the window?"

"Did he? No."

"Yes he did, yes he did. He jumped out, and then he came back in and looked out the window for the rest of the time. Did you also notice that those two guys threw rulers at each other, back and forth? That she got her body totally invaded by hands from him and him? Did you hear that he was called Osama bin Laden several times and that he didn't like it? Did you notice that J was touching A's breasts and she was hitting him and smiling and he kept doing it? And then she hit him again."

"No – no it can't be true."

And I say, "But it is true, it did happen."

I'm now bringing in the self-image phenomena, mirroring the teachers ego. When a psychologist is observing you your self-image is probably even more enlarged than usual. But I think, without exaggerating, that this goes on a lot because teachers have a lot of attention on their own self-image. They are much more concerned about themselves than their students.

So actually there are too many filters between reality – what is happening – and what teachers think they see. The result is scary, and of course the students also have the same problem, so they don't even see what is happening. And because the context becomes very very small and personal what matters is basically your own survival, so that's where the energy and focus gets placed.

3. A moral development perspective – being objectively true to yourself

ND: Lets say we have a group of teachers or students having difficulty working together. How can we talk impersonally and objectively about our difficulty in relating to each other, about personal relationships that are filled with conflicts? How might this sound?

Regressing to a lower level of moral reasoning

ME: Well this is very interesting because it brings in the moral context behind what we are discussing. Let me answer from an experience I had with a group of preschool teachers at a daycare center. They were experiencing a lot of conflict and were in complete disagreement with each other. The kids were not having a good time or doing things such as paintings and drawings. The parents began voicing critique and complaining to the coordinator who then contacted me. So the whole situation could best be described as inertia, i.e. the environment was anti-evolutionary. I began by listening to this group of preschool teachers, the way they spoke to each other, and I could hear that they were speaking from Kohlberg’s moral level two (figure 1), an egocentric position which says: "I’ll help you if you help me". These women had regressed in their relationship with each other to this very immature level of moral reasoning. But of course this was a group of well-educated women living in an advanced postmodern society; so there’s no way they haven’t individually progressed beyond that level; they were all capable of a much higher and more complex level of thinking and reasoning. So I responded by repeating more or less what they were saying in order for them to see that fact.

<i>Level</i>	<i>Reasoning</i>	<i>Expression</i>
1.	Power	“Might makes right.” which says that whoever has the power is the strongest.
2.	Deals	“You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.” "I’ll help you if you help me." "I’m good but s/he is sabotaging everything I do”
3.	Mutuality	“Treat others as you would hope they would treat you” or “We help them if they are nice to us.”
4.	Social System	“Are you contributing to society?” or "Are you contributing to the growing cooperation of the whole organization?"
5.	Cultural or Ethical Relativism	“There is no nonarbitrary basis to judging anything. All beliefs are equal.”
6.	Social Contract or Utility	“The greatest good for the greatest number.”
7.	Universal Ethical Principles	“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”
8.	Distinguishing Universal Depth	"Okay – every human being has equal rights but everything they say isn’t necessarily of equal value."

Figure 1. Levels of moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg.

So I said, "So you are saying that *they* are the problem, the other people are the problem. You are saying that you can’t do your things because they’re not cooperating, because they are not doing their thing. You are blaming the others by saying: ‘I’m good but they’re not.’"

And then I said, "This is what you say and I think that’s way below your level of maturity." Because I repeated what they said, they could now hear what they were actually saying and from what level it was coming from. "It’s like you are coming to your job each day, you are feeling good on arrival, and then you are taking each other down, or you are letting your own

colleagues take you down. That means you can never be sure if you will have a good day at work." And I just kept saying these things and in a way it became impersonal because I just repeated what they said. I didn't make any personal judgment about it other than to give them a map and a compass and pointing out what was higher and what was lower. "This is what I hear and this is below where you are. Honestly – you don't function on this level when you go to the bank, visit your lawyer, or visit your doctor. And if you meet your friends in your free-time you wouldn't speak in this way either."

Rising to a higher level of moral reasoning

So nobody liked what had happened – having regressed to this very low level. And they saw this important distinction and realized that they themselves had to choose to rise up at least two levels in order to be true to their own experience of how they perceive life. Because this is something they themselves are creating. So the choice is not to continue living as a victim. And when they saw this it came as a relief to them.

And when you recognize this, your response will not be depended on what other departments and people do. You will still be able to choose to make a good day for yourself, the children and the parents coming here, because how you choose to see the world will not be dependent on how others are feeling and choose to see the world each day. So this came as a relief to them. Cooperation in the house had stopped because everyone was blaming everyone else. And also because everyone was being very personal – either feeling very good or very sorry about themselves. They were in effect creating a narcissistic victim culture, encouraging each other's regression to only thinking about themselves, "How I feel." The result was that they had reached a dead end in having any kind of productive relationship with one another.

Their relationship was lifted up by use of reflection; from an egocentric moral level two: "I'll help you if you're nice to me" or "I'm good but s/he is sabotaging everything I do" to moral level three, which is now a kind of ethnocentric/biblical stance saying, "Treat others as you would hope they would treat you," or "What would it be like if everybody spoke in the way I did before Mats came here?" to moral level four, "Are you contributing to the growing cooperation of the whole organization?"

So they were able to rise two to three levels up in a very short space of time because I was able to come in and facilitate them see what was happening more impersonally, more objectively. This widened and deepened their moral context. They were able to face where they were and see what level their self-image was presently at on this integral map and that it needed to mature quickly; for their own sake and for the sake of the organization as well, without anybody feeling or being blamed. This is prevented from happening as long as the conflict is seen personally and subjectively.

ND: And of course there are even higher levels in moral development.

Being true to yourself

ME: That's right – it's never ending. But this relatively short process resulted in a large change occurring within the daycare center staff. The kids now produce things. There are now drawings on the walls and they come home with things and they tell about songs and games they play. Parents are reporting back to the coordinator that the atmosphere at the daycare center has improved dramatically. It might not be that everybody working there is happy, but they see they have a choice and they are not blaming each other anymore. It might sound like a miracle, but in the moment of when they spoke I just kept reflecting back what I heard them saying by saying, "Do you hear where you are?" And my point was that they were not living

up to where they really were. They were in a deep regression – hiding out and not living their full potential. This is actually a typical female trait in workplaces where many females work.² This is characterized by an awful lot of negative competition whereby the group actively stops its members from growing and this is very unwholesome for both the individual and the organization. They get locked into processing unwholesome relationships and nobody gets to mature and be a women. It's like everybody is reduced to being a girl again and nobody knows how to evolve. When the group focuses on being together, i.e. community, and indirectly punishes agency – the so-called togetherness keeps everyone glued to mediocrity.

4. A values development perspective

ND: You've given clear examples of how our relationship to ourselves and the people and world around us can change radically in a positive direction once we become aware of, challenge and lift the level of our own perspective. It seems that what you are talking about is the need for not only recognising an impersonal perspective but also the need for verticality – a need for a vertical perspective to our own development. Because once we, as teachers and school leaders, introduce verticality we enable ourselves to change and develop.

ME: Yes, that's exactly my point.

ND: Then if we look at values development as yet another line of inner development and the model Spiral Dynamics as researched and developed by Graves, Beck and Cowen (figure 2), which describes this in detail, and apply this perspective to help better understand the general educational situation in schools in Sweden, what is it that we are seeing?

ME: Well I see first tier *survival* qualities [levels 1-6] and unfortunately no second tier *being* qualities [levels 7-8] as yet. This is because headmasters and teachers in our postmodern Nordic culture have meme stacks heavily centred in GREEN and ORANGE – they hardly recognise differences in developmental depth and complexity of thinking – in fact many refuse to acknowledge it and in doing so actually prevent their colleagues and students from developing. Because the GREEN value system disenables them from seeing a hierarchical change process as being something positive and healthy, so that significant differences in depth, development and complexity of thinking get painfully levelled out. So when these teachers are teaching in school they are not able to handle students at different levels of development. They don't recognise these differences or their mismatched teaching style as being the problem. As such they don't know from which level they themselves are coming from, and they don't know from which level their students are coming from (figure 3).

So how are they going to come up with appropriate solutions for promoting change and development? In effect they are left to grapple with very difficult situations without a map and a compass to guide them. And without this sense of vertical depth, they use a GREEN *one-size-fits-all-teaching* style, which more or less treats everyone the same regardless. The result is disastrous and this is what we are seeing in Sweden today. It's also very hilarious – they scream for solutions but don't want to question, change and develop their level of thinking! Which is a very narcissistic moral position and is in fact what is actually preventing them from generating the solutions that are needed.

² Ken Wilber makes the distinction in his integral model of recognising "different *types* of consciousness (or possible orientations at every level, including personality types and different gender styles)" these being female and male. Evidence suggests that male and female behaviour and thinking is different and therefore an important aspect to address when discussing the topic of integral education. We shall return to this again later in the interview. Wilber, Ken, (2000). *A Theory of Everything*. Shambhala.

<i>Level</i>	<i>Healthy aspects</i>	<i>Unhealthy aspects</i>	<i>Motivational forces</i>	<i>Required leadership style</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
2. PURPLE Safety & Security	Extended families; bonding belonging; group	Fearful/fatalistic; victim mentality; gang	Rituals; custom & tradition; safe, caring environment; respect for powerful figures; magic places/things	Tribal: Strong, caring teacher who assures safety; rewards group not individual; uphold traditional ways	In the present but facing towards the past. "What would the great chiefs or spirits do?"
3. RED Power & Domination	Creativity; sense of self; dynamism	Aggression; crime; selfish; impulsive; exploitative	Macho challenges & dares; heroic images; look good and get respect; immediate tangible rewards	Autocratic: tough straight talking teacher; immediate feedback; gives respect; police boundaries strictly	Immediate present. "I want it and I want it NOW."
4. BLUE Order & Structure	Order, self discipline; structure; planning	Dogmatic; rigid; fundamentalist; authoritarian	Sacrifice for team, country, belief; duty & honour; be prepared; codes of discipline	Bureaucratic: set uniform standards; reward good performance fairly; hierarchical	Time continuum from past through present to extended future "Sacrifice now for a better future."
5. ORANGE Winning & Wealth	Belief in science & reason; risk based on understanding	Greedy; manipulative calculating; cold	Opportunity for success; competitive advantage; seek best way among many; be a savvy winner	Pragmatic: perks for winners; goal-oriented & competitive; reward excellence	Multiplistic & compartmentalised. "Just how many balls can I keep in the air at one time."
6. GREEN Equality & Consensus	Sensitive to needs of others & planet	Political correctness; long meetings; eco-fascism; rigidity	Participation; human rights & dignity for all; liberation of the oppressed; equality, affiliation & love	Social: sharing circle of equals; develop human potential & heighten awareness collectively	Fuzzy Time. Tends to experience time as indivisible. Extended sense of now.
7. YELLOW Knowledge & Systems	Values knowledge & competency above status & power	Arrogant; isolated; over-reliant on self	Be as one chooses; big picture access to systems & info.; self-worth & competency	Systemic: be available mostly as resource; consult; give space; flexibility & functionality	Flexi-time depending on what needs doing. Yellow can do all above as appropriate to context. Flow state

Figure 2. Spiral Dynamics and levels of values development in education after Beck and Cowan. Adapted from Nick Owen, English Teaching Professional Issue 28 July 2003.

We have a lot of kids in school today who are stuck in the RED meme. In fact we are seeing clear signs of negative RED in day-care centres as early as two-three years of age and continuing all the way up to high school. Of course we are also seeing many more students than ever before in GREEN. However, the problem is that because GREEN doesn't recognise open vertical development or the need for an integral map we are not aware of which teaching style is most appropriate for promoting growth at different levels of development. When this happens we use the wrong style and create blockages to growth. We waste a lot of time, energy and badly needed resources by teaching, leading and motivating students in the wrong way. And I see this a lot when sensitive GREEN teachers and school administrators find themselves literally chewed up and spat out in this increasingly tougher RED environment – which they themselves are actually creating. So rather than rising, we end up sinking to the lowest common denominator. I mean because we don't recognise YELLOW, we end up promoting narcissistic GREEN in our best teacher students.

<i>Level</i>	<i>Required teaching style</i>
1. BEIGE Survival	Caretaker. Takes emotional and physical care of instinctive automatic biological drives. Seen in young infants and severe cases of psychological illness, sickness, trauma, grief and regressive behaviour.
2. PURPLE Safety & Security	Caring Parent. Fosters belonging & togetherness through whole group rituals. Motivates the student by giving sense of bonding, safety and belonging and giving tokens and tangible rewards. Repetition and rituals allow students centered here to feel safe and secure in a mysterious, unknowable world.
3. RED Power & Domination	Big Boss. Can give tough love, lays down the law & polices the boundaries as toughness gets respect. Motivates the student by gratifying their impulses and positive behavior with <i>immediate</i> tangible rewards and prizes. Students centered here see the world as a jungle. Consequently they play the role of warrior or aggressor. Their behavior is governed more by their impulses and ego than objectified social norms.
4. BLUE Order & Structure	Rightful Authority. Focuses on rules, structure & discipline; prefers teacher centered methodology. Motivates the student with rewards for dedication and to control impulsivity through guilt using social reinforces. These students believe there is only ' <i>one right way</i> ' and with this belief seek order, meaning and purpose in life.
5. ORANGE Winning & Wealth	Colleague. A snappy, well briefed pragmatist who demands the best from learners; favors individual project work. Students centered in this system seek influence, possibilities, status, and hi-tech tools to play and work. Motivates the student by giving responsibility, challenging experiences and treating them as important people. They like to be winners and will negotiate win-win situations with teachers and parents.
6. GREEN Equality & Consensus	Sensitive Facilitator. Encourages harmony & co-operation; uses humanistic methodology. Students centered here seek mutually agreed ways of working together with teacher and fellow students. Motivates the student using openness, involvement, inclusion and participation and treating them as equal. Their concerns are to build a better world for all and share common resources with those who have less.
7. YELLOW Knowledge & Systems	Competent Partner. Adapts tasks and methodologies to suit the preferences of each individual learner. Students centered here seek competence, knowledge and ways to understand the complexity of integrated living systems of which they are a part. They often prefer working alone. The teacher needs to get out of their way and be available as a resource.
8. TURQUOISE Holistic & Spiritual	Spiritual Counsellor. Focuses on the forces that enable the student's transpersonal development. Students centered here seek to transcend their ego and become engaged in processes that promote synergy within all previous and future levels and systems of development.

Figure 3. *Spiral Dynamics and required teaching style. Adapted from Nick Owen, English Teaching Professional Issue 27 April 2003.*

So the teachers that we are left with mostly have romantic views about RED, both in themselves and in their students, and use some pseudo-psychology in trying to understand it. They see the RED meme as being very traumatised, and that we should understand them and love them with the motto, "Love all, serve all."

So my mission in school is to de-psychologize, de-understand, de-empathize, de-sympathize, de-compassion, de-victimise everything. I know this might sound very threatening to many of my psychologist colleagues in Sweden, but I literally mean that.

For example I often hear GREEN expressing, "We have to understand (the tough kids) better, we can't do much, we have to realise that he actually has a hard time, and she has a hard time; it's actually very difficult...If only more of us could understand them better." That's GREEN talking about RED and just not giving a damn about what is happening.

It can also be ORANGE giving up on students, saying, "It's no use. I just give him something to do and I hope he just sits still, and if not I send him out, because spending time on him is basically a bad investment. It's better to concentrate on the other kids. I mean there are so many that need help, I can't save all of them, can I? I just don't have enough time or resources."

ORANGE basically doesn't care either. They may pretend to, but the thinking is basically flatland, "Why invest resources in somebody when it's not going to pay off. That's meaningless." But this is also a case of ORANGE and GREEN not being able to generate more elegant and creative solutions for the complexity of problems now faced, they simply don't have the interest, capacity or complexity of thinking to generate the solutions that are necessary.

From a Natural Designs³ perspective what is needed for RED kids is a healthy RED or BLUE teacher. And I don't see that much healthy RED or BLUE to be honest, actually very little BLUE. In fact the very few teachers who are still centred in BLUE in the schools I have visited in Sweden are very popular amongst the kids. The GREEN teachers, of course, do not like them at all and these teachers are commented on negatively and receive a pretty hard time from their colleagues. The GREEN culture, that is so prevalent, basically cannot and will not support them. So the challenge we are faced with is to catalyse and facilitating a major leap from GREEN to YELLOW, i.e. introducing a more complex level of thinking.

ND: So without YELLOW leadership this GREEN culture is actually dissolving the lower memetic systems that are vitally necessary for young minds to pass through in order to evolve?

ME: I'm afraid so and it's very frightening when we see it on a large scale. GREEN accuses BLUE of being fascists, because the kids have to stand up in line outside the classroom and wait until the teacher tells them that they can enter the room. They walk in line like a military march. And GREEN cannot stand that at all, because the Mean Green Meme, as Don Beck and Ken Wilber call negative GREEN, hates discipline, hates hierarchies, all hierarchies, i.e. even natural hierarchies. Which ironically in itself is a hierarchical judgement!

I've met several hundred teachers in the City of Malmö, and of those I have maybe met only a handful of teachers who are centred in BLUE, so they are very very rare; a woodwork teacher and a gym teacher, that's about it. Honestly – I'm not joking – the implications are very frightening.

³ Second tier Natural Design leadership and teaching is in contrast to rigid, artificial, top-down or one-size-fits-all first tier leadership/teaching models, which often result in mismatches, dysfunctional conflict, and chaotic developmental processes.

5. The two paths to human development perspective

ND: What are you seeing if you use the two schools to human development, i.e. Nietzsche's Back to Basics, a growth to goodness philosophy in contrast to Rousseau's Whole Child and natural goodness philosophy?⁴

ME: Mostly Whole Child. That's also the reason why I want to de-psychologize, de-understand and de-empathize what is going on here. I have to really confront this idea and destroy the hold it has on our culture. And it's actually very very simple to do and people actually become very happy when this happens. I was visiting a private school recently talking much like I am now. And they answered, "But this is not what we were told. We were told that all kids are good and we should look for that goodness and be more or less like gardeners in Eden. Just make them grow good."

And I said, "No! Forget about it. Look at your own experience. Have you seen this happening? No." And they just loved it. They saw from their experiences the truth in what I was saying and they wanted to have me come there and lecture. They were like people who had just walked through a desert, desperately thirsty and craving for water. It's true; they have been filled up with this GREEN Whole Child garbage for far too long, being told by a GREEN culture that they should have sympathy, and patience with these kids. And I asked them, "Why would you have that? They are thugs and bullies doing horrible things to other kids. Why should you need to understand that?"

The private schools have actually more of this GREEN Whole Child philosophy than the government schools, maybe because they do not have the same level of experience, resources, teachers and student counsellors.

6. A natural hierarchy perspective

ND: You often use a pyramid model (figure 4) to describe leadership and make the point that leaders have to be at the top. This of course goes against the flat pluralistic GREEN "we are all equal" leadership model. Can you use this perspective to explain what we are seeing?

ME: Sure, and let me use an example. About one and a half years ago I gave a two-day workshop for a group of school principals. I was talking to them about leadership using this pyramid model. Basically it says that if you are higher up in the hierarchy – this naturally existing hierarchy of increasing levels of depth and maturity – you see people, you give affirmation, but you don't have any need to be seen yourself except if it makes sense. It is actually choice-less. And at the base of the pyramid, people are seen and that's their need. As soon as you start to rise in the hierarchy you begin to see more and more and have a lesser and lesser need to be seen. I was pushing these headmasters and they liked it, so they said at the time, but I didn't get the opportunity to speak more about it. So I think it was a mixture of feelings actually. But I continue to say this to all the educationalists I meet and I give them the example of Jesus, Buddha, Mother Teresa, John, F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela and Ghandi. Highest up is the seer. And I say, "You are in that position now, you are also that person because you are also highest up when you are working with three-year-olds, or seven-year-olds, or fourteen-year-olds. You are also the one who is

⁴ The Back to Basics School uses the metaphor of GROWTH and EMERGENCE. *Growth* implies not that we are attempting to recapture anything we had yesterday but that we are *evolving to our own higher possibilities*. The Whole Child School implies that people are BORN GOOD, but that *natural goodness* is slowly suffocated and buried by the forces of society. See Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads. The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1994).

the seer and the seer has to have full sight. You can't have a filter in front of you through which to subjectively interpret reality and expect to see reality objectively."

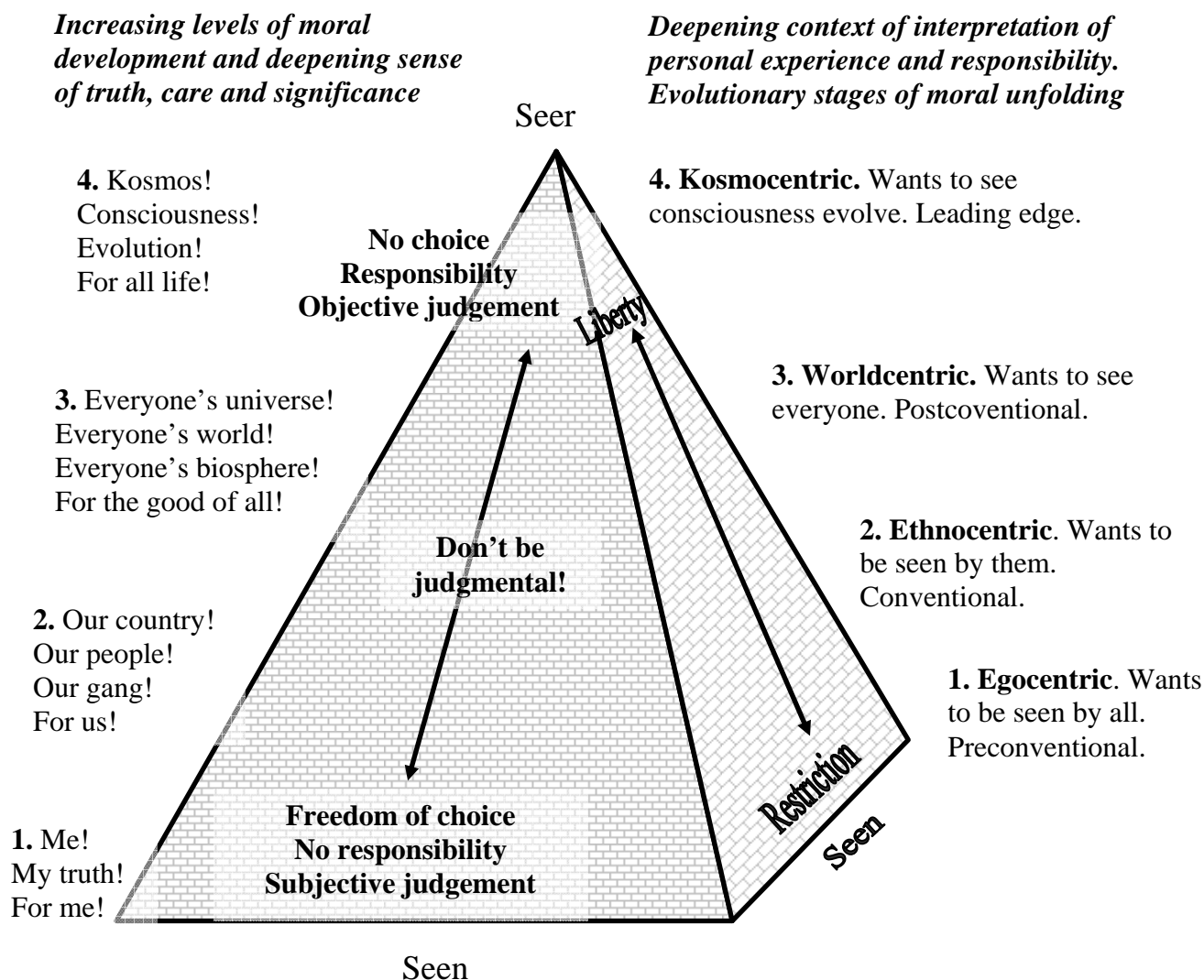


Figure 4. Leadership pyramid. Increasing levels of maturity, liberty, responsibility, moral judgement as well as decreasing levels of freedom of choice. Adapted from the work of Kohlberg, Gilligan and Wilber.

I continue to say to GREEN centred teachers in secondary schools, "You saw what happened with those kids in the corridor. One guy assaulting another guy, and another guy sexually harassing a girl, but you didn't do anything. Why?" Then they always answer, "Oh but I was afraid. I didn't do anything because I was afraid – I don't know what will happen."

And I ask, "Did you act like this in 1985 when you started working here?"

And they say, "No – no, I always intervened."

"And now you say you no longer intervene. Is that right?"

"Yes, because it's getting worse."

So I ask them, "Do you think it will be easier in the future?"

And they say, "No it's going to be harder."

And then I ask, "Isn't it a good idea then to try and stop it now?"

And they say, "Yes I realise I have to actually do it although I'm scared."

ND: Do you mean that in order for these children to develop then the teachers themselves should be coming from a much higher moral position and that that position actually demands them to take a much greater responsibility for what they see no matter how they may feel?

ME: Exactly. But as they don't see this, and instead see themselves as a powerless victim, I start getting tough with their self-image and say, "Maybe you are not afraid, maybe you don't care enough." I'm not saying this to ridicule them. Remember, my job is to come in and create an opening for them to see the possibility for development and growth. In doing so I must be perfectly open and honest and say, "Maybe it's because you just don't care enough. Maybe you don't care as much as you could, because if you did care, you'd do it although you were scared. You wouldn't stop to consider saving your own child if it ran out on the road, would you? You just do it because you care."

And I think this is a very important point, as Andrew Cohen talks about. We must face everything about ourselves and avoid nothing about ourselves, instead of doing the opposite, which is, avoiding everything and facing nothing. When we do this we have to realise that we don't actually care enough. We are not really interested enough in actually making this whole society better. In effect this is a very narcissistic perspective, and here we are seeing the Mean Green Meme active once again.

7. The self-image and the authentic self

ND: Do you notice anything happening after you have said this?

ME: Yes actually two possible reactions. There is a shift and mostly it is a very good shift. I have a sense that they actually open up for the possibility of still being able to look themselves in the mirror in a good way, because what they hear is tough news. It offends their ego and normally they hear the opposite. As I said earlier, we mostly talk about ourselves in a private and personal manner. This is very appealing to and 'massages' our ego and separate identity. What I'm talking about is radically different.

Face everything and avoid nothing

When you are aligned instead with your authentic self, you see and say everything about where you are, what is happening inside you and outside you. You no longer avoid everything that is inside you and outside you, because the self-image – ego⁵ – is actually very strong here. You walk past someone who is bullying someone and you actually interfere, instead of saying to yourself, "No I won't because I'm afraid," which often is a lie. A lie you have to back up by regressing to a lower moral position because you are so much in the grips of the self-image. You have to be congruent with the idea you have about yourself and your actions. That means you have a choice and with that a responsibility to either make the situation more integral and therefore less dangerous or more fragmented and therefore more dangerous. And for that to happen, for the situation to become less dangerous, you *must* to *do* something. If you do not do this, you will stand by and see a fourteen-year-old girl being pulled into a toilet by three or four fourteen and fifteen-year-old guys. And everybody, including you, knows what is going to happen. And when I point this out, even school leaders say, "Hasn't it always been like this?" So they really get themselves very entangled in these lies and in slavery from the self-image. In effect what we are seeing here is the Lower Left quadrant, the collective culture values and norms that we are embedded in and the hold they have on us. You will

⁵ Ego, as described here, is the need to see oneself as being separate at each and every moment and characterised by pride, arrogance and self-importance. This is opposite to the authentic self.

regress to a lower moral position and when this happens collectively as a culture you prevent others from evolving. This is Sweden/Scandinavia in a nutshell.

So if you start looking at what is happening, without having to fix your self-image all the time, in a sense being very free, you start seeing what is actually happening very clearly. In a sense you have to choose to see things either as your self-image would like things to be or as things actually are. How do you feel about that? You feel rotten and you can't stand this deception any more. So you start acting. You have to because in effect there is no choice any more. And when you start acting of course you make a shift, you start evolving morally, but it's because you choose to be true to what your experience is. You can no longer live a lie. So when you are being true to what is happening inside you and outside you, then you are automatically lifting yourself from one meme to another and to a higher level of moral reasoning. But the point is you are being true to who you are, you take your true position in the pyramid and the Spiral. The change, I believe, is as radical as going from GREEN to YELLOW in a split second. And in one sense this is what happens when you see who you are and what has been happening. Ignorance about your actions stops, karma stops. You're taking full responsibility and your self-sense gets totally mirrored. To stay with your self –sense becomes so painful you can't stand it any longer. You just stop being numb and become someone who cares. To change like this doesn't actually have to take more time than a split second and clearly some people I have spoken with have been doing that.

This authentic self, as Andrew Cohen calls it, is there ready to "rock-and-roll" now whichever meme you are centred in. It doesn't need time to develop. The authentic self is pushed down by ego of course, because your putting your attention on ego or what you fear or what you want for yourself.

8. Recognizing the importance of a four-quadrant perspective⁶

ND: You mentioned briefly the Lower Left quadrant - the culture and worldview that we are embedded in and the hold it has. We are not separate to any of the quadrants. I'm interested to ask what you see happening when using the four-quadrants (figure 5)? How can we use a four-quadrant perspective to better understand what is happening in schools?

<p>I Upper Left interior-individual subjective</p>	<p>IT Upper Right exterior-individual objective</p>
<p>WE Lower left interior -collective cultural</p>	<p>ITS Lower Right exterior-collective social</p>

Figure 5. The Four Quadrants.

⁶ The examples given in this interview for applying the four quadrants are from school and class level. In a later interview we will be focusing on a macro mesh works perspective. How would we approach the question of education and human emergence, if we were to accept responsibility, as Don Beck so challengingly put it, for "seeing the school and society as a conduit through which the mind passes?"

ME: Basically the first thing would be – when we come to a school – not to go into the trap of using or working in only one of the quadrants. The result would be a gross reduction of what is happening, like I was explaining before where we find ourselves blaming other people saying: "It's no use because they are not doing what they are supposed to do anyway."

If I go to that other person while thinking in moral level one, and say: "Hey take care of the dishes stupid!" Would it make it a good place to work in? No, because it leaves out the importance of self-reflection and an awareness of my own level of development and this influences what I am seeing and how I relate to the world around me. So in much the same way we now have to involve an awareness of all four quadrants.

ND: *Which quadrant or quadrants do we normally work with?*

ME: Well normally we are involved in the Upper Left quadrant. It's like everybody is focusing on his or her own inner feelings and emotions. We are encouraged to focus on inner self-reflecting questions like, how I feel about things, and my personal experiences about different events.

ND: *And this happens a lot when we are centred in GREEN and are imbedded in a culture centred in GREEN, which encourages narcissistic reflection.*

ME: That's right, but also an egocentric ORANGE, which asks: "Why would I, why should I because I don't get paid enough anyway?"

ND: *Yes, ORANGE is also be very much focused on itself, but in an achiever materialistic way. It seems that we are continually working and expressing ourselves in all the quadrants, without being aware of that.*

9. Recognizing the importance of types of consciousness or possible orientations at every level when understanding relationships

ME: That's true and it's important to point that out and actually see how people affect each other, like I was mentioning before, how the women hold each other down, to be one of the gang so to speak. To be one in a group of peers, in this sense, results in nobody evolving. What I point out many times to those women, and I'm talking about adult woman, is that there is so much latent potential in them once they realise this, that they are relating to each other in a way that keeps them all in a state of status quo. I said to them, "You have coordinators coming here, mostly women who have actually made a career, why don't you compare yourself to them. Why don't you take a risk to also evolve?"

ND: *This is what Ken Wilber expresses about the importance of recognising "types" such as male and female principles which, in effect, play out on each of the first tier levels: " If the healthy feminine principle tends toward flowing, relationship, care, and compassion, the unhealthy feminine flounders in each of those. Instead of being in relationship, she becomes lost in relationship. Instead of a healthy self in communion with others, she loses her self altogether and is dominated by the relationships she is in. Not a connection, but a fusion; not a flow state, but a panic state; not a communion, but a melt-down. The unhealthy feminine principle does not find fullness in connection, but chaos in fusion."*

ME: This is exactly what is happening. These women get caught up in making it quite an issue not to listen to their coordinator coming. Because the women who are leading have left

this status quo of mediocrity, of being lost in communal relationship, and are instead expressing a large degree of free agency which now becomes very threatening to the status quo. So these coordinators should actually be seen as role models, a source of inspiration to actually make a move from where they are trapped.

10. The Upper Left quadrant

ND: Lets talk a little more about recognising each of the quadrants. This is a big topic once we get into all the different levels so lets begin by focusing on the two or three levels that we are most concerned with just now and how they are expressed in school situations. Lets begin with the Upper Left quadrant, which refers to the person's mind, interior States, their emotions, psychological attitude, imagery, and intentions and development of Stages or levels of consciousness. As we know this plays a crucial role in both the individuals learning and their development.

Fake it until you make it

ME: Well I was recently speaking with a thirteen-year-old boy and his mother. The boy's mother was extremely concerned and worried about her son and the school had more or less given up on him. I saw the importance of recognising his level of interior awareness, which was very unhealthy RED, and the affect this was having on his interpretation of the world. I just kept telling him to, "Fake it till you make it." I said to him, "You might not believe that there is a chance for you and you don't take life very seriously, you don't take anything seriously, but I think you can fake it until you make it. Even though you have a sceptical voice coming up in you saying, 'I am not worthy of this, I'm no one anyway. It's no use, I can't do anything.' And you are so used to making a failure out of everything you do and behaving like a clown to hide from that fact. But you can actually use this "fake it until you make it" because in the long run the result is the same for your mother, your teachers and me. If you do well at school and you know you're not real, genuine and everything, it doesn't matter what you feel and think. It's only what you do that matters." And in a sense this refers to behaviour or what can be objectively seen in the Upper Right quadrant.

So in the Upper Left quadrant I'm empathizing that – especially when working with first tier levels – one has to fight these inner ghosts, these inner voices, these lower levels of ego-based thinking and begin to recognise oneself and the worldview or perspective one is actually using. If we don't then these can become very psychotic. It is this perspective that determines how we interpret our experiences and helps us decide how we should respond, i.e. what we choose to do.

Now from a four-quadrant perspective I also said to him, "Saying to yourself 'fake it until you make it' may not be enough. You also need to have rewards." And this is the reward or economic system in the Lower Right quadrant, in this case necessary to support healthy RED. So I said to his mother, "You should start rewarding the behaviour we want to encourage. That's also 'fake it' to you."

I say this because I am appreciating that this mother is centred in Whole Child GREEN, so her perspective is one of expecting him to behave well and feeling it is very wrong to have to reward him materially for good behaviour. GREEN has great difficulty in appreciating depth. So she has to realise that it doesn't really matter if her son does it for the reward or if he does it because he realises it is the right thing to do. It really doesn't matter in the long run. It's what her son *does* now that is important. And it is what she *does* that is important. His mind will evolve over time. So in working in the Upper Left I am saying to both the boy in RED and the mother in GREEN, "Fight these demons in your head by making these strategies. Just

fake that you are more developed than you actually are." Otherwise you will have to wait for genuine inner change to become a permanent State, and that might take some time. It might mean this boy waiting until he is fourteen, fifteen, sixteen or seventeen-years-old which of course does not make sense. But this way he can start now.

Seeing beyond the level of your own development

As I said to him, the aspiration is to already know now, on a cognitive level, that when you are fourteen you will want something else, i.e. BLUE. And when eighteen, if not sooner, you will want ORANGE. So you fake BLUE right now. So the eighteen-year-old, lets call him B, will be very very grateful for what the thirteen-year-old B does right now. And the thirteen-year-old might not see a point in it, because RED just keeps thinking, "why would I, why should I." RED can't answer that question, so you just fake it. And RED fakes it because he gets an immediate reward – which is very important for RED – or because he makes other people happy; it doesn't matter, you just "fake it until you make it." And you will not notice when you slide into making it for real, when you become that person you aspire to be. And this is essentially the same for GREEN who cannot yet see vertical depth. So you encourage GREEN to fake that there is depth and that these different levels need to be handled very differently and in specific ways in order for the individual to evolve.

It's like someone being a street fighter and going into the Martial Arts dojo-training centre and pretending he respects the rules. It doesn't really matter; he has to pretend that he respects the rules outwardly so nobody will have any problems with him. Who needs to know what he is actually thinking? I mean who would want to know about all the freaky things going on in our minds? And after a while his mind will naturally evolve and he will be thinking in BLUE and doing it genuinely and totally inwardly without having to fake it.

And with GREEN, we have difficulty accepting hierarchy, it is essentially exactly the same; "I can pretend I respect my boss when my boss is bossy. I can pretend that I can respect the higher authority or hierarchy. I can pretend that I am the higher authority and need to take charge. I can pretend that I am interested in development or evolution. I can pretend that I am interested in Spiral Dynamics. I can pretend that I understand YELLOW."

ND: So what we are talking about is actually encouraging the awareness for natural environments or ways or relating to people that allow the mind to evolve naturally rather than, as we are presently doing in GREEN, actually blocking this evolutionary process.

ME: That's exactly right.

11. The Upper Right quadrant

ND: You already talked about the importance of the Upper Right quadrant which refers to the person's brain, body, behaviour and skills. What else are we seeing here?

What you do affects the world

ME: Whatever the individual expresses in the form of overt behaviour affects everything else. And this is even more so when you have a group of twenty-seven fourteen-year-olds. Again, "fake it until you make it" is the key concerning the Upper Left. And this of course means instilling self-discipline and control through the use of respect for a powerful authority [RED] or desire for a future event [BLUE]. So the individual is now encouraged to reflect on who she is and how her behaviour is affecting herself and others.

As I say to teachers, they need to be more aware of when this impulsive behaviour happens and ideally they need to recognise the deeper memetic codes, or ways of thinking, that trigger it. Otherwise they risk not know how to respond in order to further evolution. For example, for some students it is impossible for them to sit still, to not make noises or to stop drumming or whatever. So I ask these teachers, "Is this behaviour a habit or a strategy for this guy?" And I tell them that they can choose to moderate the behaviour. But to do this they must first be interested in and recognize what level in the Spiral the student is at and how this will determine the appropriate response they must use. Because if it is a very extreme impulsive upset RED behaviour – more or less like a volcano just waiting to explode – it's stupid to try and stop it once it starts exploding – unless of course it is endangering other people, then there is no choice but to use appropriate force in stopping it. Punishment will have no effect on RED, and GREEN discussion or tolerance is stupid.

So ideally you need a YELLOW teacher who understands healthy RED and BLUE, who is prepared to express healthy RED and BLUE, and who confronts the undesired behaviour directly and says, "I said not to do that, I told you not to do that, so stop it!" This teacher will not get into any Whole Child GREEN discussion explaining what one should or should not do or start asking why they did it. They do much more than they say, they have patience and perseverance, and they know how to accentuate the positive and ignore the negative. But they never punish. When faced with challenging problems they start generating the solutions necessary in order to most effectively raise the individuals or groups consciousness.

The level of your thinking affects what you do

ND: For example you have a nine year old child who talks without first raising their hand. As soon as the child starts to open his mouth you put your hand right over his mouth to stop him and point to the picture of a hand on the wall – his own hand – that says, "I must raise my hand to ask permission to talk."

ME: That's right. Of course the individual's thoughts and feelings are the inner intention that starts the behaviour. And the level you are on determines the conclusion you make in your inner experience. Like when we are talking about education, about people who are not totally in control of their behaviour as yet – it is because they are still in RED. For example when RED has an experience of unease, of excitement, of anger, or of not being able to sit still, it often results in an impulsive action occurring. So you have to work on both upper quadrants. You have to work in the Upper Left quadrant as I explained before; helping the individual by saying "this is how you can also interpret your experience, you don't have to act it out." But in also working in the Upper Right quadrant, you can start moderating the individual's behaviour.

Rewarding desired behaviour in RED

And when the student is centred in RED this needs to be done using behavioural psychology, such as B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning. This means the teacher needs to – even more importantly – reward the achievement of the desired behaviour, as I explained before. So that whenever an impulsive movement starts in the body, you – the teacher or parent – can start moderating it before it has gone too far and even more importantly reward the desired behaviour directly afterwards. GREEN can't understand why rewards are needed at all and BLUE usually wants to keep score and punish negative behaviour by taking away rewards received for previous positive behaviour. So we really need YELLOW to help understand what it is we are trying to do. And when we do this use of rewards can be done as early as two years, but even up to eighteen-years-old and beyond. I mean even as adults we need a healthy and vibrant RED system alive in us. There is nothing wrong with healthy RED.

High structure, discipline and immediate tangible rewards in RED

The important point is that you can start moderating the negative RED behaviour before it has gone too far. I call it "Don't let the kids push your buttons all the time." The teacher, parent or whoever is in charge can actually start controlling it. You go there before something happens. And you reward it with attention when it does not happen. In order for RED to evolve you need to provide high structure, discipline and immediate tangible rewards. This is really awareness for the natural environment needed in RED, as you mentioned before. And when behaviour is very hyperactive this strategy of structure, moderation and reward needs to be done much more.

Some girls and boys have already mastered this self-discipline and can actively choose to sit there for ages and resist the impulse to move and once they have evolved to BLUE they despise others spoiling their peace and quiet. While other girls and boys need to be moderated and rewarded in order to master this. So don't have RED sitting still for too long, or working on the same task for too long, or without anything to do for too long, or you are asking for big trouble. They need structure, variety and to be kept active. This is old knowledge. Another method is to ask RED to go somewhere, go on an errand, or to get something, thus keeping him/her busy. But since we are often centred in GREEN we don't know how to use these healthy RED and BLUE methods, in fact we despise them. But now when we are seeing RED from a YELLOW perspective we realise that we don't want to get upset and be pushed at as a teacher so we have to be much smarter than the inner voice of this RED body mind function within the twelve-year-old who is starting to scratch here and there, trying to reach out for someone. You now go to him/her before s/he has started and say, "Could you go to the janitor and ask for this and that?"

A call to evolve

ND: This sounds like if I am a teacher centred in Whole Child GREEN, it's actually me that has to begin evolving first.

ME: Well that's spot on. From a YELLOW authentic-self perspective we are now aware of these different levels and distinctions, so deciding what to do is actually very very simple. GREEN can't, and in fact won't, see the simplicity. Because this is very threatening for the ego or self sense, so again, if you are GREEN "fake it until you make it."

12. The Lower Left quadrant

ND: What are we seeing in the cultural Lower Left quadrant? The child's individual subjective consciousness does not exist in a vacuum; it exists intrinsically embedded in shared cultural values, norms, beliefs, and worldviews. We are now talking about the collective inter-subjective mind of the teachers, parents and students and the levels they are at.

The collective ego

ME: I think this is a very important point to understand because we are dealing with the collective ego now. And this collective ego pops up wherever there is a culture, whenever people come together. And now, as we are living in a postmodern society, with such things as the Internet and mass media, our mind is coming into contact with many different groups expressing different levels of consciousness.

All the time when I talk to parents I say, "You are handicapped because you lack objectivity when it comes to your own child." And I say to the teachers the exact opposite; "You are also handicapped because you lack a subjective view."

Because you see when you meet with a group of kids, you open a classroom door, you think you are meeting with twenty-seven individual kids, but that is not necessarily the whole truth. It might be twenty-seven individuals who come through the door – you know; one kid, and one more kid, and one more human being. But the truth is more than this. It's like they are individuals but there is also a group phenomena occurring, which is in a way the culture of how we come together and relate to each other.

What happens when a group of thirteen-year-olds or fourteen-year-olds come together and form a group of twenty-seven? What is the cultural pressure that is being created when you have that many minds coming together that are centred in RED or BLUE? Andrew Cohen talks about collective ego, which he says is not twenty-seven times stronger than one, it is like thousands of times stronger; i.e. the cultural ego that develops in a group regardless of what level the individual minds are at. So if there is a movement in a group you can see how almost impossible it must be for the parents of say a fourteen-year-old girl, who is always nice and very polite at home, helping out with laundry and cooking and baby sitting, whatever, to suddenly believe their daughter could behave in any other way. Then one day the teachers report, "We had a substitute teacher in your daughters class the other day and your daughter was one of the worst behavioural offenders. She behaved ill-mannered, extremely rude and was provoking everyone." And it is very hard to relate to this as a parent because they have maybe never seen their daughter within this other very negative PURPLE – RED tribe like group culture. What happens is that in this culture, as in any culture, the collective ego has an amazing amount of strength.

I mean, if you ask this girl to report back on her interior Upper Left experience, her inner dialogue will be saying, "What am I doing? I can't believe I'm doing this! Why am I doing this? The substitute teacher is not very bad, I mean he's a nice guy and I'm just tormenting him here. But I can't stop and I actually like it!"

And because there is no appreciation for this type of AQAL (all quadrants, all levels) perspective it becomes almost impossible for the teachers and parents to meet, because the parents will, very rightly, report back, "I have never seen that. We have never ever heard anything about that. We can't believe you are actually talking about *our* daughter. She would *never* do that!"

Raising AQAL awareness

ND: *So we are talking about raising the level of awareness of the Lower Left quadrant and the AQAL perspective?*

ME: Absolutely otherwise it becomes meaningless in a way. Because if you only have knowledge and interest about a person in regards to the Upper Quadrants, and this is so for many parents, you will actually not be able to benefit from the knowledge you receive from the teachers and school about how your child behaves in groups, because you will always deny it. You will not be able to help your child evolve.

And this truth needs to be pointed out bluntly. And it is true because you wouldn't behave like that if you were alone – never. Nobody does. And also the heroic part is difficult but needs to be recognised when you actually start to become a hero, or a heroine in the classroom, which takes a lot of courage. When the individual starts to evolve and push the envelope of the collective ego. Because some of those guys or girls actually break out of the collective ego and stop what is occurring which is fantastic. But at home that pressure is never there, or at

least it is different. It's like you are alone with your parents or maybe you have a sibling. Maybe you have parents with very traditional cultural values. Maybe you have parents with very postmodern cultural values. Either way the cultural dynamics will be there, and in some cases very strong, but they are still going to be very different to what happens when you are in a group or gang with twenty-seven other minds your own age.

ND: It seems also that teachers, as leaders, must become aware of their own level of awareness and maturity as a culture in the Lower Left quadrant. Because being stuck in Might Makes Right or even the GREEN meme is preventing any higher goodness from emerging within the school.

ME: That's very true. I mean once again, do you want to be upset by having your button pushed, or do you want to be in control and actually responsible for growth on the individual and group level? What would you rather want? There is so much energy wasted because teachers pretty often want to be upset and not assume responsibly for being in charge. Because we do fall into traps and become very very disappointed with how the group or individual is behaving.

ND: Yes, instead of looking for solutions by first evolving in our way of thinking we focus on blaming each other and reduce ourselves to being victims or we look for creative ways to feel better about ourselves. Blaming others or feeling better about ourselves does nothing to help these students evolve.

Creating a natural and open system for PURPLE, RED and BLUE

ME: Exactly. Let me give another example from a school with a special group of seventeen pretty tough teenagers and two male teachers. They experience that they can take in almost an unlimited number of students. I mean normally most of these groups would consist of four to six students. But they found that as long as they have solidarity to the task or the group, teacher and school – the interest of reaching achievements in school – this limit is exceeded. As long as the Tribalistic PURPLE solidarity exists within the group they can have much larger numbers of students. But if the two teachers have to fight the group, then there is no way that they can win. They can never win. Because if the teenagers are fifteen, sixteen, seventeen in number they will slaughter those two guys both verbally, and also physically if they would go for it.

But as long as they can discipline or tame each teenager who comes in – individuals who have a long history of being in trouble – if they can make each individual feel solidarity with the task, and wanting the quietness, and wanting to work with the teacher, no one can sabotage it anymore. So that each new individual who enters the class will be helped by the group. So the conformity group pressure – the culture created by the group – will be on the school's side rather than on the student's side. It will be on the side of the evolutionary impulse and the Spiral.

So that's how you use the Lower Left phenomena of the cultural group pressure from PURPLE and BLUE in a controlled way. At least at these levels of the Spiral anyway! You start from knowing the phenomena of group pressure or collective ego in PURPLE and then BLUE, and use it. So that means using the knowledge from PURPLE and BLUE cultures, which are more homogeneous and controlled, were one lives according to KinSpirits and the TruthForce where you don't want your behaviour to stick out. So these two teachers must meet these kids in negative Egocentric RED and where they reason by a moral position based often on Power where "Might Makes Right". So these kids now come to see and respect those

two grown-ups as PowerGods – "they are stronger than I am so I'd better side up with them." That means that whenever a new RED student comes into the class they of course start to challenge authority, i.e. the teachers, and they look for affirmation among their peers. But when they don't get a smile, they don't get affirmation and they don't get a, "Yeah - go for it!", because the students now have self-discipline, then the teachers always win. But as soon as there is a little crack in the hierarchy then power and respect are severely threatened. All it needs is one or two other students giving affirmation for the new student to side up with which results in the teacher losing power and respect. And of course, for the sake of these students, the teachers cannot afford to relax and make mistakes.

But from the perspective that these teachers have it's actually a fantastic example of how to use the power of the many in a good way – for the emergence of goodness.

ND: That's fantastic.

This RED is actually a survival of the fittest jungle mentality. You either understand it naturally, i.e. you're a teacher who already has a positive RED and BLUE system, or you have to deepen your understanding. Because if you are centred in GREEN you will still be empathising with RED's traumatic condition and despising BLUE for being absolutistic and repressive.

ME: Exactly.

ND: This actually puts us in a very interesting position. Because from a natural design perspective it would be easier to just select and align teachers who are already centred in positive RED and BLUE with students who are centred there. However – what do we do when we have a whole culture of teachers centred in GREEN?

ME: Evolve quickly!

13. The Lower Right quadrant

ND: And then of course supporting the power of the many is the task of the Lower Right quadrant.⁷

The economy of support

ME: That's right, because then you are one of the gang in a good way; you are actually contributing to supporting the power of the many. I recognise that I am one of the people in this class and how to be included as one is to make an effort to be silent and thereby create an environment that allows other people in my group to concentrate and work. These teachers have reprogrammed each individual in the Upper Left quadrant – given them a new script to interpret the world – and proving that behaviour in the Upper Right is functioning positively so they trust the new script or at least are prepared to fake it until they do take it on genuinely. And now the teachers can actually match this with what needs to happen in the Lower quadrants on the group level. First by recognising the power of the many whereby group pressure actually becomes a prerequisite and driving force for maintaining a positive behaviour. And then by recognising what has to be done to motivate and reward this cultural belief system in the group.

⁷ This relates to the structure, economy and transfer of resources that are created to support the culture.

ND: Because the teachers would have to be aware of the different Lower Right structures necessary to reward this positive RED and then BLUE behaviour and which are necessary to support the cultural values and norms they wish the group to take on. They would recognise that each level has its own particular economy and reward system.

Supporting the PURPLE economy

ME: That's very true and can be illustrated using this class we have been discussing. There is a lot of pressure from the rest of the school on this group of seventeen teenagers, if we see them within a larger group context of six or seven hundred teenagers at this particular school. There are very many troubled kids around this group of seventeen kids and many trying to pull them down. But since these seventeen teenagers stick together as a PURPLE KinSpirit group they are more or less untouchable. But even then there are crazy guys trying to provoke them anyway. Then the two teachers that I spoke about come in and play the role of RED Scout leaders or dojo senseis – so they come there much like RED PowerGods and actually protect, support and reward this group of seventeen teenagers for the positive decisions they must make. They provide a Lower Right structure that protects the Lower Left culture that binds the group together.

So we are seeing these negative RED students evolve up to BLUE. And this starts because they choose to show PURPLE solidarity with the group. Why do they do this? Because they want to be included, they want to adapt to the group norm and they want to be safe.

ND: What is it that they get rewarded with?

ME: RED gets strengthened in a way because as PURPLE they have never been really safe. The school doesn't offer them healthy PURPLE. That's partly why RED expresses itself negatively. So now they are safe because they are included in this PURPLE tribe-like group, which provides safety. They are identifying with the group and the two teachers. So in PURPLE they are having their peers as a reward in itself.

Supporting the BLUE economy

And then they are promised, "You will get grades here," which is the beginning of thinking in BLUE. They are sacrificing their negative impulsive self in order to obtain grades. They are seeking order and finding a new sense of purpose in signing on to the task. Because we demand self-discipline and demand you to work – which the negative impulsive self can't really understand – but in return we promise you you will get grades. The guys who are stuck in negative RED are not promised grades.

ND: But if they are in RED they must first be in an environment where they can assert themselves in a positive way to now take control over their life and become independent of the PURPLE and RED gang mentality being expressed by other students in the school. And for this to happen RED needs to be rewarded now, not with grades at the end of term.

ME: Yes that's true, but firstly, negative RED is of course not allowed into this group of seventeen students.

ND: So is it BLUE that gets rewarded in this group then? I mean in terms of finding dedication to the task of achieving grades. The teachers create an environment whereby that is a real and realizable possibility.

ME: That's right, so they actually get grades. So BLUE is prepared to sacrifice the immediate freedom it had in RED for achieving something bigger in the future. It goes from thinking *now* to thinking *future*. But first, of course, they sign on by sacrificing the negative PURPLE they had outside the classroom for the positive PURPLE group identity now offered and also sacrificing the negative RED for the positive RED they see in the two teachers.

Using RED PowerGods to tame wild horses

ND: And the teachers are the guardians of the process that this will happen.

ME: That's right, but this won't work if they take in two or three new negative RED-thinking students at a time. Remember, the teenagers who come in have just come from a wider Whole Child GREEN environment, where they are used to spontaneously asserting themselves, taking control and expressing power without any sense of guilt, higher moral obligation, self-discipline or concept of future. If these three teenagers come in together they will shake the group up and they will take the other fourteen students with them very quickly. So they have to take in one at a time. GREEN has created a form of negative RED in this school that requires a process much like taming wild horses. You cannot bring in the whole lot at the one time. And unfortunately there are only two teachers who understand the process. This is a big school with six or seven hundred teenagers; those seventeen students are in a controlled environment, they get out of that controlled environment and walk around the corridors and they get provoked, so how can they stand the provocation from negative egocentric RED leaders and resist falling back there themselves? They are protected by the two grown ups who are themselves now seen as RED PowerGods and they are promised rewards. So when a new RED student enters the group and starts provoking those other seventeen students they are directly approached by the two teachers. They say something like, "Hey – I saw you jump on one of my students. You are attacking and bullying them and that's not right. And also, you can't be sure that you will get good enough grades for your career when you get out of this school. My students will." So they actually get involved and work on shaking up the negative RED, because just saying that in their face is actually waking up sometime in that RED mind. It's a higher call to evolve.

ND: It seems that motivating RED to assert itself in a prosocial way and rewarding him/her as soon as possible is very important. Because RED wants the tangible reward now.

ME: Yes that's right.

Supporting the RED economy

ND: Whereas BLUE is prepared to sacrifice now to gain the reward later, which comes at the end of term, when the examinations are done and grades are given out.

ME: That's why I talk about the need for token systems for RED. Because RED can't handle waiting, it doesn't make any sense for RED, they say, "You mean I should do things now and wait six months to get something. No way!" But they can handle a period of one hour, or one day, and then they get given a token. And after maybe five tokens they get given a reward. That they can handle. So yes, awareness for the need of a token economy as well as other kinds of award systems to motivate RED and then BLUE is recognised in the Lower Right quadrant.

14. So what might integral education look like?

ND: So let's turn to the exciting question of education from a second tier or Integral perspective. What might Integral Education look like?

What does it mean to be a human being?

ME: I think Andrew Cohen gave a good example recently at a two-day retreat in Copenhagen (November 28-30, 2003) when he said he had been speaking with three children aged nine, eleven and thirteen-years-old several days before in London. He was talking to them and asked them, "So what are you learning in school? You are learning about maths, science, history, geography, sports, etc. So you are learning about all these things, but is anybody speaking to you about what it means to be a human being? And how to become one? A human being is what you are isn't it?" And they said, "Yes."

So Andrew Cohen asked, "This is what you are studying in school, all the things that I mentioned, but has anybody talked to you about what does it mean to be a human being, which is what you are?" And they agreed. And he asked, "Are they talking about, how you can become one?" And they replied, "No."

"So they are not teaching you this in school. So where do you get the information about what does it mean to be a human being and how to become one? You get it from culture; you get it from television and mass media." So Andrew Cohen said, "Don't you understand that something very fundamental is missing from everything that you are learning?"

Andrew Cohen pointed out that even though these children were young they were smart enough to observe all this information *about* human beings and human development in school and still never having to address the question of what is a human being and how do I become one. And these three kids were all very shocked by that fact.

So these two questions, at least in my way of thinking right now, would take care of a lot. Because the questions imply that you are not a human being right now, not in your full potential. So where are children today finding answers to these questions? Of course from television, mass media, advertising and gangs. The place that we usually get the answers to those questions, as Andrew Cohen pointed out, is usually religion. It's religion that usually teaches us what it means to be a human being and how to become one. These are often theological questions, but for those of us in the postmodern era, who have now left the great traditions behind, we find ourselves morally, ethically, philosophically and spiritually empty-handed. As Andrew Cohen pointed out, "All thoughtful, sensitive and caring human beings want to know the answer to the question, What does it mean to be a human being and how do I become one?"

In order to answer the question will imply that one starts looking in all four-quadrants and at all levels. I think everything is in there to be honest. I mean, how could a teacher not be true to him or herself, the situation and the context when asking that question? Because it's not even a philosophical question any more, it is a very literal question. It means evolution. It means development. It means questioning who you are and how you are living. It means transcending and *rejecting* the separate ego sense.

A fear of hierarchical judgement

And I actually have scientific studies from schools in Sweden showing that the focus is very much on the opposite, the separate ego sense and the individual. These studies show that there is less cooperation, less group work, and actually what this generation of kids – between six and nineteen – are actually being told is that they have to *design* their own lives. So they get to actually self-reward themselves. They decide for themselves what is important. They do research where the teacher is more of a secretary or assistant at worst. The teacher never

stands up and says, "I know more than you do, I am responsible for your development." So actually in this role, and being entangled in GREEN, as we talked before, they can't do that anymore, because everybody is the same. Nobody is regarded as being more developed than anybody else because that implies a hierarchical judgement. And the last time that happened historically we had fascism in our schools. There is an excellent Swedish film called *Hets*, with manuscript by Ingmar Bergman, as an historical testimony. So fearing hierarchical judgement they don't give lectures, or tell kids where to look, because that would be too authoritative and too hierarchical. So the kids have to accept responsibility for their own development and are looking for themselves on the Internet, going to libraries and doing project studies much like what happens in university.

ND: Or turning to television, mass media, hip-hop music, advertising, drugs and gangs!

ME: That's right. And since these kids have not yet matured to accepting such responsibility for their own learning, have not yet reached self-directed ORANGE or higher forms of education, the weaker kids, who are not yet in ORANGE, are not getting anything out of this kind of student centred learning environment. So this is creating an enormous gap for, especially, weaker kids or those stuck in PURPLE, RED and BLUE. And even the most brilliant minds are having difficulty, because they, like everybody else, also start out not knowing much. It's like what Einstein said, "The problems we have created cannot be solved with the same thinking that created them." They try to solve the problems from the levels that they are on themselves. They are not given any guidelines or teaching environment that will encourage them to evolve from RED thinking. I'm talking very generalised now, but this is very much so in Sweden.

There are studies that show how little time students spend in a whole group and how little time doing group work gets. So healthy cooperation, which starts in PURPLE and BLUE, is something that is not prioritised. This means that reflection on what it means to be a boy or girl is not encouraged. Being a boy bully or being a very withdrawn and silent girl is not reflected upon, because nobody is dependent on your cooperation. And when you do discuss it it's always done from the perspective of understanding or promoting your self-image, because this is what our cultural worldview encourages.⁸ So you can literally go twelve years through school without getting any reflection on who you are, what it means to be a human being, and how to become one.

Exposing the self-image

Nobody mirrors you. The four-quadrants and the different levels become very very fragmented. Your darker side, your self-image, as we talked before, and the hold it has is completely invisible to you, because you are not being exposed. You are, in effect, being kept in the dark. The shared cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews within the Lower-Left

⁸ This raises the question of, "What does it mean to be a man or a woman? And how do I become one?" Very little if any collective reflection is done on these questions, and if so it is done from a personal perspective. As Ken Wilber explains, "the healthy masculine principle tends toward autonomy, strength, independence, and freedom, when that principle becomes unhealthy or pathological, all of those positive virtues either over- or under-fire. There is not just autonomy, but alienation; not just strength, but domination; not just independence, but morbid fear of relationship and commitment; not just a drive toward freedom, but a drive to destroy. The unhealthy masculine principle does not transcend in freedom, but dominates in fear. If the healthy feminine principle tends toward flowing, relationship, care, and compassion, the unhealthy feminine flounders in each of those. Instead of being in relationship, she becomes lost in relationship. Instead of a healthy self in communion with others, she loses her self altogether and is dominated by the relationships she is in. Not a connection, but a fusion; not a flow state, but a panic state; not a communion, but a meltdown. The unhealthy feminine principle does not find fullness in connection, but chaos in fusion." (www.integralinstitute.org)

quadrant are instead encouraging the strengthening and expression of your separate-self rather than more deeply encouraging you get to know who you are and how to evolve.

It's time to leap

Actually, in order to be able to start integral education, and discuss what a four quadrant perspective could truly mean, we first have to rip apart the rotten GREEN roof, the rotten Mean Green Meme lid, that is preventing all this from happening. And to do that it has to come by way of provocations. This is not the time to be gentler. We have to point out to them that they are already good at handling GREEN and that it's time to leap. And to do that requires pushing and pulling.

My experience is that the time is not only right but also ripe for something to happen. It has already gone too far in Sweden. The most rotten signs of Whole Child GREEN, which cannot handle RED, are painfully clear. So talking more about it is like kicking in an already open door. And actually, you don't have to be very persuasive to get them to see it. Ten-years-ago, five-years-ago, even two-years-ago it would have been much harder. But after events like the assassination of our Swedish foreign minister Anna Lindh (September 11, 2003), increased street violence, gangs and several generations of spoiled kids from over indulgent or not caring parents as well as children from poorly integrate refugee families running the streets, we need to change now! And asking teachers, "Do you think it was the same in 1985, or 1995?" And they reply, "No it has become much much worse".

So how can we get a RED meme spoiled brat who is saying, "I'm strong therefore I can do this and this and this and that... and nobody can tell me what the fuck to do," to see who he is and want to evolve to BLUE, if we don't use the full potential of all the memes in the first tier? Which really means we have to unblock the blockages and use all four-quadrants in an integrated way. Like I said, this definitely will not happen as long as we continue to use Whole Child GREEN thinking to generate solutions.

15. Looking at the deeper codes within

ND: Many programs for working with RED in children and youth are being discussed in Sweden without them acknowledging a macro perspective, the deeper inner memetic codes of the Spiral or the fragmentation occurring within the four quadrants. We are still looking at surface behaviour, programs, and one or two quadrants at best. It's like heading over the North Sea and spotting icebergs with a GREEN helmsman.

ME: Exactly. Because in regards to RED, old psychology, and I mean here existentialism which has dominated in Sweden for some decades now, has been about looking at the unconscious traumatic reasons and excuses for behaving very badly, and trying to understand it and thinking in processes which go on endlessly. So this isn't working. What is needed is to take overt behaviour and just stop it, setting clear limits, saying no and rewarding good behaviour, i.e. behaviourism, but from an integral perspective. We thus recognise why BF Skinner works well here. And only afterwards when we have developed into healthy BLUE can we start to talk about the larger movements in the Spiral as well as the reasons and traumas blocking development. In effect this means creating positive and open environments for encouraging RED and BLUE minds to become healthy and develop and this being done using second tier YELLOW.

Meeting minds all along the Spiral and facilitating their evolution

ND: In a natural way you are already talking to RED and GREEN at the level they are at. If we were to have school leaders and teachers coming from second tier YELLOW and aligned

with the authentic Self then we would always be wanting to accept responsibility for meeting these children, parents and colleagues – these minds – at the level they are at. We would always be working for the evolutionary impulse, what Don Beck and Ken Wilber call the Spirals Prime Directive, in ever higher embraces of integration in all four quadrants.

You and I are meeting many children and teachers presently stuck in RED and GREEN. But if we are to meet minds all along the Spiral and facilitate their evolution, then the Spiral, i.e. all the memes, have to be unblocked and made open in order to create natural memetic systems that can work healthy together to further the evolutionary impulse. This is a very huge shift in thinking from just looking at programs that work well in treating children who have behavioural problems in RED. There may be some great programs, but there is something deeper, bigger and more significant going on here which we are missing. We have to increase the complexity of our own present way of thinking in a passionate way or we will continue to miss the significance of deeper codes beneath the surface.

ME: That's exactly right and this is integral thinking what you are bringing in now and also the significance of an evolutionary context.

16. An already victorious position

ND: Which is what I wish to explore. What would integral education mean in this evolutionary context and how different would that be to what we are doing today?

Top-down

ME: I get a hit on something from Andrew Cohen again, "the already victorious position," and this is what you are essentially saying. It's like top-down. Let me give one example, a metaphor. The psychologist comes to the school, has hundreds and or maybe even thousands of kids, and he has a flashlight. He flashes it somewhere, and what does he see? He sees a problem and then he goes there, because that's where the light is and that's what and where he can see. This is taking a bottom-up perspective.

Top-down, just to be very clear, means to shed the light on everything and realising that life is already good. And it's already going to be victory for the evolutionary impulse or good of the Spiral. Evolution is going up and actually we can't play around anymore, because we can actually sabotage, ruin and smash this whole planet in a billionth of a second. So we can't play around and flash a light in a corner and point to a problem. We have to work ourselves up to a far greater level of complexity. We have to shed the light on everything and that's second tier integral thinking saying that the potential for perfect goodness, perfect cooperation, and an enlightened universe is already here. And in a sense this is the ever already Good, the True and the Beautiful we are seeing. The potential is already here; we just have to do recognise it, have someone point it out to us, and work ourselves from a top-down position, seeing everything from a perspective of already victory, for self, culture, and nature. Anything less is not going to work.

In effect we are saying, "Great – life is good – I'm here. I see some wonderful people doing wonderful things here." And they will say, "What are you talking about, we have problems here!" And they will point out two or three guys. "They're horrible they sabotage everything." And we say, "Well there seems to be three guys having a big-time show here and you are giving them a lot of your attention all the time, so that's one part of the reason. Why are you rewarding them?"

Don't they want to have paradise? Give these guys a very hard time if you need to. Stop rewarding their behaviour and hang them up somewhere, like in the good old bad days. And then we salute all the good guys who want to make something good happen, and they are the vast majority, but they get totally neglected, so they can't really go on for long. That's where we have to come in. We want to say, "It's already happening guys, we can't stop it. The evolutionary impulse is here. We have to align ourselves with it – right now!"

ND: Because we need to shed light on this goodness, this evolutionary impulse, and these deeper codes. All we have to do is recognise them and let them work, and align ourselves with the process rather than work against it. And just try and encourage them.

ME: Yes, encourage them, or push them, or pull them, or whatever. But we don't "try" we just do it. Because if we say, "try" we are not coming from a top-down already victory position. If we say, "try" we give room for failure. It's going to happen and they will say, "Maybe not." And we reply, "Definitely it will." Because I mean we can't afford failure. As Andrew Cohen said in Copenhagen, "We can't afford to think in this way." We don't even want to give an option for not changing.

Both you and I have that good way when we express ourselves, "Wow – hey, it's beautiful, it's fantastic." I mean we don't want to understand shit. We don't have time for that any more. We want to grasp and get more of the beauty. We want to make the world more integral, not more fragmented.

ND: As we have been discussing, the GREEN in all of us has a hard time acknowledging and understanding verticality and the inner dimensions.

ME: That's for sure. But I have a sense of that when we put time into the equation, when it starts taking time to change; there comes a real risk that the change we are talking about will not happen. We don't have time to wait around. And maybe this won't take time either. Relatively speaking this could be a major change process in all of the memes, a touch down on every meme at the same time. You may not see it from the outside, but it will radically change how you think and your relationship to the world.

As an example Andrew Cohen was twenty-one years of age when he started to become a true seeker. And now twenty-seven years later, he has never compromised. So I guess you could say he went from making a decision to twenty-seven uncompromising years in one move. It's pretty amazing how you can make this decision to become one who is inspiring the whole world in a very revolutionary way.

ND: And that potential is within everyone?

ME: I'm pretty sure; if God didn't make a mistake then it must be in everyone. But in the end we have to make the choice ourselves and that decision only takes a split second no matter whom we are. That's for sure.

Nick Drummond
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