

It's Your Choice!

A Moral Dimension to Education

A dialogue between Patrick Bryson,
Mats Edin and Nick Drummond

By Nick Drummond, Nordic Integral
June 5, 2004

www.nordicintegral.com

Summary

Mats Edin and Nick Drummond discuss with Patrick Bryson¹ some recent experiences with teachers and students in using the model *It's Your Choice*. The model also brings in verticality, giving students a direct experience of positive growth. They also discuss different leadership approaches from the model Spiral Dynamics which are used to encourage individuals make positive choices. Showing also that unhealthy GREEN, which is dominant value system in Swedish culture, is preventing this from happening.

As Patrick expresses, "Speaking about it you realise how much potential there actually is in this and yet how much there is to do... Your experiences are extraordinary – that model came from the kids I was talking to. The kids themselves came up with that solution. They appreciated that there are two choices and one is to go up and it's positivity and a better way of being, and one is to go down and leads to a selfish and destructive way of being."

They consider the impact and implications these models are having for teachers, students and parents in Sweden.

¹ *A Moral Dimension to Parenting and Teaching. An Introduction to Awakening Children to the Authentic Self and an Evolutionary Context*, Interview with Patrick Bryson March 24, 2004. www.nordicintegral.com
Patrick Bryson has been a student of Andrew Cohen since 1996. Patrick can be contacted at email: pbryson@andrewcohen.org, www.andrewcohen.org

1. You're responsible for what you're choosing

ME: We have just recently started using Andrew Cohen's models of Heaven and Hell in our work with teachers and students. This has been inspired by your experiences in talking to kids about these models.² When we meet with kids – how do we make it clear to them that they choose? (See figure 1) That they don't see themselves as victims? I mean, we talk about parents and teachers who see themselves as victims but here are also two-year-olds, four-year-olds, ten-year-olds and fifteen-year-olds in the same condition. We meet with all of them and tell them, "Do you see how you're responsible for what you're choosing? If you go here you go down and if you go here you go up. So what is your choice?"

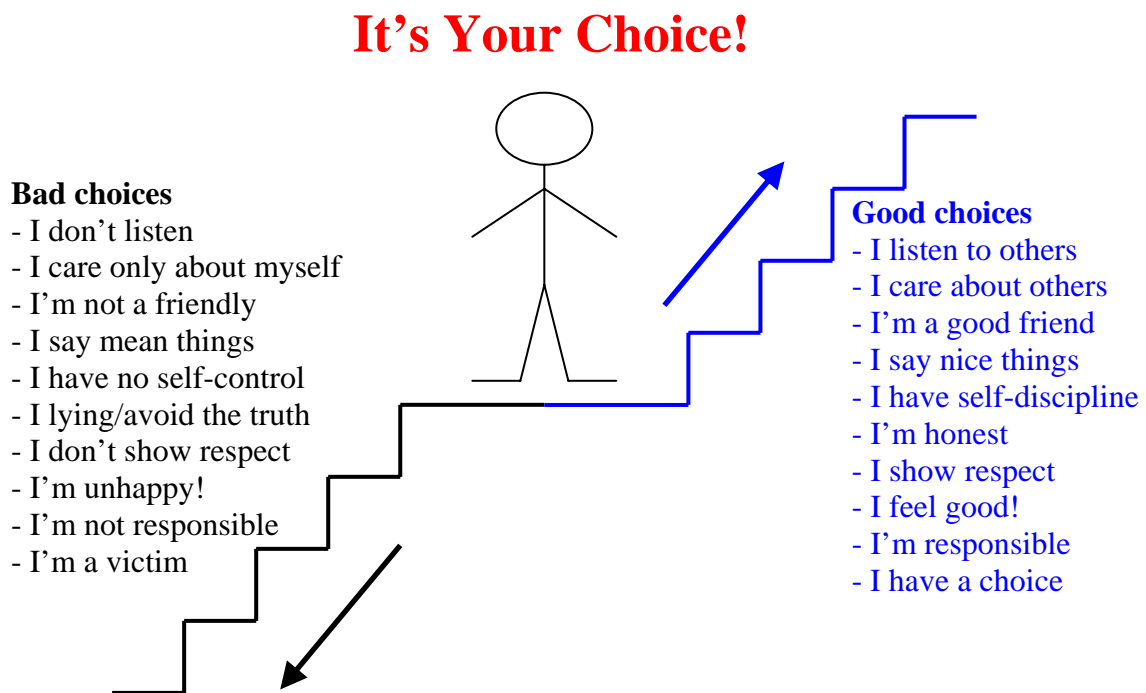


Figure 1. Staircase model: It's Your Choice! (A staircase representation of the Hell and Heaven model by Andrew Cohen. Based on enlightened communication dialogues held by Patrick Bryson together with groups of children).

PB: It's a fascinating question. Just this very simple step of pointing out to children that they have this ability to choose between good and bad and staying with the simplicity of it has a radical effect on them. And already we are seeing that this seemingly very simple point has profound implications. So as to how much we can build on that is exciting and an open-ended question. I don't know at what particular age necessarily this understanding awakens and comes alive. That's one of the things that we need to find out. What does this mean at each particular age and developmental level and turn of the Spiral? We need to explore the implications of this faculty of choice. But something in me tells me that the fact that already this is very profound means that we have in a way the seed of what we need to know about how things work. It's that simple. And of course I'd like to see it go into bigger arenas. There is something very fascinating about how simple this understanding is because it means that we can build on that. And the work that the both of you are doing in exploring the use of this in schools and education is very exciting. You've been brought recently into a crisis situation

² *A Moral Dimension to Parenting and Teaching. An Introduction to Awakening Children to the Authentic Self and an Evolutionary Context*, Interview with Patrick Bryson March 24, 2004. www.nordicintegral.com

to help the staff at Svansjöns resursskola³ and I think you were also both very struck by how quickly things changed just from applying this simple observation to everybody involved.⁴

2. You have a choice

ND: That's right. I pointed out that they had a choice between an upward direction towards respect and goodness and a downward direction towards more of what they were already experiencing. The upward direction would pull them together and the downward direction would tear their group and the whole school apart, making them feel worse and worse and that they were powerless and victims of everything that was happening around them. So in a sense this model helped to validate and clarify their experience. And by pointing that out to them it also offered them a way out; they were ready to make that choice.

PB: That's incredible to hear. You want to say a bit more about it? Because even to me I know these things are profound but until we apply them to real situations I don't think we really do appreciate how profound they actually are. Because if the situation was basically as bad as you could get and you pointed out the obvious – that everybody was choosing it to be that way and somebody was suddenly saying, "Well you have another choice" and that actually changed things – it says a lot about how complicated and lost we can be collectively if real responsibility is not being taken.

ND: Part of it was just being very clear in pointing out that they had a choice, they didn't have to be victims. And then because of the crisis they were experiencing it became very real for them to be open and receptive to making that choice at the same time. They all shared a deep sense of responsibility and commitment, not just individually, but collectively as well for the positive atmosphere they wanted to create in the school. I sensed them saying, "I can see how we have been focused on giving the students negative behaviour our attention. Show us how to identify and encourage positive behaviour." And this is where the knowledge and experience that Mats Edin has in working with children at different levels of development played a vital role.

3. Unhealthy GREEN: a perspective that distorts reality

ME: Encouraging positive behaviour is very subtle. I've been listening to teachers for years and years say essentially the same thing, "Nothing positive is happening." And I reply, "I've been sitting here forty minutes and I've seen that student working twenty minutes. You say he is never sitting down for longer than two minutes – he was sitting down working twenty minutes and nobody was encouraging him for that. As soon as he started moving and banging people you were there next to him rewarding him with attention. Calling his name several times, hugging him, holding him, hanging over him, and when he started working again you went away."

What is happening has to be appreciated from the worldview that is currently dominating our culture. This is the context in which these problems arise – the perspective of unhealthy GREEN or the Mean GREEN Meme [MGM] and its strange way of perceiving things; it distorts reality. They see nothing positive actually happening and we keep seeing the same thing happening all the time in the teachers we meet in Sweden. We see positive things happening, but nobody is ever acknowledging that.

³ Svansjöns resursskola in Malmö Sweden is an alternative school for students with behavioural problems in year 1-6. The school has eight students and six teachers.

⁴ See *What is Integral Education? Facilitating Human Emergence and the Evolution of Consciousness*. An interview with Mats Edin May 22, 2004. www.nordicintegral.com

ND: They are only acknowledging negative behaviour. And as GREEN dislikes all forms of hierarchy, both negative and positive, they are unable to point out this vital distinction. "Who am I to judge others on what is right? Everybody should be free to express themselves so long as they don't hurt other people. He didn't mean to hurt her; we have to understand his background."

PB: So you mean that the focus is on what is negative but there is a distorted way of dealing with it?

ND: That's right.

ME: This is important because of the fact that we say, "You have a choice." But lower levels of development can't handle that choice if they never get seen and rewarded for making that positive choice. For example we have to understand how the PURPLE mind and RED mind works. When older children who have not been able to establish a healthy expression of PURPLE and RED first begin to develop a positive expression and take a step up in the staircase, which means taking responsibility for their behaviour and response to a situation. It's important to appreciate how delicate this situation is. I say to them, "That's good", not overdoing it, but just saying, "That's good, that's right". It may even have to start off with me saying less than that, just nodding my head slightly. Then I keep going; I don't give them any more attention than that. Doing so would actually cause them to purposefully respond negatively. It may not have been their intention to actually do something good. They may have been sitting quietly, while actually planning to do something bad. Also they are just not used to hearing about themselves doing good things and have no sense of security and trust related to that. So they first have to see that they have a choice to do something else and they can trust what we are saying. But these kids expressing negative RED never hear that, they lack this PURPLE sense of security and trust. Healthy relationship with the adult is missing. Instead they hear, "No, no, no." Whereas now they get a clear message so that when they do something wrong either they get a very tough reaction i.e. a sanction or consequence, or no reaction at all i.e. no attention for negative behaviour. Which means they start seeing how what you say actually has an effect. You do what you say, and that also means you are someone they can trust. This translates into PURPLE as safety and security. But because everybody is so focused on giving their attention to that which is negative there is no effect in choosing to do the right things, and this translates again into PURPLE as insecurity and lack of trust.

4. Looking for examples and wanting to be seen

PB: It seems so obvious when we speak in this way – the simplicity in what you are saying. You see the absurdity of treating children this way who's natural inclination is to look to adults and older children for examples and if the only example they're being given is that when you do something wrong you get seen and rewarded and the positive isn't recognised or acknowledged therefore it might as well not exist. So there's no encouragement or discovery into better ways of being.

ND: And yet despite the negative downward spiral that this creates there is still a tendency, even in the most negative cases, to want to do something good.

PB: Right – when you point it out. Because it sounds like you couldn't have been in a worse situation, and when you pointed it out they all said, "Yes" because they were desperate.

ND: And these kids were still doing something positive, even if it was very small.

PB: They weren't seeing this positive side, or else if they were seeing it then not acknowledging it because of their focus on the negative.

5. Seeing through the pluralistic worldview and its myths

ME: Exactly. This is the insight that we can bring. Because what we are talking about is actually nothing new in the field of child psychology. It is old psychology as pioneered by behavioural psychologists dating back to Pavlov and BF Skinner. But what we bring is an awareness of these different levels of development and a working knowledge of how the GREEN meme and the postmodern value system that saturates our Nordic culture makes it impossible for most teachers and school leaders to see and discriminate what is actually happening and then generate the solutions that will work. And because they are so imbedded in the GREEN meme they can't and don't want to see the problems they themselves are generating. The GREEN meme gives them a script that says either, "Be helpless" or "Be a caring rescuer". They place themselves and those around them in the victim position instead of releasing a positive potential for growth and emergence to something higher. As Sting says in one of his songs, "If you love someone set them free."

What we see happening are not isolated incidents, it is very much a cultural phenomenon throughout our whole society. To be really effective in generating new solutions we have to recognise this and deal with negative GREEN on a cultural level. Otherwise the culture will continue to generate these problems. Teachers will continue to want to blame the parents for not raising their kids properly, blame the kids for coming from wrong cultures, and blame the headmasters for making wrong decisions. So we have to work on creating change at all levels at the same time.

6. Pointing to an integrative force moving vertically upwards

PB: You're dealing with a very real situation. But at the same time I'm struck by the fact that if you come in with a different set of values and want to appeal to the most positive part of the child, you're already creating the conditions for something different to emerge. And you're already having an effect immediately and that is what is so interesting. This is the direct solution, which doesn't mean avoiding the reality. You are actually creating something different by actively choosing to put your attention on a higher good. You're showing the way out of the mess people are in.

ND: It also means that all the tools, knowledge and experience that you already have get applied in a very specific way. For example, now knowing how to encourage, lead, motivate, and support positive expressions of PURPLE, RED and BLUE in children. Recognising the need for different leadership styles and reward systems to encourage positive behaviour and ways of thinking which are appropriate to the different value systems that awaken and come alive within the self as it emerges along the Spiral.

PB: Yes, Mats has experienced twenty-five years of child psychology, which now comes to light in this deeper understanding. Right now I can feel myself wanting to know and understand more about how children at different stages of development develop. It's a fascinating question. This learning experience enriches all of us, it enriches what we already know and it shows us what we don't know and therefore there is this development for all of us. We're all learning from this context.

7. Clarity of intention to support positive growth

ME: Maybe it's like what we are doing is bringing in Andrew Cohen's Psychology of Liberation, in this case the First Tenet, which is *Clarity of Intention*. We've been talking about the Second Tenet, which is the *Law of Volitionality*; in this case meaning the fact that we have this capacity to choose what we say or do, i.e. we are always choosing.

It's Your Choice!

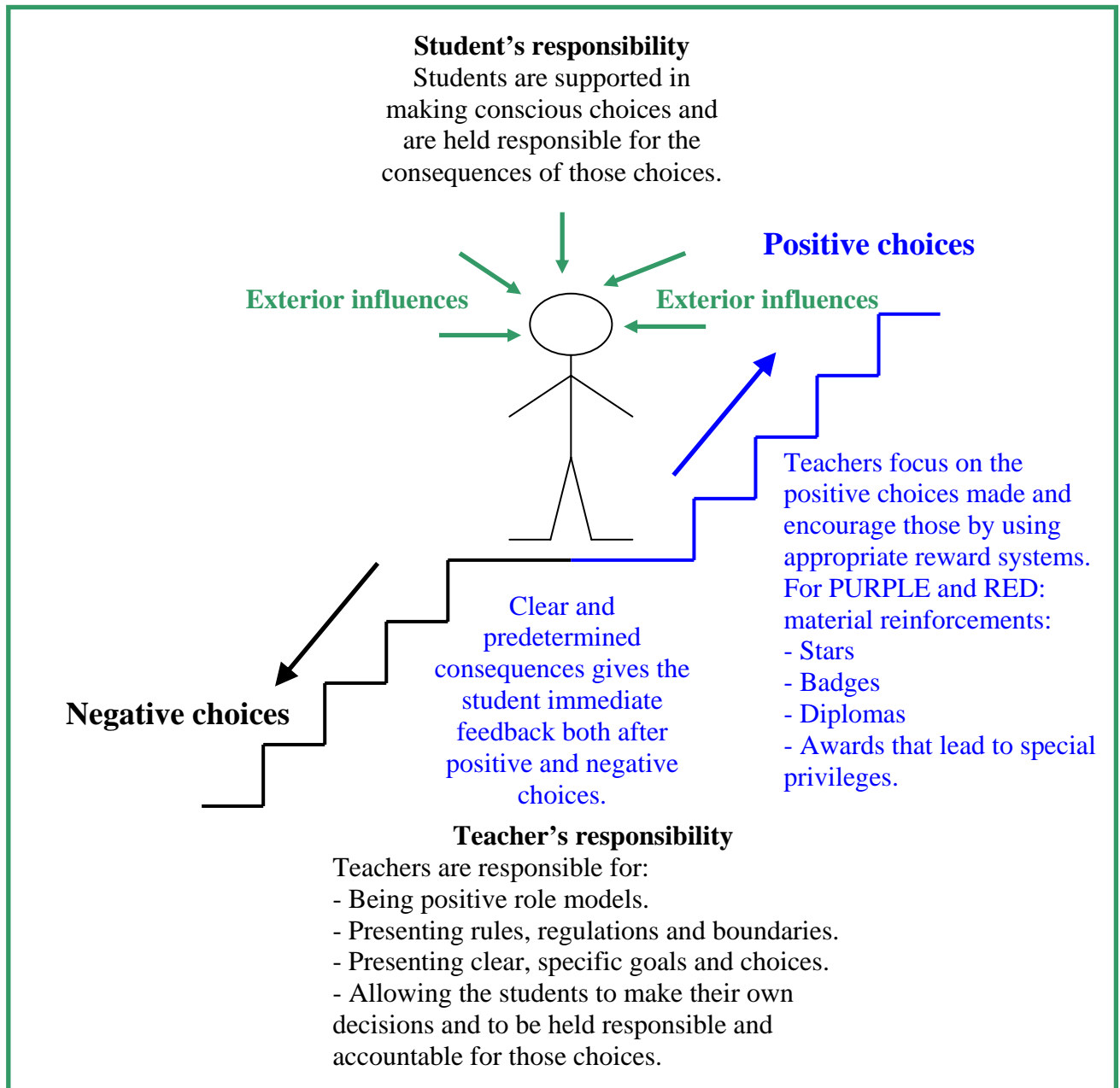


Figure 2. *It's Your Choice!* (Model used by teachers at Svansjöns resursskola in Malmö Sweden.)

From experience, I can see that aligning ourselves with this positive force doesn't really happen until I have both tenets in the picture. In the area of child development in the PURPLE and RED memes it means stressing the importance of rewarding positive behaviour immediately and either totally stopping what has to be stopped – if you enter a street fight you

have to know how to end it – or not paying attention to negative behaviour immediately. This actually increases good behaviour and decreases bad behaviour. (See figure 2 for a description of how the staff at Svansjöns resursskola clarify their use of the model, *It's Your Choice!*).

But since the teachers don't inherently want to see goodness, they don't answer, "yes" to the question, "Do you want to choose the positive side yourself, to be a good teacher, to be a happy teacher, to be a good leader?" Because when you do answer "yes" you will actually discriminate what you actually wish for. You are either choosing to support this upward movement or you're against it.

Once you're *Clarity of Intention* is to care about this positive process you will find yourself becoming very objective about the level of your own thinking and behaviour. You will ask yourself which side you are on. You will be able judge yourself very objectively. It's literally yes or no – there is no in between grey zone. Because without this clarity of intention, even if they get it intellectually, after two minutes they seem to forget it and go back to rewarding negative behaviour once again. You start tripping over yourself. It's very difficult to break out of this conditioned response, as it is part of our culture as well. The way out is to follow the First Tenet, which is *Clarity of Intention*. And for those that trip over themselves I have to say afterwards, "So why did you do that?" and they reply, "But it was distributing". And I say, "It wasn't that disturbing and now you rewarded it once again. So now he knows that if he wants to get your attention he just has to clap his hands and make some noise. Nothing has changed."

PB: You're speaking about trying to bring in a different perspective into a system that is already well established and of course through habit it's hard to change that. It begs the question then: Well what do we have to do? Which is where we are all at, because we have to somehow start to create different contexts.

ND: Change the level of thinking.

8. Be bold but don't attack

ME: We talked to Don Beck recently about this and he said, "We want to be bold – bold but not attack."⁵ Bold could be saying, "We have experience that this is happening in schools in Sweden. We also have suggestions as to the solutions you will need to make your school work." We don't want to just say, "It's a catastrophe at your school". We want to show them an alternative way of thinking, and show them examples of how this new level of maturity and leadership is already generating new solutions that actually work in schools. We want and need to show specific examples of headmasters, teachers, parents and students. We want to have such people talk about the rapid progress now being made. Teachers, headmasters and parents are experiencing a crisis and that the current solutions and methods being used for dealing with them are only making things worse. That's why it's very applicable being bold.

ND: The present models aren't working – they already have teams of people with years of knowledge and experience. They've already invested time and money on countless projects and yet there is no overarching understanding or agreement as to what to do. Like in this particular example from Svansjöns resursskola, they had reached the end of the road, it was either find a solution that works or close the school. In fact I honestly think it came as a shock to everybody, including me, when we saw the kind of change that emerged. As the

⁵ *Reality Based Education. It's Time to be Bold but not Attack.* An interview with Don Beck May 12, 2004 www.nordicintegral.com.

headmaster explained, "This school has not worked well since its inception in 1997". Everybody had more or less given up and with financial problems in the city budget creating extra pressure it was quite possible that the school would have closed. They were, in his words, "on the verge of ruin."

PB: Oh my God!

9. You are what you do

ME: That's exactly the situation. The GREEN psychologists, teachers and parents are saying clichés like, "I'm not angry with you, I'm angry about what you are doing". The kids do not get that. They can't see how they can be separate from and not responsible for their own actions and behaviour. From their perspective – what they do is who they are. It's my job to be judgemental, showing the teachers and parents that there is a vertical scale. As I say, "You keep saying 'I'm not angry at you I'm angry at what you are doing' and that simply doesn't make any sense. You have to stop saying that to these kids. You *are* what you do and say. It's you who is doing the choosing – nobody else."

10. Fighting a battle in defence of that which is higher

ME: That's why I say we have to attack the negative GREEN thinking here. We definitely do not want to defend the postmodern value system, because this is what is stopping anything good or integral from happening. So it is a real battle we are fighting against this postmodern value system. For example, "There are many truths, we need to understand why, and there is always two to blame when two are fighting". We say this even when it is a 90-kilo guy hitting a 60-kilo guy! How could this be true? It's very often, if not always, one who is most responsible; two boys, one is sixteen-years-old and the other is twelve. There's nothing complicated to understand. And when we understand this on a deep level, we only have one choice; we just have to stop it.

PB: You mean that this negative GREEN thinking is actually insane where it is leading.

ME: When we speak to big groups of people they keep saying, "Why haven't we heard of this before?" This knowledge has to start coming out more and more because people are now becoming very receptive to hearing it saying, "This is fresh, this is new, this makes sense. Why have we been told the opposite?"

ND: This has impact when you have somebody who is speaking from the position of experience, somebody who is a living example. When you have students who have made that choice you can see a radical shift take place in their behaviour. And the same is true for parents and teachers as well as a whole school. The school that I have been working with previously had a very bad reputation but is now able to generate positive results. Where this leads will very much depend upon whether they get recognition and support for their results. And unless we help create a change from unhealthy GREEN in the leaders supporting the school, they most probably won't be able to value the significance and take action.

Interestingly the results have not come about by explaining theory: Spiral Dynamics or the possibilities with integral thinking. Instead we have started by using examples, showing that healthy change is possible in contexts where it was assumed to be impossible.

PB: In a way this is the only thing that really moves us, being inspired and impacted by other people. And obviously it's the parents and teachers who are going to have to be inspired and embrace this view to begin with.

ND: We will have to fill in a lot of detail when people are ready for this sort of change. Like when a teacher asks, "Well what can I do to inspire my class of 27 students? I want to learn how to do this." Or the headmaster who asks, "What can I do to develop the intelligence of the whole school?" Nobody has written the book, as yet, so let's find out together.

PB: This is the real question of education: What is real education? We usually assume education to be teachers educating children. But of course somebody needs to educate teachers as well.

11. Recognising natural hierarchy

ND: It's also concerns recognising natural hierarchy.

PB: You've been describing a situation were there was zero hierarchy so nobody's experience was more valuable, therefore children are left without any adults to look to who could give them an example of how they should be. That's a situation that's seriously lacking in richness of experience to pass on. Because isn't education really about passing on life experience to younger people - children who are coming into our world and it's our responsibility to pass on to them our life experience. So what we are passing onto them is what the world is going to become. So there is an enormous responsibility in that and I think facing the responsibility of, "What are we contributing to younger children?" I think asking this question brings back in a sense of responsibility and a moral dimension that is so severely lacking. And then what this means in terms of natural hierarchy? It's a big subject and is something that isn't very easy to find explained, but one way to describe it in this context is actually passing on a bigger vision to people who have less experience, which in education would have to be the most important thing really. Because what we are actually giving children is a worldview, we are giving a worldview and a context for living and what it means to be alive and it's a very big subject. That means the responsibility for teachers is a big one.

ND: And this could even mean accepting responsibility for the intelligence of the whole community.

PB: Yes – it's a very big responsibility.

ME: Recognising hierarchy is very important in breaking through GREEN pluralism. Often teachers working together in Sweden pretend they're all equal. Even in that very context if I say, "So who are you listening to more among your colleagues?" They might not answer that question. When I ask, "Who has worked longest?" You have to listen intently and distinguish depth in what they are saying to get them to see that there is a hierarchy existing, that there is actually one person who is higher in the hierarchy. Especially between women, it is almost impossible. I use the example of, "Who is getting paid the highest salary?" There is something about introducing such a factor or variable that you can use to start organising them. Then if they say, "Okay that person is now the one who is reporting to the headmaster," that's creating positive order amongst them and then they can go to classrooms having experienced the goodness of having a hierarchy because now they can be efficient in how they talk to the headmasters and the parents and how they organise things. They see the necessity of recognising a hierarchy. That hasn't happened because of decades of pluralistic thinking of not being true to the hierarchies. So hierarchy gets watered down everywhere – you can't find them. You find yourself asking, "Who am I talking to here? Who's actually in charge? Is it you or is it you?" I mean I always say that when I talk to groups of children, "Who is highest in the hierarchy?" And everybody knows, they point to her; she's the most beautiful and him

because he's strongest. They know that. "Did you know that?" I say to the teacher. "Umm, what are you talking about?" they reply.

PB: That's true. In any group, no matter who it is, there is always somebody who is a natural leader, through being older, more experienced, having more natural ability, whatever. It's usually obvious to everybody.

12. Expressing higher values

ME: This is part of the bullying situation. Teachers and parents don't get this. Parents tell their daughter, who is number twelve in the hierarchy, to dress like number one in the hierarchy and then she gets smashed because she can't go there, she has to take one step up at a time. She can't buy the same cloths as number one. That means death in this PURPLE and RED value system and level of thinking. You never do that. I mean if you are number twelve amongst the boys and take the ball from number one you get hit. Everyone at this level of thinking knows that you have to take one step up the ladder at a time. There are codes that you have to recognise.

PB: You are pointing to what is very significant and important. For instance there is often some correlation between who is getting paid the most and their life experience as teachers, therefore those with more understanding should have more to give and contribute. But if everybody is forced into a system where everybody's view and experience is equal then it is going to be interfering with that natural flow of life experience. The system will not be recognising that there exists a hierarchy of values and that our responsibility as teachers is to pass on, "a bigger vision to people who have less experience."

ND: That's right. We are pointing out that there is a hierarchy that we must be objective about it. But what does that mean in the context of recognising a natural hierarchy for enabling emergence?

PB: Obviously nobody needs telling that they need to bring out something more positive, cultivate deeper values, more positivity and awaken each other and the children up. But what does that really mean? What kind of structure and framework is going to support these deeper values? So obviously it needs some of us to be interested in exploring those deeper values ourselves.

ND: That there are deeper values.

PB: Exactly! Very good! [Laughter] That there actually are deeper values, we're discovering them, we're exploring them, and we're finding ways of sharing them and expressing them in our lives.

13. The higher that we climb the more the ladder sways

ND: And that we will defend this higher ground the further up we are in this natural hierarchy because more things can go wrong if we don't.

ME: Like Stuart Davis sings, "The higher that we climb the more the ladder sways."

ND: That's a lot in itself, acknowledging that there are higher values and we have to be willing to defend them. And if we don't take responsibility and say "yes", who is going to do it so that we all don't come crashing down?

PB: Yes. When you described your experience of explaining to the teachers and students that there was this other choice and they instantaneously went for it. They recognised it and they wanted it.

ND: That's right and as the teachers are higher on this ladder they had to be the first to make a choice in wanting to defend a higher set of values before they could awaken students and parents to anything higher. They recognised that they could choose and that for it to have best impact they saw the necessity and implications of making that choice together. They shared a level of understanding not shared by the students, parents or headmasters and now recognised that as being higher and thus a need to defend that higher truth. They suddenly realised that they were on a ladder and had to be the first to defend this natural hierarchy and the truth that everybody had a choice. But they needed to gain confidence in expressing that in their words and actions. They needed to experience it.

PB: And that's what was causing the problems?

ND: That's right, they were letting the ladder sway. They hadn't been choosing to recognise this natural hierarchy or express it and were thus working against it. They had reduced themselves to being at the bottom of the leadership pyramid.⁶ So I was using that model to explain this as well.

14. The higher you go the narrower it becomes

ME: In the bottom of that pyramid is a wide range of choices; there is subjective judgement no pressure, no sense of urgency, just lots of ego. The higher you go the narrower it becomes, there is less movement, there is literally one choice. I point this out to teachers, as well as all adults working in schools and say, "You are at the top, you have one choice, not many choices, not even two choices. You only have one choice. You can't pass by when you see a conflict between two kids or between staff and students. You can't choose to not see that which is happening right now."

PB: That's what you mean by the one choice?

ME: Yes. They only have one choice. They have to intervene and say, "Stop! What's happening here?" And that is what is not happening in schools. People pretend that they don't see it, that they have lots of choices, lots of time and no responsibility. They say, "I'm afraid, I wouldn't dare to intervene. I might get hurt!" And so their own negative attitude creates a lot of room and tolerance for students to make negative choices. They're not authoritative when they teach; they don't stop what is happening. They don't create order in the classroom. Their leadership style is very sloppy.

ND: They fight against this natural hierarchy.

PB: Yes! Natural hierarchy in this context was not shying away from responsibility and not avoiding the experience that we actually do have and living according to that.

15. At bottom is the egocentric/narcissistic position

ME: It may not have been you that decided that a conflict should arise in the classroom or school ground, but because you're highest in the pyramid of leadership you accept

⁶ See leadership pyramid model in *An Already Victorious Position. An Impersonal perspective on Education*. An interview with Mats Edin January 14, 2004. www.nordicintegral.com

responsibility for the consequences, i.e. what you see arising in front of you. I mean, who else is going to do something? Do you want to let some teenage thug take over? Because many times, as an adult, you are alone in the classroom or with a group of children. Who else should it be? Who else is in charge? Who else is being paid to be the leader?

PB: It sounds crazy to talk like this, but our culture conditions us to think in this way.

ME: Yes, because teachers in our culture actually do avoid accepting responsibility. At the bottom of the leadership pyramid is the egocentric/narcissistic position, "I need to be seen." At the top, "I am seeing". Like Andrew Cohen would say you become the Seer. At the bottom teachers and headmasters are giving their egocentric/ narcissistic position away reporting, "I just don't see it. I don't see the problem." I'm there in the classroom observing them and afterwards I say, "Why did you do this, why did you do that?" "I didn't see that," they say. I have to be very direct and say, "I think you did see what happened and you have to be true to that experience, that you do see and you make a choice not to intervene and stop the conflict." And then sometimes they do acknowledge the fact and admit you're right. But it's a huge barrier we are fighting against.

PB: So the scenario you're describing sounds like the children, who are the collective, i.e. the mass, are in charge. So the whole pyramid is basically upside down.

ND: Exactly – which leads to them smashing the windows, throwing stones at the teachers, climbing on the roof, taking over and the teachers having to ring the Police.

PB: Well exactly! That's where it ends up!

16. Either a victim or a sympathetic caregiver

ME: It's a very serious and dangerous situation we have on our hands in Sweden. Just to be very brutal here, we have extreme violence, suicide, assaults, rape, stealing, misery, drugs, and in the last few weeks we saw the threat of a school massacre. We saw forty-five teenagers create their own value system in the absence of this true natural hierarchy and the BLUE value system able to instil in them a sense of purpose and extol authoritative leadership. We saw an absence of teachers, parents and headmasters being true to their experience, being unable to say "No" and "Yes" when it's needed to.

ND: Basically nobody is caring enough to take responsibly for what is happening.

ME: I had to recently address a large meeting concerning a planned school massacre. The meeting concerned one of guys involved. At this large meeting were his family, all the teachers, the headmasters and the top staff from the city district. And here they were talking about this guy as a victim. They were saying, "Poor him," and that, "We have to take care of him when he comes back to the school." And I said, "Can I please say something? Maybe this guy – who is 190 cm tall, weighs 90 kg has powerful friends, and is of course, very influential amongst his peers – maybe that's not his true experience when you go and cuddle him. Maybe you're meeting him more real if you say, 'Hey I know you're responsible for what you're doing. I know you might be afraid of this and that person, but you also enjoy it when people are afraid of you and you get on a high when you have this power trip and I think you know what you're doing. I know you are responsible for everything and you have to take responsibility for it. And I and the rest of my colleagues are going to see to it that you're held accountable for what you do.'"

ND: You were draining the GREEN swamp.

ME: I had to because they even talked about, "We have to take care of him, we have to take him to McDonald's." And after I questioned that everything stopped in the room. It was like swearing in church. It went against everything modern psychology had been conditioning us to think and say, but interesting enough it seemed to awaken and liberate the dormant BLUE meme in them because they nodded their heads rather quickly.

PB: You mean that's how the authorities treat thugs and violent ringleaders?

ME: Not the police – thank god – but the school yes. He wasn't the leader; he was maybe number three in this gang organisation. My experience is that if you're fifteen years old and a head higher than everybody else plus other assets as well, your experience as a fifteen-year-old is not being, "Poor me", it's "Powerful me." We don't meet him in his true experience if we say, "Poor you". When we say that we turn him into a helpless victim, someone not in control of himself, which we have been doing. But then afterwards they say, "You were right," because they were treating him in this way. "What you said matched it completely."

17. Unveiling the subjective GREEN myths

ND: We have to look though the subjective myths of what we normally hold to be true. GREEN doesn't recognise the different values and forces at play at the different levels of development. Instead it wants to be unique and come up with it's own home-cooked psychological theory. To relate another example, I was recently consulting teachers for a year five class at a Montessori school. They were experiencing a situation of severe bullying amongst two-thirds of the girls in the class and were not able to come up with a solution despite them already using arguably the best program against bullying developed by Norwegian child psychologist Dan Olweus. What I discovered was that in terms of their leadership style they were practising a lot of listening and very little good authoritarian leadership. They had no commonly agreed upon list of sanctions or consequences which could be implemented immediately and no system for recognising positive behaviour, neither amongst themselves nor in cooperation with the parents. Another very important point as Mats Edin pointed out, was that nobody was acknowledging the underlying impersonal biological forces at play within this group of girls and the elder boys. The girls were being subject to awakening biological and sexual forces that can be very strong, affecting our psychology, group structure and hierarchy, but they were not consciously aware of.

ME: This insight in understanding the female mind comes from Andrew Cohen's vision, "Every girl/woman wants to be the queen." And if you just use that and stay with what is happening in this classroom; she's more cute, more good looking, taller and whatever. Of course she has more attention, so how does she use that? And how does she feel if somebody else is almost as cute? The fight between those girls is really about biological script that they are not aware of and until that level of consciousness arises they will not be free of it either. For example, they send text messages on their mobile phones to each other about each other, telling them she has this kind of string panties; she has these kind of breasts. They sell out everything to keep their place in the hierarchy. When you tell this to the adults in school they give you one big long unbelieving "No." And I say, "Ask them." The collusion is more horrible than you think. These girls are stuck in living this lower level biological script and value system and will continue to until they wake up from it. So we have to help them with this waking up and this insight is from Andrew Cohen.

18. Providing the maps for a revolution in thinking

ND: So for Svansjöns resursskola I pointed out that they had a choice between a negative and a positive choice, the positive side expressed as a stairway going up and the negative side with a stairway going down.⁷ This brought about a revolution in their thinking. I then used the pyramid model where I explained to them that they, as a collective group, needed to share agreement on the higher values that were important as well as an understanding of how to use the tools they were going to need to motivate the level of thinking and moral reasoning they wanted to encourage in their students, i.e. they had to include all four quadrants. For example, the motivational system previously being used had no commonly agreed upon norms governing its use. In addition no regard was taken to individual student's level of development.

PB: So you were basically giving them several maps. Which gives them a reference point for this different way of operating.

ND: Yes, in fact I used five different maps, including Kohlberg's levels of moral development. And interestingly they have written up on one of the walls in the school, "Treat others as you would hope they would treat you" which is level three, Mutuality, in Kohlberg's model. But without a map there was no awareness of verticality, that this phrase represented a level of moral development, and thus how to awaken even higher levels or indeed encourage level three in students who are still at level one "Might is right!"

ME: Moral level three is actually a level of thinking that dates back to Jesus.

PB: You mean that was already there on the wall? [Laughter] That's incredible, it is the very thing that needs to be cultivated.

ND: They new it was important but they had no idea as to how to cultivate it in their students. It is written up in a room that has walls damaged after outbursts of anger, so the exact opposite was happening.

PB: Oh my God that's scary [laughter]!

ME: We see RED students behaving, "I'm stronger therefore I'm right," which is level one in Kohlberg's model in combination with GREEN teachers saying, "Who am I to judge?"

ND: One of the lecturers at Malmö University School of Teaching commented to me recently, "I am forever fascinated by how we humans register so many different things, and that our personal interpretations are also so different. It's exciting with these differences because they create a dynamic."

ME: A very destructive dynamic. For thirty years in Sweden they have been saying, "How do you think he feels now when you kicked his ass and stole his mobile phone?" And we say, "Does it help asking this sort of question to those guys? No." So we give them the tools to say that's not the way you talk to a guy who is saying 'I'm stronger therefore I'm right.' You have to show him you're stronger, that you're the boss. If you're not physically stronger call his dad and tell him to come to the school. Then they say, "Can I do that?" "Yes you can", I tell them. "It's your duty. You have to call somebody, you have to STOP him!"

ND: "I'm not sure that I can do that, what if he gets angry?" they reply.

⁷ See *What is Integral Education? Facilitating Human Emergence and the Evolution of Consciousness*. An interview with Mats Edin May 22, 2004. www.nordicintegral.com

19. Rewarding good behaviour

ME: This guy, and for sure his father, are going to get very angry, but it's this fear of conflict that is stopping the teacher from thinking and choosing to intervene. Keep his father in school with his son for two weeks if needed. His son has to go to school, the law in Scandinavia is very clear on this, but he cannot walk around kicking and hitting other students or throwing furniture around.

We help them to build up reward systems for the students to move higher in Kohlberg's model of moral development. These lower levels of development actually involve old knowledge while the new thing is that we integrate it with Andrew Cohen's, Ken Wilber's and Don Beck's insight and knowledge in this, which means self-knowledge about being a human being. How you're impacted by culture, how it doesn't work only to have these psychological tools and a personal context, because that hasn't helped. We are using Andrew Cohen's very stark model (see figures 1 and 2) as well as putting attention on right behaviour and not on wrong behaviour. So using these two models together brings about radical change. We want many more examples of this.

ND: What I also found valuable in this experience was the importance of appreciating how the negative RED mind thinks and behaves within an unhealthy PURPLE environment, i.e. not instilling any sense of security and trust. While our aim is to generate a more positive expression of RED, so long as there is no healthy PURPLE base of safety and security to build from, we have to build up that level of trust first. And as Mats Edin explained before, this means not giving them too much encouragement and reward too soon, because some of these kids are suffering from emotional frost bite, in taking them in from the cold we must first bath them in snow and then very slowly introduce warmth. Just giving them barely enough recognition to help them take one small step up at a time. This also goes very much against GREEN.

PB: I like what you say about just giving enough so that it becomes something that they develop as part of their own experience and knowledge. This has to be the most important thing because if somebody takes on something you are giving and they actually move upwards with it themselves, even if it is small changes, that is real development, that is real change. And then that has to be the way forward.

20. Broadening the context

ND: The teachers and students at Svansjöns resursskola now look forward to being together and have created a positive working environment. The teachers also see that what they are doing could have an impact on other teachers and schools in the district and are excited about that possibility.

PB: Already from what they have done. That's incredible.

ND: That signals a vertical movement in their thinking. I'm also interviewing other headmasters, school healthcare specialists, and district supervisors, and they are all very interested hearing about the change that is taking place.

PB: That's incredible.

ND: For this small group of teachers it's been a significant shift.

21. Less is more

ME: We are also saying, "Less is more". When Nick and I started giving lectures to teachers and headmasters a year ago we were standing there trying to give everything.

ND: Every theoretical angle and model we had.

ME: Like machine guns.

ND: They were searching for insight and understanding, but it was like throwing crates of food at starving people who were so famished they couldn't eat.

PB: Bucketfuls of rich food [laughter]. And that's part of the learning process because if a little bit helps and a lot doesn't then it's an important lesson, like Mats said, "Less is more".

ME: And that's one of the qualities of TURQUOISE, as Don Beck points out.

PB: Speaking about it you realise how much potential there actually is in this and yet how much there is to do.

ND: Introducing the model, *It's Your Choice!* (see figure 1), that you explained in our last interview was an important key. Without that very simple and yet very profound map I don't think it would have happened. They have this map hanging on the doors in each of the classrooms, some of the parents are now using it at home and the kids are referring to it the whole day.

PB: That's extraordinary – that model came from the kids I was talking to. The kids themselves came up with that solution. They appreciated that there are two choices and one is to go up and it's positivity and a better way of being, and one is to go down and leads to a selfish and destructive way of being.

ND: In my experience in working with this group of teachers and other groups of students is that this model has been validated each time. By that I mean they get it very quickly and are able to give me examples of the choices possible on each side without me having to tell them. It's like they already have this knowledge, all they needed was a map and someone to recognise them and confirm what was higher and what was lower.

22. I have to save myself

ME: Without this map they are trapped in the horizontal value system, which says, "Recognise and treat everybody's values as equal." I mean look at what happens when we do that. "I saw you passing in the corridor and you saw something happen that wasn't good, you didn't stop it." And they say, when I push them to answer, "I didn't dare to". I say, "Didn't you intervene ten years ago when you started." "Yes I did," they reply. "Then why don't you do it now?" I ask. "Because it has become worse," they reply. "Oh, so you think there is change occurring then? Because what were previously small incidents where you intervened and stopped have now become bigger incidents that you merely observe and don't stop. So how do you think it is going to look five years from now?"

We have to point out to them that there is a movement here, there is a direction, things are becoming more complex and we are choosing to go down the staircase. It's not horizontal at all, it's getting worse and we are choosing it to be so.

ND: I think this map makes that immediately visible and experientially clear, "I can see how I have been choosing this negative path and I can see how I have been going down." And as kids say, "If I keep going I'll be in the cellar, all alone and in the dark." "So which choice do you want to make?" I ask. "I want to choose the path leading up," they say. "So what does that mean you have to do?"

So what would that mean? When you decide to choose the positive side, what would you be saying and doing? It's not like I have to preach what they should do, or rescue them because I see them as being powerless victims of a poor childhood. It's not that at all. When they recognise that no one is going to save them, that they have to accept full responsibility for the choices they make, it liberates them to choose something positive, to choose to be an expression of this positive side. They generate the answers of what this positive side entails. All they need is the map and teachers to encourage them. The knowledge they need is already within them but nobody sees it when we level out all these values in the GREEN horizontal value system.

PB: Which reveals that this horizontal is actually a delusion, it's not really what is happening.

23. Accepting full responsibility means no excuses

ND: Often we meet teachers who in playing this victim card don't want to take responsibility for what they see.

ME: When I talk to teachers I say, "Forget about what you think is going on and taking place in the kids home. Because if you do you will find an excuse to not act; 'It's no use because they come from a home that treats them badly.'
You're responsible for everything that happens in the classroom no matter what."

And then I say to the parents the same thing, "Forget about what you think is going on in the classroom and just be responsible for what happens at home no matter what." And then when this is understood it actually creates a very good platform for the kids. But if you allow this fantasy to go on, some sort of homemade psychology will arise. The teacher thinks, "I know these kind of parents therefore why their kids are behaving in this way and therefore I can understand why I am having trouble," i.e. I'm a victim, I'm powerless and unable to accept responsibility and change what's happening.

ND: And also, even when these parents or teachers are sometimes saying or doing something very negative you can listen for something that you see them do, say or even indicate with their body language that is positive, and then point to it. The same as we do with children, lifting them half a step at a time. By focusing on the child it might mean an agreement on how important it is that we are consequent in our behaviour, choosing good behaviour, and that we are good role models.

PB: Because somewhere in what they are saying they have to care about their children.

ND: That's right and we need to be very serious about this. We have to demonstrate that understanding that we are caring about a value that is higher and better and that we are not prepared to back down no matter the stress they put us under to back down. As teachers and parents we must be able to handle high levels of stress in a very cool manner.

PB: But I appreciate that it's not an easy task.

ND: No it isn't, but it is a very important part of teaching and parenting that has to be given much more attention. For example, recently at another school in Malmö I had to physically restrain a nine-year-old for over thirty minutes while colleagues called his mother to come to the school. He was brought in from the playground after hitting and threatening fellow students with a metal pole. The boy kept screaming and struggling to get free from me in order to do as he pleased, i.e. smashing doors, kicking walls, trying to kick me, kicking tables, throwing his head backwards and forwards, spitting, hitting people and continuing on a rampage. The atmosphere was charged when his mother arrived. As Mats said to me recently, "You have to have your primary objective down to the size of a postage stamp, and just focus on that, no matter what happens." I had no interest in discussing her feelings or what had led up to her son being angry. It was of no interest in terms of this higher context, though I knew it was on her agenda. I knew she was going to play the victim card along with her son. She was certain to have sympathised with whatever her son told her. Regardless of what had happened, how she felt, and not least the effect my own adrenaline was having on me, I had to keep it very simple, it was all about choosing to show respect. I just said to her, "Your son has to show all the adults in this school respect when they wish to talk to him. He is refusing to do that. I will not let him go until he does that and apologises to my colleague and me for his disrespectful behaviour." Without this being established nothing higher could emerge. And despite her not understanding Swedish too well, she seemed to implicitly understand the importance of me saying her son had to show respect towards adults in authority, as this also implied herself. She dropped her own agenda and sided up with what I was saying immediately and within five minutes I was able to leave the room.

ME: It's important that when these kids turn twenty-five they can say, "Well my life turned out pretty good because I had a teacher who demanded a lot from me, although my parents were crazy alcoholics" or whatever, because that teacher saved his life. So in a way you need to have someone doing it and it's a bonus if the parents jump on the same train.

ND: Yes. And while meeting individual teachers may have sufficed historically what we are now talking about is to go way beyond that. We want to create a society that is accepting full responsibility. So that we meet such people all through society by conscious choice and no longer just by chance.

PB: Being responsible, bold and daring to think that big.

Nick Drummond
June 5, 2004