

## Getting Ready to Leap

# Leadership and Application of Spiral Dynamics

### An interview with Teddy Larsen<sup>1</sup>

Managing Director, Eli Lilly Denmark

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### Summary

In this interview Teddy Larsen describes how his organisation is coming closer to the tipping point – a leap to second tier – and why they must make this leap. *"The dynamics of the whole industry are constantly increasing. And the ability to look into the future is getting tougher and tougher."* It's a time when known ways of thinking and generating solutions, *"won't work any longer."* It's a time when stress and change are big problems for many people and organisations and when second tier leaders ask, *"How do we ensure that we are able to survive and thrive on change?"* In the case of Eli Lilly, Teddy describes it as, *"implementing a more change adaptive behaviour in all people in the organisation... training ourselves and getting used to handling new and every increasing levels of complexity, because that's really what we do all day."* And basically this means training people and teams to take increasing levels of *"responsibility to make decisions."* Leadership is about facilitating change – a process whereby you meet people at the level they are at and increase their understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the next level, *"of helping people move from one level to the next level."* *"I have invested a lot of time, money and resources in my managers, and a lot of time training them to cope when people are getting stuck. What to do once people are getting the frustrations of not being able to find the solutions of a given problem."*

Teddy describes YELLOW leadership as concerning unblocking the blockages in the spiral, *"How can I help unblock those persons that are blocked in their own development. How can I open their eyes into the future?"* Because how managers and companies answer these questions is now becoming crucially important when there are many different levels of thinking existing at the same time. *"Once you start to mix people coming from lower levels of complexity, i.e. a BLUE manager with people with a mindset from a higher level of complexity, i.e. a young YELLOW mind, you are facing a disaster unless you help those people that manage the young generation understand where the younger people are coming from and unblock their energies at their levels."* Teddy Larsen makes absolutely clear that we are facing a real challenge at this time in history, *"We need YELLOW leadership, both at*

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*company and societal level, leaders who can facilitate and take out all the destruction from this new wave of energy that is now facing the whole of society."*

## **1. Applying Spiral Dynamics in Eli Lilly Denmark**

*ND: Teddy, as the Managing Director of Eli Lilly Denmark how are you using Spiral Dynamics?*

**TL:** First and foremost Nick it's a very broad topic, but clearly I'm working with the principles lying behind Spiral Dynamics in the corporation that I'm running here. The corporation has grown significantly over the last five to seven years, and although it's not a one thousand people organisation, we are something like one hundred and twenty now. The dynamics of the industry we are working with, i.e. the pharmaceutical industry, the dynamics of the whole industry are constantly increasing. And the ability to look into the future is getting tougher and tougher. Within the traditional businesses, people are trying to use the old kind of analytical tools to look into the future, to kind of forecast the future. But that won't work any longer. And when things are not working any longer, I'm talking generally now, people start getting frustrated, become alienated in the process, alienated in their jobs, they start seeking advice, seeking solutions in terms of getting out of their kind of chaotic situation, because things that they forecasted don't work, or aren't working as they had expected. And that leads me to the whole concept of Spiral Dynamics, and exactly how you manage and do business in a world that you cannot predict any longer. How do you ensure that you are not "dissolving" as a person, that you are able to survive and even thrive on change, even make your position better when change is demanded? And that, I think, is an extraordinarily important capacity of being a manager and leader in all industries, but clearly also in the industry we are working within.

## **2. So how do we practically work with Spiral Dynamics in the organisation?**

Firstly - it goes back many years when we decided that we needed to do something about our organisational adaptability to changing times. This comes back to a very important point, which is how do we unblock, and unlearn the things that people learnt in the past. So what I am saying is this: how do we unblock the blockages that we have within that are stopping us from developing? So we started very decisively back in the year 2000 to work with a consultancy. This consultancy was chosen because they had an understanding of Spiral Dynamics and had published material about it and its application. My interest for Spiral Dynamics and the way that it could help us facilitate the move from one level to the next level, as an organisation, was a clear criterion to me when I choose the company. We started the process, that has now run for more than three years, with the clear aim of implementing a more change adaptive behaviour in all people in the organisation.

And now I want to get down to and explain the very practical application of the operating principles behind Spiral Dynamics in the organisation. So we started by finding out where we were, and we did that by asking people to fill out a questionnaire<sup>2</sup> about the status of the company, and about the way that people think, and the way that people perceive or looked at the company, and the management processes. And from there we started to build up a complete new culture based upon a much more open way of looking at things. Creating a culture that is much more interactive, much more involving, and involves taking much more responsibility for ones own behaviour.

## **3. Creating and working in dynamic teams and a change adaptive organisation**

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<sup>2</sup> These questionnaire surveys including the Values Test, Change State Indicator, CultureSCAN and other SDi tests can be done online using PeopleSCAN ([www.onlinepeoplescan.com](http://www.onlinepeoplescan.com)). This enables the testing of large populations of people as well as within organisations.

And then we started to build, over a year or so, the whole concept of teams. So we are working now in teams in Lilly Denmark. And when people hear that we are working in teams, people think that they know what it means to work in teams. But at least when I started the process I honestly didn't know what it meant to work in a team, because there are actually clear cut criteria to working in a team. Such as everybody understanding the *common goal* and everybody on the team *agreeing to the common goal*. There is a *set of living standards*, or set of living rules if you will, for the team to function. And there is what we call *logical levels*, i.e. the team has decided how they want to be perceived by others. So there are some certain criteria to working in a team that we started to work with. And this brings me to the next point of relating that to the Spiral.

What we have tried to do here is basically provide the foundation or the Life Conditions for people to make a transition from one level of complexity to another, i.e. we're training ourselves and getting used to handling more complexity. So what we were trying to accomplish in this organisation was to facilitate the transition from handling one level of complexity to handling a higher level of complexity. Because that's really what we do all day, that's our situation, of handling new and every increasing levels of complexity. And looking back now, over the last three years, we have constantly worked with these processes.

And although I'm the Managing Director, and I have to be careful with what I'm saying here, because you know, the boss always thinks things are moving nicely. But my conclusion from all the work we've put into this, and I have invested, numerous, I mean enormous amounts of money and resources, I can tell today that I have such a flexible organisation, such a change adaptive organisation, that is so different from what it was before, due to the fact that we started to work with the principals underlying Spiral Dynamics and have learned to handle higher levels of complexity.

#### **4. So what does this mean for the individual employee?**

In practical terms for the individual employee that means in essence that everybody has been delegated a responsibility to make decisions. In the good old past, the decisions were traditionally pushed upwards to the management. Now we started to push decision-making downwards into the organisation. Knowing that we would time-to-time have to swallow decisions that were probably not made quite right, decisions that we should probably not have made. We agreed that we would accept that there would be mistakes once we let go of the hierarchy and the way that we operated before. But my conclusion today is that those mistakes are absolutely minimal compared to the gains we have achieved, by first and foremost training people and asking them to take the responsibility, and then the results that we have achieved by following this process.

A very concrete example here is that in the good old days, you know when we were to refurnish or change colours or whatever in the office; it would normally be somebody working out a proposal to the management. The management would sanction it and say, "Go for it." Today we form a small team of people to take care of this and they will get the authority for the okay. If we need to paint the office or whatever, they would basically take the responsibility for it. I never hear about whether I will approve of what they decide on doing. Basically I provide them with a budget and they take the ball, and they run with the ball, and they play with the ball, and they take responsibility for doing the things that need to be done very naturally. And there is in my mind a very clear connection and relation to the Spiral, because once you start to push upwards in the Spiral, because things start getting more complex, we all know that, that also calls for a greater degree of or greater responsibility from individuals, because management cannot handle all the complexity alone.

## **5. So what does managing people mean in this context of increased responsibility?**

Now, what we have done to add to the whole process is we have made sure that all the managers in the company have the necessary tools to better manage people who have gotten more responsibility. Because, for old managers, any manager, it's always a challenge to give up authority. So we put all the managers through a 4 x 2 days coaching programme. And we based it upon the principles underlying the Spiral Dynamics concept, trained people in coaching processes, i.e. how do I facilitate and manage someone once that person has a difficult situation? I.e. how do I facilitate so that this person will accept and understand that there are answers "above" the answers that this person may have reached.

You know the point in Don Beck's book<sup>3</sup>, here in essence is the challenge for all of us if you look into the memes; we are not able to see the answers above the level of thinking that we are presently using. This is the psychological status of the person, their level of consciousness, where you are not able to see the answers above. If you are working with people in a strictly RED meme they won't see the answers that can be reached in BLUE. You will have to facilitate that process, and the more you help facilitate that process by training those people that probably can see the next level and have the understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the next level, the more and the faster you will move the transition from one level of complexity to the next so that it becomes a stable structure. I hope you can get that point here because for me this is very crucial. I have invested a lot of time, money and resources in my managers, and a lot of time training them to cope when people are getting stuck. What to do once people are getting the frustrations of not being able to find the solutions of a given problem.

## **6. So this means that we are in effect training them to unblock the blockages in the Spiral**

How they can help unblock those persons that are blocked in their own development. How can I open their eyes into the future?

*ND: This is a great example of what Andrew Cohen is saying of the importance of aligning ourselves with our authentic self and releasing the evolutionary impulse that lies within all of us.*

**TL:** This is absolutely right and vitally important, because as both Don Beck and Andrew Cohen are saying, everyone contains the full potential of the Spiral. It's just a question of facilitating to the next level. Presently we are all captured at different levels and we need somebody to help us through the transition, hold their hands and make the transitions from the level that we are presently working in to the next level.

## **7. We are now seeing the "individualistic" generation**

A very interesting aspect in this context here is that the workforce, the people that I am employing in my company today, are typically very young people, not that I don't have a lot of older people here as well, but the younger ones are those I employ today. They are coming from, and have unconsciously of course experienced the streams, the energy, the dynamics of the YELLOW meme, i.e. I can take my own daughter who is nineteen years old and clearly without knowing it, well I have talked to her about those principles and concepts of Spiral

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<sup>3</sup> Beck, D. E. & Cowan, C. (1996). *Spiral Dynamics. Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change*. Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge.

Dynamics, so she might understand it, but the majority of young people are really starting to, in Scandinavia, I mean in Sweden, Denmark and Norway, are really starting to be very influenced by the YELLOW meme. They are *individualistic* and contrary to what many people think they are not *egoistic*. There is a big difference between an egoist and what I call an individualist. The difference is that the egoist is not accepting the collective or the group, but seeing him or herself as separate. Whereas the individualist wants to realize his or her own personal potential with respect to the collective, to the group. The younger generation is what I would call an *individualistic generation*. Those people that are now entering the work force, those people are the ones that the companies will employ over the next ten years.

## **8. We are facing a recipe for disaster or a potential to leap into the future**

And you see that once you start to mix people coming from lower levels of complexity, i.e. a BLUE manager with people with a mindset from a higher level of complexity, i.e. a young YELLOW mind, you are facing a disaster unless you help those people that manage the young generation understand where the younger people are coming from and unblock their energies at their levels. I'm not saying that they are completely YELLOW; it's just that I'm starting to see clearly YELLOW trends. I have talked with Don Beck about this, and I guess that's why he is so excited about Scandinavia. Because really, I believe honestly that Scandinavia probably belongs to the most advanced regions in the world when it comes to the Spiral. We're not the best, let me please emphasise that, but the most advanced in terms of the Spiral and that is very exciting.

There are few places if any on the planet, as Don says, where you have this level of complex thinking existing within such a large percentage of the population, as you do in Scandinavia. Where we are moving now from my own generation, which is typically GREEN to start to see trends of YELLOW, and that's a major challenge for companies and the whole of society. Because the good old GREEN, ORANGE, and BLUE mindsets will not be able to meet and understand the YELLOW mindsets of some of these youngsters that come in and start asking us tough questions when we want to employ them. When we have discussions with them prior to employment, the sort of questions they put forward to me are so much different to the questions I was asked just five years ago. Of course they are well educated and well trained, but typically they will ask me, "Okay how do I see myself in the context of this company? What are your ethical standards? What kind of ethical standards do you have here in this company? Are you concerned about the environment? What kind of postgraduate training will I be offered?"

They start to ask questions, rather than me starting to ask them questions and it's a completely different mindset. And if you mix these people with managers coming from a lower meme mindset you are facing a big challenge. And that's one of the major issues that modern companies are faced with today.

## **9. We need new maps and a new compass**

*ND: So you are meeting a whole generation of youngsters who are now starting to sense this evolutionary impulse and putting themselves in the context of a much deeper level of worldcentric social responsibility. And at the same time they are coming up against barriers in society that are preventing vertical growth and looking for openings and environments where they can realise themselves and release this energy.*

**TL:** Absolutely, it's spot on what you are saying, and I think it's going to be a major major challenge for most managers and leaders unless they are aware of these dynamics, these hidden memetic codes, that we are working with.

*ND: So let me understand you right. Are you saying that problems in Scandinavia could actually become far greater if we continue to ignore these vertical codes and if we don't facilitate the change process with our organisations, culture and society?*

**TL:** Nick, spot on - both at the company level as well as at the society level. That is why the time has come now for the principle or concept or whatever we choose to call it of Spiral Dynamics that can reveal to us the codes and the dynamics they cause.<sup>4</sup> Our society is screaming for it. I'm not sure if it was Don or Andrew who said that we have never ever before had so luxurious a life. We have everything we need; we have education, we have houses to live in, we have warmth in our houses, and we have food. Yet despite that people feel more and more alienated and depressed with their lives. As Don said at the conference in Copenhagen<sup>5</sup>, "To whom much is given, much shall be demanded. And shame on us if we don't accept this responsibility."

### **10. It's the transition from WHAT to WHAT that we want to facilitate**

But the challenge here, as Don also puts it, is how do we facilitate that transition. From where we are, to where we want to be. People are screaming for inner voices, they have something within them and they want to find themselves. They are screaming, feeling very miserable, isolated and lost, missing something but at the same time not knowing what it is.

*ND: I'm sure the same sense of feeling is here in Sweden, but it does also seem that the Danish people have been quicker to show interest in this need for "new maps and a new compass" that Don Beck and Andrew Cohen presented at the conference in Copenhagen in May. What have you noticed as the difference between Sweden and Denmark in this regard?*

**TL:** There could very well be some differences. I must admit that I have no precise picture of Sweden other than my working relationships with Swedish colleagues. There might be slight differences, not that one is better than the other, but clearly the new generation that we are seeing here are very different. Maybe I would point to one specific thing that could document that something is happening here. We have a training and education programme in Denmark called the "Chaos Pilots" since the mid nineties. The government finances them, and now even the Tuborg foundation (Tuborg is owned by Carlsberg Breweries) has put in some five million Danish kroner so they will run one year more. The Chaos Pilots have actually stimulated a lot of new thinking amongst the youngsters in Denmark. They have helped people challenge doing things the good old way that we are used to doing things in society.

I worked for five years as a managing director in Norway, and clearly there are some differences amongst the Danes and the Norwegians. There is a more open mindset amongst Danes, which expresses itself as the overall European thought of having to be together. Whereas the Norwegian mindset probably expresses a more isolationist way of thinking. But in regard to Sweden, if I look into the southern region of Sweden, I see the same kind of tendencies as here in Denmark, but you would know this better.

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<sup>4</sup> See the Spiral Dynamics concept of the Five-Deep strata. Like an iceberg we see only what is on the surface, i.e. Actions and Behaviours, while hidden beneath the surface are the Memetic codes along with the Life Conditions.

<sup>5</sup> Teddy Larsen is one of several leading Danish managers interviewed in the video documentary of the conference "Everybody wants change – but nobody wants to change", an International Summit with Dr. Don Beck och Andrew Cohen held in Copenhagen Denmark on May 7, 2003. See ([www.hekmann.dk](http://www.hekmann.dk)). The video *Leap into the Future* can be purchased from ([www.whatisenlightenment.org](http://www.whatisenlightenment.org)).

However, my overall conclusion is that, as I express to my managers, the young people that we employ today are different, and if we want to keep these young talented people then we need to provide a different management style than the one we used in the past. And as I said before, this of course puts a lot of pressure on existing managers because they will have to renew their thinking and their thoughts and that's why I have provided them training to help them understand the principles of Spiral Dynamics. And that's also why, as you saw in Copenhagen when you were here, I had my management committee members sitting there in the room at the recent Spiral Dynamics workshop with Don Beck (November 18-19, 2003). They are capturing this second tier mindset and understanding the principles of Spiral Dynamics and how to work with them. So we have in effect helped each other's transition to a higher level of complexity.

*ND: One of the things that concern me as well is how to facilitate the transition from GREEN to YELLOW in Sweden. I mean the transition from a mindset where you are not able to or unwilling to acknowledge verticality to a mindset where you are actively looking for maps and a compass that explain the hidden codes and evolutionary development through the Spiral. I get the feeling that the generation now leading our Swedish institutions are very heavily centred in GREEN and have been for several decades and because of this their present mindsets are acting as a huge blockage on themselves and society without them even realising it. They have difficulty in coming to grips with the fact that there is a Spiral of inner development occurring through these different codes. But acknowledging this becomes very threatening because it means that they have to question and challenge the level of their own thinking, and fear the depth of questions concerning who they are and their own development. And being in positions of power, they are very fearful of doing this, thus far at least.*

**TL:** Absolutely, I think your spot on here again with what you are saying. I couldn't agree more.

## **11. We need to learn to handle higher levels of complexity and energy**

*ND: Let me just give you an example of what could be possible when we begin to see this Spiral of development and these memetic codes and structures. I have an 11-year-old student whom I just recently spent a short time talking to her about evolutionary development. She is able to understand this evolutionary perspective from matter to life and to now include levels of consciousness including stages of moral development. She can understand developing from an egocentric to a nationcentric to a worldcentric perspective and even higher. And she can understand that there are different spheres of development, such as technology, education and society. She understands the seriousness of global problems when you have a country that is very developed in its society and technology but held back by leaders who are nationcentric in their moral development. She then went home after I had talked with her and talked to her mother about this. The following day I asked her what her mother had said and her eyes and face just sparkled with excitement as she replied that her mother said, "You are going to grow up and be a very important person."*

**TL:** She was 11-years-old?!

*ND: That's right and amazingly it only took a short meeting to give her a whole new context to understand the meaning of being a human being and the perspective one could choose to take in order to grow. I sensed within her openness and excitement and a sense of responsibility.<sup>6</sup> I saw during our short conversation the energy and purpose this new context*

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<sup>6</sup> I must also say that I have been able to create a series learning environments where young children can learn about impulse control, right and wrong and being rewarded for prosocial behaviour [RED], to learning about

*released within her. Here was a child who saw a world full of opportunities to grow and make things continually better and better, a potential to continue her journey ever upwards and a very deep sense of responsibility.*

**TL:** My goodness! My goodness this is something isn't it!

*ND: So this is the potential that lies within all of us if we as parents, teachers and leaders are able to create environments, which can help children develop self discipline, sense of responsibility, sense of purpose, and meaning which are continually open and unfolding. This naturally releases enthusiasm, energy and a willingness to partake and explore.*

## **12. Handling stress and postmodern depression**

**TL:** Absolutely. I think you are illustrating a very important point here Nick, because I think this new generation of children today, i.e. children of the Baby-boomer generation of let's say thirty-five and upwards to sixty, are very different. This previous Baby-boomer generation is facing a major wave of new energy at all levels of their life. Be it global, environmental, geopolitical challenges, and at the personal level. That's where my major concern is because I see a fragmentation, a lot of fragmentation going on amongst people aged between forty-to-sixty where they simply have difficulty coping with the challenges that they are faced with. Let me give you another example of this. I've been giving several lectures and workshops to general practitioners over the last eight months on the specific topic of "stress". These GPs and doctors in private practice typically are between thirty-five and fifty-five. It's an eye-opener to see what happens after I've made my introduction, after thirty minutes or so, talking about the general principles about the dynamics of our society and what it does to people. I then turn to them, and I have some good examples, actually some Swedish examples from some colleagues of theirs in Sweden whom are struggling with stress. And in essence these people are struggling with the increasing levels of complexity. When I start to open the facilitated discussion, it starts with people becoming very quiet. I normally say to them that they are the experts on this topic because they are seeing the patients before they themselves become patients. But there is a lot of depression going on in the Danish society as well as in Sweden and Norway and many other places. And it comes largely from the fact that people are feeling alienated in their overall life. If I start to work with such a group of educated people – doctors, who should be the experts... well you should be there, it is a real eye-opener. I also start by exposing myself, by describing my previous experiences where I've suffered from stress and had much to do. You often have one doctor who starts speaking up, "Well the way you describe the situation there...this is exactly my life. This is my daily life. I'm sitting there alone in my practice. I have twenty people sitting in the waiting room, it's a quarter past four, I need to close at six, and I just see one new patient after the other coming

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self-discipline and achieving an understanding of responsibility for the school, when they're engaged in a sense of goal setting [BLUE] within a good authoritarian environment. From a four-quadrant perspective this demands that the teacher and parents be aware of and support the child's growing self-confidence, thinking and behaviour. And at the same time are not encouraging any kind of negative behaviour, thus providing clear boundaries but also challenges and learning structures that can stimulate and support this growth process that is really very natural. Positive growth doesn't have to be forced at all, it's what happens naturally and just has to be watched and encouraged and above all, not stopped. In this case I believe I'm now seeing a young girl who is now encouraged to think and express herself autonomously as an individual but also willing to take responsibility for her actions in an ever widening context. Here is a young mind that is confident and motivated to hold a one-hour class for a group of fellow students, as well as helping me as a junior trainer to train teachers at this particular school I'm working. She grows and they grow. She understands why what she is doing is important and I guess in an ORANGE sense learning to think strategically to express herself independently and calculatedly so as not to arouse the ire of her fellow students that remain trapped in RED and BLUE.

into the waiting room. My secretary is up to her ears. She cannot cope with the stress and the pressure."

And once one person has opened up, the others join like a screaming pack of wolves! And it's such an eye-opener. Here we're dealing with Spiral Dynamics. They are faced with not just a new type but also a whole new level of complexity that they are not able to handle. They don't have the tools to handle it!

### **13. YELLOW will not accept not knowing**

Let me just give you another specific practical example, what we call the informed patient, i.e. young people that have already started to think YELLOW. They will not accept not knowing, they will have the answers. They will not accept the doctor as the authority as we used to do until we reach the GREEN meme, right, because once in GREEN we started to challenge and ask questions to all the "authorities" such as the GP's. But still you have a lot of people with meme stacks centred in BLUE and ORANGE where the physician is still the king. However now with GREEN and YELLOW we are turning the whole triangle, the whole hierarchy, upside down and suddenly the doctor finds him or herself at the bottom of the hierarchy with a challenging patient coming with printouts from the internet, knowing more about the disease and the treatment options of that specific disease than the doctor. It's a major, major change. It's a major alienating change for the doctor. And again here, I'm just talking about a very practical example of new complexities facing society and a specific group of people in society, i.e. the doctors. So how do they cope with it? Just now they cannot cope with it because they cannot see the answers from the level above. The level of complexity that they are bound into is below that which they really need.

### **14. We need Spiral Wizardry**

And my point is that we need what Don Beck calls Spiral Wizardry.<sup>7</sup> You need these kind of people, both at company and societal level, who can facilitate and take out all the destruction from this new wave of energy that is now facing the whole of society. Because the energy in this wave coming to us can be very very devastating, very destructive, if we are not able to handle it and capture and cope with it. And that's the whole challenge. I mean there is a reason why we see so much psychiatric disease these days. The evolutionary psychological mechanisms, structures and tools that we have are not as developed as we would like them to be in order to handle the complexity. But there is a way to help facilitate their development. And we have to realise that responsibility.

### **15. Capturing complexity and facilitating the evolutionary impulse**

And I think your example with the 11-year-old girl is an excellent one. She has, because somebody has exposed her to it, already captured the complexity of the society. I think that this is an amazing example.

*ND: Yes and all we really have to do as parents, teachers and adults is just continually give this young girl the encouragement to explore and give her the environments necessary for that to happen.*

**TL:** Absolutely.

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<sup>7</sup> Spiral Wizards; 1) Think in Open Systems rather than Closed Final States, 2) Live and Work with Natural Flows and Rhythms, 3) Their Ultimate goal is to keep the System Healthy, 4) Interact comfortably in many conceptual worlds, 5) Possess a full complement of resources, strategies and skills, 6) Are systemic thinkers and integrative problem solvers, and 7) Possess a unique blend of personal beliefs and values.

**ND:** *And without putting a lid on her evolutionary impulse to develop. Like telling her that she is on the wrong path, telling her that she should be thinking more about herself, or allowing her fellow students to pull her down. Because the danger is of course that she begins to recognise and identify with the evolutionary impulse and starts to develop ever faster and starts leaving the others who are still trapped behind. This will create tension between her and her teachers and her fellow students and even her parents if they are not able to support the process. So we need all quadrants and all levels working together.*

**TL:** That in my opinion is a very real risk.

**ND:** *And this is exactly the same as what you have been describing regarding the new YELLOW generation now entering the workforce and interviewing you with tough questions at the job interview.*

**TL:** Absolutely. There is a very very real risk for her being alienated as well, because she can see the light at the end of the tunnel while the others are still being kept in the dark. And that's why the work that people like you are doing is extremely important. And as Don is saying, I think the time has come specifically in our part of the region. And I must admit that the feedback that we have gotten from the participants from the recent workshop with Don in Copenhagen have been extremely positive. And people are asking about what will be the next initiative in term of continuing the dialogue. We don't want this process to lose its energy, and we are now actively working on this next step. Clearly somebody needs to do something and it's up to us to accept the responsibility.

## **16. Creating some sort of facilitative institute for the next leap**

**ND:** *Can we explore a little the idea of creating some sort of institute or centre, which we talked about at the workshop. What is it that we are trying to do?*

**TL:** I would describe it in one word – facilitation. Of helping people move from one level to the next level. I think that once a process has gained so much momentum, once you have nurtured a process to a certain level, it will help itself, it will be self-perpetuating, and it will be self-running. You will be reaching what we in marketing terms call the *tipping-point*. That's the point where either a certain product or process is creating so much energy behind it, like for example the Nokia telephone, that once it reached a certain point it was an explosion. My aim of this institute would be to facilitate the ideas and concepts underlying Spiral Dynamics so that it reaches in our part of the world the tipping-point, i.e. the point where the progression of this thinking is reaching so many people so fast there will be a major and real change.

Facilitation is for me a crucial word here. Because that's my whole aim within my own company and also outside my company, my private life and the society as such. If I can help move more and more people towards that tipping-point it will have this self-supporting energy in it, and exponential growth will be achieved. That's the whole idea behind this institute. And although I'm now talking about YELLOW, I feel this institute should also be a leading star.

Thus a second purpose of the institute would be to explore the energies at even higher levels of the Spiral, a leading unity actively stretching all of society and us into the next level of the second tier i.e. TURQUOISE. That's where it's very important that we work with the people associated with Andrew Cohen.

People coming from Andrew's circles are claiming that they are working even in CORAL, whereas I think I might actually question that. People would like to see themselves as TURQUOISE. But what I see in my society is not a lot of TURQUOISE. So I would question if all that many people are actually working at TURQUOISE and for that matter even in YELLOW. I think it comes bottom-up rather than top-down, i.e. the younger generation. The young girl who you describe, she is having the insight, the dynamic capacity, you have facilitated in opening something in her memome [deeper value codes] that will help her see the answers above the level that the society in general and her friends are working at.

## **17. Combining a leap to second tier with a decision to let go of ego**

*ND: I think there are two different distinctions that need to be made. YELLOW sees vertically and the previous six systems from a worldcentric perspective. This was not possible in the previous systems. But there is also a second leap, which is equally if not more important, and that is a realisation of the decision to align with your authentic Self and the evolutionary impulse and become totally free, as Andrew Cohen teaches, from the ego. This touches on what you said previously about the individualistic generation and not being egocentric. The ego in this sense being the need to see oneself as separate from the group, as you were saying, and characterised by pride, arrogance, self-importance, not wanting to be free, seeing oneself as a victim, avoiding taking responsibility, always taking life very personally and reducing the context of being a human to something very egocentric and narcissistic.*

*So I think that even this 11-year-old girl, although she has a long journey ahead before being able to manage the complexity that will require YELLOW, she maybe already be able to sense the energy associated with the evolutionary impulse that exists within her. We just have to help her see it and support her. However, our ego, the need to see ourselves as being separate, prevents us from doing this, and is very powerful, especially when we see it in our culture where ORANGE and GREEN are very strong.*

*So if we consider these two leaps occurring together we will be releasing an amazing amount of energy, creativity, potential and willingness to grow and develop with a sense of responsibility for this context we have been talking about. It literally saturates ones life, there is no going back.*

*My point is that this is not the same as YELLOW still being caught up in ego. This makes the work of what Andrew Cohen and the IEF are doing very very important and exciting.*

**TL:** This is absolutely true.

*ND: I'm very very excited in what Andrew Cohen and the IEF folks call Enlightened Communication ([www.andrewcohen.org/supermind](http://www.andrewcohen.org/supermind)) and using this new technology. People can come together and talk together in many different ways, as we know from Spiral Dynamics, and talk about many different things. But what if people came together from a second tier perspective, became aligning with their authentic Self, then focussed on questions concerning the role of leadership, education, raising children, the evolutionary potential or even the human immune system, it's going to be a very amazing discussion and radically different to the first tier discussions we are used to. It's going to radically change the thinking of those who take part in the process.*

**TL:** It's going to be a very very challenging and very exciting discussion. I agree completely. And I think that the point that you are making here is extremely essential, because what I am trying to do is to make a real life practical application. I'm trying to use the principles in

practical life. Not just talking about it, actually applying the thinking behind Spiral Dynamics to practical life, to real life situations. This is for me the greatest challenge, i.e. not talking about Spiral Dynamics, because everybody can talk about it and read the book. But what I've worked with for many years now is to implement this thinking in real life situations in a major company. For me, that's the kick that I get once I see things work in real life. Of course you need to understand, as you and I do, the theory and thinking behind Spiral Dynamics. But just as you work with this young girl, which is a real life situation, that's when I think things start to come together. That's where you start to close the circle so to speak, taking it from theory and thinking, which is very important and stimulating, to real life change in people. As Don is always tell me, "Okay we have talked about it, now go and do it." And that I think is the whole difference.

*ND: Changing ourselves is a very difficult process. We are for the most part caught up in our own baggage, our own history, our own identity, everything we've build up in the past. Our culture in effect provides the cement. And we're feeling that, "Well I've built all this up, it's what I'm basing everything that I'm doing on." And then the walls and foundations start to crack. And in effect what this process is doing is creating a barrier for radical change.*

**TL:** Sure. And an important point also to make is that you have to meet people at the level that people are regardless if they are higher or lower. Unless you can move to the level that people are you cannot help facilitate them into the future, make the transition into the future. Too often people are preaching to others not appreciating the levels where people come from. That's where you have to make the diagnosis. Asking, which kind of complexity, which kind of thinking, where are people coming from? And you have to start there. There is no way around it.

## **18. How do we meet people trapped within the GREEN meme?**

*ND: I find this a very challenging question; how do we meet people still trapped within the GREEN meme, unwilling or unable to sense vertically? What is the tipping-point here?*

**TL:** *How* do you move people to the tipping-point? That is the question. That's a major question, i.e. you have probably read Boomeritis<sup>8</sup>, which is exactly about that. How do you facilitate people at the GREEN level, this Mean Green Meme, as Don Beck and Ken Wilber call it, how do you make people transition from GREEN into YELLOW? That's a major challenge. It could be the last important question we are facing in history. I'm not joking. Just look at the narcissistic GREEN meme and what it does to and is doing to its surroundings, to the environment, education system, our society and culture. Lets not forget that we are part of the GREEN meme. So this is a major major challenge. Everybody on the planet is trying to move higher in the Spiral, but the consequences and cost of this are enormous. What if just each second Chinese buys a car - it would mean a disaster but that's where we're heading! And we need to do something about it i.e. help facilitate the understanding of the greater complexities of this planet earth.

By nature I am a very optimistic person and the reason I am so excited about Spiral Dynamics is that I want to help this process, I want to facilitate this process. I have practically started right where I am, here in my own company, in my own private life, and also outside my own private life with other like-minded people. Recently I had two young people that participated in the workshop with Don Beck from the Danish Design Centre come to visit me one afternoon here two weeks ago. They kept asking me questions like why I didn't write a book,

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<sup>8</sup> Wilber, Ken (2002). *Boomeritis. A novel that will set you free.* Shambhala

and why I didn't join politics and things like that. I said, "Good questions." But now my real challenge is actually to be a Spiral Wizard because I'm practically applying, I'm practically taking the ideas, concepts and thoughts into my organisation and making them work. This is a real life example of Spiral Dynamics, where we are moving up from "me" to "us" to "all-of-us" thinking. That to me is so gift giving and rewarding, although very challenging, but that will not stop me from working outside the company with the group of doctors where I basically applied the same principles. It's just using different words.

## **19. Identifying the tipping-point and getting ready to leap**

*ND: What was the tipping-point for you?*

**TL:** I believe it had something to do with the challenges we are facing here where I work, because we started off as a very small company first and foremost. I saw all the stress building up around me, and the need to do something about stress, combined with my personal interest for philosophy, because I actually started to read Ken Wilber. I think it began when I read *A Brief History of Everything* (1996). And then I read *A Theory of Everything* (2001), which mentions Spiral Dynamics, and it was then that I got in contact with Spiral Dynamics and decided to do the training after reading the book. So it started six or seven years ago and I've been reading ever since. But it also started with a question about society, that I could see the "diseases" of the modern society and people screaming for advice and direction, they are feeling very alienated. People are asking for solutions, and I see it still around myself in the company. We don't have a completely 100% ideal company. I still see people struggling. I'm trying to help them. I see in society people hiding behind nice faces, trying to escape from the turbulence around them, but they cannot find the answers.

So I was coming from the point of wanting to help people cope in daily life. And I have another very practice example here of how I have actually helped some people. And you don't need a lot of science behind this. There are very basic things that you have to do. As one example, I had one employee in the office who was very very stressed at one point in her career. I talked to her and we agreed to how I would help her cope with the stress and the complexity around her. And it was as simple as we agreed that I would take five minutes of her coffee break with her during the day. Just help, not tell her what to do, but listen.

I would ask her, "Okay – tell me what kind of tasks you are doing." And I would always turn the discussion into asking her not to forget her family, asking if she was happy with her family, which she was. Asking her not to forget to look at the blue sky today and see that the sun is shining.

I asked her one-day, "Put yourself into the perspective of this major Corporation you are working for and let me ask you one question. What will happen if you go down? What will happen if you get a depression and cannot cope?" And she looked at me and said, "Well that would be disastrous."

And I asked her, "And what would we do? What will the company do?" Not because it's a bad company, but because it's a good company, it would get another person. It's as simple as that. So don't make yourself more important than you actually are. Don't worry about your ego. See yourself in a deeper and broader perspective and live a good life. This is a very important point and it applies to everyone. If I for one reason or another get sick in my job, it's the same for me. To avoid this I must handle the complexity. I also talk about having "air pockets" during the day. I close the door and I have my "air pockets" where I kind of mentally

recharge the batteries. But in essence, it's not because companies are bad, or government employers are bad, but basically put yourself into a bigger perspective and have a nice life.

And a nice life for me is a combination of having challenging work where I am mentally and constructively challenged with a good balance into my private life, and joy. So this is a very practical application of helping people cope. First make a diagnosis and move them back to where they can handle it and then move them forward. That's what I mean by having to meet people at their level of complexity. And hopefully you can get managers and leaders that have a greater perspective, i.e. are higher in the Spiral, who understand the dynamics and the complexity of the next two levels above, because then you can start to make a change, then you can start to move people.

And if you install this philosophy and thinking in a company, at a certain point, the company will reach a tipping-point and it leaps.

*ND: And you are seeing this in Eli Lilly in Denmark?*

**TL:** Nick, talking Lilly Denmark, you should have a chance to talk to some of my people here because we are facing a leap. This will differentiate us from many other companies in the market, because we will survive. Because, as I mentioned in the beginning of our discussion, we have helped people cope with greater complexity, by putting them through training, helping them make that transition. And it requires needing to make huge investments, but the gains and rewards are even greater.

*ND: Teddy, once again thank you very much. It has been very exciting listening to you. And it's going to be very exciting to watch and take part in what happens as we now approach this tipping-point.*

Nick Drummond  
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