

Overview of Spiral Dynamics - Culture Diagnostic

The Spiral Dynamics model is derived from the original thinking of Dr. Clare W. Graves. Here is a brief introduction to the Gravesian point of view as it has evolved thus far:

Human nature emerges along a developmental path from one equilibrium state to the next. These can be viewed as stages wherein each layer adds new elements to all that came before; in turn, each stands in preparation for a next phase which may or may not come. Every "level of human existence" offers a particular viewing point for the real world as defined by its unique set of perceptual filters. These diverse reality views lead to very different decision-making approaches, organizing principles for business, economic and governance models, and ideas of what appropriate, effective living means.

Through decades of research, Dr. Graves built "the emergent, cyclical, double-helix model of adult biopsychosocial systems development." Though Graves used the term, "double-helix," a Spiral is also a useful way to visualise this process of emerging systems. As a Spiral builds, each whorl represents the flow from one reality to the next. Individuals, organisations, and entire societies move along this spiral trajectory, shifting their priorities, values, and essences as they go toward their various futures.

For simplicity, a colour-code system was introduced back in the late 1970's to label the Gravesian levels (vMemos) in their peak conditions. The colour choices were based on convenience for making title slides and training aids - there is no deep significance intended. However, these metaphors may help in remembering the sequence:

Beige	Savannah grasslands and survival
Purple	Colour of royalty and the first common
Red	Blood and hot emotional energy
Blue	Sky and heavens
Orange	Steel taking form at the furnace
Green	Plants and ecology
Yellow	Solar energy and life force (correlates to Beige as survival in complexity)
Turquoise	Earth's colour viewed as a whole from afar (correlates with Purple as a global village)

As with all colours, there are shadings, mixtures, and blends within individuals and ranges in organisations and communities.

	The Values System of the culture	Successful living in the culture – what people are seeking	How ‘rational’ people deal with the culture
Beige	based on biological urges/drives; physical senses dictate the state of being	survival; biogenic needs satisfaction; reproduction	as natural instincts and reflexes direct; automatic existence
Purple	threatening and full of mysterious powers, spirit beings which must be placated and appeased	safety/security; protection from harm; family	according to tradition and ritual ways of group; tribal; animistic
Red	like a jungle where the tough and strong prevail while the weak serve; nature is an adversary	power/action; asserting self to dominate others;	asserting self for dominance, conquest, and power; exploitive; egocentric
Blue	controlled by a Higher Power that punishes evil and eventually rewards good works and Right living	stability/order; obedience to earn later reward; meaning	obediently as higher authority and rules direct; absolutist; conforming
Orange	full of resources to develop and opportunities to make things better and bring prosperity	opportunity/success; competing to achieve results; influence	pragmatically to achieve results and get ahead; multiplistic; achievist
Green	the habitat wherein humanity can find love and purposes through affiliation and sharing	harmony/love; joining together for mutual growth; awareness	responds to human needs; affiliative; relativistic; situational
Yellow	a chaotic organism where change is the norm and uncertainty a usual state of being	independence/self-worth; fitting a living system; knowing	build functional niche to do what one chooses; existential; systemic
Turquoise	a delicately balanced system of interlocking forces in jeopardy in human hands	global community/life force; survival of Earth; consciousness	experiential to join with other like thinkers; holistic; transpersonal

