

Jean 00:00

Hi, Cindy.

Cindy 00:01

Hey Jean, good to see you.

Jean 00:03

Good to see you again. Thanks for coming back. To those who are listening, this is Cindy Wigglesworth, who is founder and president of Deep Change, Inc., focused on spiritual intelligence; the previous blog, podcast was about that. And I invited her to come back and talk about spiral dynamics. Now, for those people who are listening, you need to know that Cindy and I can trip off on theory about the past, present and future of humankind, and some.

Jean 00:42

Okay. All right, so Cindy, let's start with spiral dynamics. Tell us briefly what it is so people will just know what we're talking about, and then explain how you got into it and why it interests you.

Cindy 00:59

So spiral dynamics is one model of human development. There are multiple models of adult human development out in the world, and I have studied several of them, and I love them. I find them very helpful to me as a human being who's trying to grow up and as a coach who's trying to help other people solve life problems. And just sort of a thinker who wonders about the future of humanity. Is humanity going to survive ourselves? Or are we going to figure out how to be on this planet in a way that is sustainable? So the whole field of adult development has been important to me from all of those perspectives. It's also been important to me because of my work in spiritual intelligence, the essence of which we talked about last time is love in action and becoming the highest and best person you can, shifting from small egoic behaviors to larger, healthier, more informed by higher self behaviors.

Jean 02:02

Egoic, explain it.

Cindy 02:04

Yeah. So ego is a complicated term, it means a lot of things depending on your field. In the field of psychology, it tends to refer to a part of our psyche, that is our sense of who we are. When I say I am Cindy, I am American, I am a master's degree from Duke University, I am blah, blah, blah. These are all pieces of identification of who I am. Some of us are earlier in the development of our egos. If you think about teenagers, they're very early in the development of their egos. They're trying to figure out who they are, and what their power is, and they rebel sometimes in order to help identify themselves. Ego goes through developmental phases, like a teenager becomes a young adult and a young adult becomes a mature adult. Ego goes through developmental stages that can be described and measured with a great deal of refinement now. So in that sense, I love the word ego, because it's a healthy sense of ego and it's how we operate in the world. If we don't have an ego, we don't know how to function. Now,

oftentimes, people use "Oh, he's just an egomaniac" as a slam. And that means that someone is all about themselves to the exclusion of others. That starts to bleed into the spiritual use of the word ego. In the spiritual world, egos often made bad and soul, spirit, or higher self made good. I don't like the good/bad dichotomy, because I think we're embodied human beings, we need our egos to function. I don't know how to be helpful in the world without having my ego being present. What I don't want is unhealthy aspects of my ego being present. I want my healthiest, best, most mature self to show up. And because of that, I see a strong overlap between the world of psychology and spiritual intelligence, which is, of course, my core commitment. And spiritual intelligence is about being love in the world. How do we do that? So there's a very high level of ego development that starts to reflect the transcendence of the small self, the engagement with service to the whole and some kind of connection to transcendent purpose. So that's my entry into the world of ego development theory and adult development theory.

Jean 04:35

Spiral dynamics is an adult development theory.

Cindy 04:39

Yes.

Jean 04:40

And it relates to spiritual intelligence that you talked about last time, because we have a higher self and we have an ego self. Yes. And spiral dynamics addresses both of those.

Cindy 05:01

Not directly, it would not call itself a spiritual system and probably wouldn't use the language of higher self. What I found was a very strong relationship between the higher stages of adult development and what I described as exemplars of spiritual intelligence.

Jean 05:16

Ah, so, okay, I didn't know that. So you're going to talk us through the stages. Okay, so we got I think we understand. So you're interested in this because you're interested in adult development and we need to know about the adult development if we're going to do any good in the world.

Cindy 05:36

Correct.

Jean 05:39

Cool. All right. All right. So Oh, I know the other comment I wanted to make is that I know so many people who are in despair right now, about the state of the world. I know someone who thinks humanity, the human species is doomed, that we have gone too far in destroying the planet and destroying each other, that we were doomed. Maybe not in our lifetime, yours and mine, but it's coming. Do you believe spiral dynamics poses an alternative viewpoint?

Cindy 06:21

I think spiral dynamics provides a research based way of looking at human capacity, that if we live into our capacity, we might survive ourselves.

Jean 06:36

Okay. So I'm about developing capacity.

Cindy 06:43

I find it hopeful.

Jean 06:45

You find it hopeful. Okay. So, those of you who have told me that you are in despair, we are giving you an alternative way of looking at the world and humanity to get out of that.

Cindy 07:01

So let's move into if you don't mind, I'll move into my slide deck.

Jean 07:05

Yes, ma'am.

Cindy 07:06

All right. I'm gonna do screen share. I think you need to enable my screen sharing. Yes, sorry.

Jean 07:14

Oh, here it is.

Cindy 07:27

All right. So you can see that I hope.

Jean 07:30

Yes, ma'am. I'm all excited.

Cindy 07:32

All right, good. So I'm going to begin by saying this is a super big complicated model, but I have done my best to simplify it. I'm going to begin actually with a different theory that most people have been exposed to, which is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The one I snagged has a misspelling on pyramid, I apologize for that. So in any event, this is an image that helps to depict Abraham Maslow's conception of adult development, which is that we start out dealing with our physiological needs or need for food, water, safety, and food, water, warmth, and rest, our body's needs. And then we move up to our safety needs. His basic thesis was, you solve the food and water and warmth and rest problem, and

then you solve the safety problem. And then you move up to solve your relationship needs. So you move from taking care of basic needs up to psychological needs, like having friends and loving relationships. And then you move up to having your esteem needs met, feeling like you're making accomplishments. And then you move into what he called self-actualization, achieving your full potential. At the end of his life, he actually added another stage to this pyramid, which is rarely shown, which is self-transcending self-actualized, or self-transcenders for short, and it was these self-transcenders that were transcending their small ego self, and seeing themselves as part of a much larger purpose and being committed to being of service to the whole of humanity and the earth. So that final perspective was published after his death, but was actually quite inspiring to me and was my initial lead into adult development theory. So I got excited about Maslow stuff and then I wanted to know more. It turns out that Maslow and Clare Graves, who was the creator of spiral dynamics, were contemporaries and knew each other and talked a lot and were supportive of each other. He and Maslow knew each other and had to weather the storms of a vicious academia, which at that time was having nothing to do with adult development theory in any way, shape, or form. They were arguing between Skinnerian behavioral psychology and Freudian psychology and Jungian psychology, and Clare Graves was frustrated by the arguments and found them all unsatisfying and set about doing his own research which led to spiral dynamics. So, all right, here we go with spiral dynamics.

Jean 10:05

Just a minute. As I understand it, Maslow is about the individual and spiral dynamics is about the collective.

Cindy 10:13

Actually, spiral dynamics is about both. The initial research was on individuals. And the initial research question was what makes for healthy adults?

Jean 10:25

Ah, okay.

Cindy 10:27

It became expanded and best known for its ability to look at collective groups, which the other adult development models generally have not tried to do.

Jean 10:38

Okay.

Cindy 10:40

So here's the cover of the book that has the title spiral dynamics, it was written by Dr. Don Beck, who was a student of Clare Graves, along with Chris Cohen, who I think was a student of Don Beck. And they came up with the color system that we're going to go through, with Clare Graves with his permission. So they studied with Clare Graves, they worked with him, and Clare Graves came up with these absolutely

unusable names and terms for things that they felt no way we can teach this, we have to simplify it. And that's where the color system came from. So a few things about adult development that are helpful and important. The first is to understand that in all of these adult development models that I've studied, there is a concept of emergence, which is that inside the seed is the potential for the plant, inside the infant is the potential for the fully mature adult. Then the question becomes which seeds grow to full maturity, and which seeds do not. It is not that there is inherently a flaw in the seed. But assuming a child is born with a normal brain, regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, geography, wherever they are, they carry within them the same potential for emergence everywhere on the planet. So then what changes over time as to which seeds just barely come out of the ground and which fully fruit and flower? It's a very important question if you want to have hope for the future, because the life conditions are what drive the emergence. So you have within each of us the potential for maturity, whether or not we achieve maturity, has to do a great deal with our life conditions. If we're not frustrated, if we're not mad and not getting our needs met, if we're not scared, if we're not upset, if we're not hitting the limitations of our current level of maturity, we have no incentive to move to the next one. So we must be upset and scared and frustrated and have all kinds of existential threats around us to pop to the next level.

Jean 13:06

It's like lifting weights, you have to have weights to develop, tax the muscles to develop them.

Cindy 13:13

Exactly. If you spend all your time in bed, you will never develop the muscle, you must be pushing against something. And so in this very weird way, the problems we encounter, help us to become the people we can potentially be. We have a lot of problems right now.

Jean 13:32

Yeah, a lot of them.

Cindy 13:33

Lots of opportunity for growth. And in none of these models, is there a guarantee of development. Collapse is always possible. So it's possible for life conditions to be so overwhelming that an individual collapses or a whole society collapses. So the challenge for us is to rise to the occasion as the problems arise, and to do it quickly enough, that they don't overwhelm us. Human history is full of us overcoming. And so I am optimistic it is potential for us to grow up and overcome.

Cindy 14:10

When I was a teenager, I was very despondent, we were in the middle of the Vietnam War and Silent Spring had come out. And the threat of environmental collapse was first arising in my consciousness. And for many people first arising in their consciousness. Nuclear War was threatened. It was the Cold War. And I just thought I'm never going to make it to 30. Grownups that are running this planet are nuts. We're never going to make it. And I'm sure in World War II people felt that way. And I'm sure in the depression people felt that way. And I'm sure World War I and the Spanish influenza pandemic people

felt that way. We have overcome a lot. And I think the hope lies in this reality of potential emergence to the next stage. So I think we can now maybe move into the next level. Are you ready for me?

Jean 15:03

Yes, I just want to add that during that period of time that you mentioned, I was in the streets protesting. And because of that, I did not sink into despair. The counter to despair in my experience is to go into action.

Cindy 15:20

Absolutely, there's lots of research that says taking any action is helpful, even if it's just to get out of bed and take a shower. You know, like that much might be all you can accomplish that day, or get out and take a walk, talk to one other person, read one thing that helps lift your spirits and empower you. Go out in march in one protest, send one email to somebody who you want to let them have it and let them know what you think of whatever it is they're doing in Washington or whatever. Do that one thing.

Cindy 15:48

So development is a natural process, it can be made to flourish, and it can be forged. But the essence of the tree is in the seed, the essence of the mature adult is in the infant. That's the emergent part. The next part to know about this model is it's what's called a bio psychosocial model. You have to look at least three pieces. There is a biological aspect, there are brain components that actually appear to grow and be developing as we go through maturity. And we see this much in childhood development, the prefrontal cortex doesn't fully come online until at about 20 to 25. As we push into each of these new stages of development, there's a sense in which there's rewiring happening in our brain, literally new connections need to be made to support higher complexity of thinking. But given enough support, and the right amount of life conditions challenging us, most of us have the capacity to keep going. And Clare Graves would always point out an element of choice. And there's no making people wrong for where they are. So if people get comfortable at a certain stage, and they decide this really suits me, and I'm not going any further, it is not for this theory to shame that. So we have to be really careful not to assume everyone has to get to the top of the developmental ladder. For a society to function, you need enough people to get to the highest stages of developmental ladder. But not everyone may be in a life circumstance where they need to or want to, and shaming people is not part of the model.

Jean 17:32

Okay, I hear you say that. But we both know that that's not where most people's head go. So we'll come back to that.

Cindy 17:40

How we manage as a species to be able to communicate and build larger and larger and larger cohesive groups is, by most theories I've read, the probable reason that Homo sapiens beat out every other hominid species on the planet. Homo sapiens could communicate and work functionally in larger

groups than the other hominid species could like Neanderthals. So we just out competed them by being successful in our expanded social system.

Jean 18:08

So basically what you're saying is back to the whole muscle thing and the challenges. Challenges happen and we adapt and we either move forward in a positive fashion or your world collapse or go backwards? Yes, and then whatever level that takes us to, new challenges emerge.

Cindy 18:37

Yes. So we adapt, we end up changing the life conditions around us, we interact with the world, we change life conditions, sometimes for the good, sometimes for the bad, we solve problems and we create new problems. And that's a theme that occurs throughout the spiral. So we keep adapting, we keep having new problems, we adapt. We climb this hierarchy of needs that we looked at from Maslow, we tend to get dissatisfied pretty easily, and then want to do the next thing, which is not all bad, because it seems to pull us forward, whatever this thing is. We can regress but we can also progress and adapt to a whole lot of things we can't even imagine. At the level of development you are at, you cannot even conceive of the next level of development.

Jean 19:25

Okay, that's very cool. So people who are saying to me that they're in despair, they are facing the choice to adapt?

Cindy 19:35

Yes. And they're realistically diagnosing the fact that we are at the limit of existing worldviews. So our existing stage of development is not sufficient to the complexity of the problems we're being confronted with. Going backwards has been kind of what we've been trying for the last few years. Let's go backwards and be more tribal. Let's go backwards and deny science. Let's go backwards and start hating on each other for all kinds of ethnic and racial differences and see how that works. It's not going to help us. But sometimes you have to take a step or two or five backwards in order to realize the solution is not in the past. And the cognitive dissonance, the mental stress needs enough time to cook. It's like it's cooking our brain to pop to the next level. And it's not a fun feeling. Having your brain cook like this is not a fun feeling. You know, I feel it too. You know, I feel this "Alright, what are you not thinking about? What are you not seeing? What are you assuming to be true that might not be true?" And those are questions that this theory has helped me ask myself, but I still have to do the walk up the mountain to get to the next level. And that hike is a hard hike.

Cindy 20:57

All right. So a couple more pieces of the theory helpful to know, which we won't have time to get into in great depth. But the word spiral is really important and intentional. And it's referencing a spiral staircase, which also looks a great deal like a DNA strand.

Jean 21:14

Oh, it sure does. Yep. Oh, yes. Yeah.

Cindy 21:19

So this model says that as life conditions go up in complexity, adult development goes up in complexity. So it's like the two sides of the spiral, are going up together. Life conditions have to go up for us to take the next step. So as life conditions get more complex, we take the next step up in the spiral. The other piece that's helpful to know is there's a repetition that happens. So if you look at this model, can you see my pointer on the screen?

Jean 21:51

Yes.

Cindy 21:51

Right about this point, actually is further down, right, at some point down here, this step is above this step in terms of its position on the spiral. It's basically in the same point on the circle if you were looking vertically down on it, but it's higher. So one of his beliefs, Clare Graves', his beliefs was that these steps would occur in a pattern, and that the lowest rung on the first is a survival rung, like we just have to survive. The first rung on the next tier is also a survival run. And what we are facing now with COVID and climate change are survival level challenges.

Jean 22:36

How interesting.

Cindy 22:38

Yeah. So that's something to actually be both terrifying and optimistic about, you know, in that if this model is correct, and all models are just models, but if this model is correct, the provocation the life condition that will help us go to the level we need to fix this is the life condition of survival problems. And so that is exactly on schedule. Yes, yes. And then the second part of the word spiral dynamics is the movement. And you see here I have a picture of the waves which are being cut by the winds. So you've got winds and clouds and motion of the water. This is not a static model, although in order to put it in a PowerPoint, it goes two dimensional, and it looks very flat. But it is not a flat model, it is a moving model. And so while I might be all in my most mature self today, something might happen tomorrow, and I might regress to acting like a teenager or a three year old, depending on what's happening in my life. All of those cells are still inside of me and I can access all of those in different degrees under different stimulus, and depending on my self mastery. So those are important.

Cindy 23:52

Now, I'm going to start with the historical overview of the colors and what they mean, even though this model started with the individual, it ended up blossoming out into a look at collective human history. And this is where the whole despair thing is helpful. So it's like this will give you a little bit of despair relief, I hope. But it also helps to contextualize the model for the individual. So I'm going to do the history part,

and then I'll do the individual part. So looking at the history of Homo sapiens. And these are just rough numbers. The first color, the first level that evolves here, and these are color coded these ways for a reason, which I'll keep explaining as we go through it.

Cindy 24:31

The first level is called beige. Beige doesn't show very well on a white background. So I just put tan but it's supposed to be beige. It's essentially the earliest Homo sapiens operating at the most instinctive level, doing natural behaviors without a lot of interference from thinking about them. It's mostly reactive responsive, and in that mode, there would be small family groups like you would see them wolf packs, but it's pre language. And so pre verbal and pre tribal. So it's just sort of survival focused at that level. About 25,000 years ago, although there's massive argumentation about this, so don't get hung up on the year, it could be 50,000 years ago, Homo sapiens, also Neanderthals, we now know, developed some tribal grouping and some magical thinking and representational thinking where they're drawing and they're using symbols to communicate, and having early religious beliefs. For example, burying people with objects, which seems to show that there's some concept of an afterlife that they are potentially, and you know, we're describing intention where we're not sure of it, but potentially, that's what's going on. So language arises, tribal consciousness is dominant. So this is larger than family groupings. And tribes are living and competing with other tribes. Over time war is fought in order to protect food sources, to protect water sources, to protect each other. And so you move into this history in human history, which is referred to by many names, but the color is red.

Cindy 26:19

So the color purple, actually is for magical thinking. And it comes from the fact that purple dye was used for early religious ceremonies around the Mediterranean, there's a snail and around the Mediterranean that if you crush it, you can get purple dye out of and that was considered only for the elites and the wealthiest of the priests, a high priest would wear purple. So it's just a reminder of that. There's more reasons for these colors, which I'll get to later. But little mnemonics are embedded in these to help us remember them.

Cindy 26:49

Red is the color of blood, which is kind of gross. But this is the bloodshed era. This is the era of warlords and the beginning of empires, and it's brutal. It's just brutal, might makes right, complete male domination begins here. So the patriarchy really gets going in this period of history because men are physically stronger. And one of the things they want to control is the breeding rights over their women, harems, large groups of concubines, whatever it is. So, that's that period of human history. At some point, and people argue was it 4000 years ago, 2500 years ago, whatever it is, the axial age begins. And there is the beginning of an understanding that law and order matters. And rather than you kill my son, I kill your whole family; you kill my son, I kill your son. There's some kind of proportionality that's beginning. I'm not saying it's pretty. But this eye for an eye was a huge advance over and eye for I kill everyone you know. So the earliest laws arise, and the beginning of the major world religions arise during this axial era. So

you have Buddhism, Hinduism makes a shift in its sort of understanding of itself at this time. You have Judaism and Christianity, then Islam arising, all of which are very focused on law and order. And sky gods are often a big focus, what they call sky gods. God is up there, rather than God is in the earth, which was more the purple period of history. So you get kings, and you get laws at this time, sometimes queens but mostly kings at this time.

Cindy 28:43

Now, Orange is an interesting period in history. So blue was for sky gods, by the way, I should say that's where the blue comes from scientific era begins to arise in multiple places around the planet. The challenge is, why does it arise and collapse repeatedly, and then arise and sustain in Europe? And for that, I have to defer to the book *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond, where he talks about the differentiator was primarily geography. So it's not about some kind of cultural superiority. It was an accident of resources and location that led Europe and you have to read the book because it's complicated, but essentially to be able to develop agriculture, which made for surplus energy. And this happened many places, right. So agriculture is developed to create surplus food. People can then start developing trades, and they can start doing things like developing mathematics, which was of course developed by the Arab world before it ever was really understood in Europe, most of Europe. China had eruptions into orange, but life conditions can cause a setback and so war can set a whole culture back, being conquered by a lower level can set a whole culture back. You have the development of agriculture, you have the development of animal husbandry. Well, two things, agriculture leads to surplus food and surplus time and the space to start inventing things like tools that you need that will later be useful in industrialization. Better guns, better swords, whatever it is. Animal husbandry meant that people were around animals all the time, and we're transferring germs back and forth between humans and the animals. And Europeans developed an immune system to many of the germs they then later took with them to the New World. So you had the development of surplus food, which led to time to do things that you couldn't do otherwise. This also occurred in the Mayan Empire, right. You have beautiful empires occurring in other parts of the world. But you have the Europeans first developing this massive capacity to travel the world in ships. And so they start traveling the world in ships with armies and with their livestock. And they show up in these places, and what the people they did not conquer with their guns or their weapons, they conquered with their germs. And many theorists have speculated that the reason the Mayan Empire collapsed had much more to do with the germs than with the weapons.

Jean 31:31

I had never heard that before. I knew about I knew that the germs wiped out people in the Americas up and down. But I had not heard that people thought it was a more major cause than the guns.

Cindy 31:46

Yes. Now, I think by the time you get to Native Americans here in our country, United States, there was some intentional germ warfare that went on here as well. It wasn't just accidental, the initial was accidental. But I have read and I have no reason to disbelieve the sources I have read that in the western general stores kind of thing, they would sell contaminated blankets to the Native Americans that had

been used by people who had smallpox, knowing full well it would transfer smallpox. If that's true, that's horrific. And unfortunately, given human's ability to outgroup people and to be cruel to other groups that they have decided are less than them, I don't doubt it. But in any event, accidents of history, somebody, somebody was going to dominate this era orange, and whoever dominated this era would end up conquering a lot of the world, which is what happened during the colonial period. The colonial period brought some gifts but brought a lot of damage, you know. So with the interesting things that came with European colonization, came devastation and disruption to the local cultures. So, life conditions interact with emergence, and the emergence of many people were thwarted by the arrival of colonial powers.

Jean 33:17

And whether that was good or bad is part of what is the debate today?

Cindy 33:23

Well, I think, looking at history, whether it was good or bad is not super helpful, because it was, it's already happened. But what do we do with it now, is to me, the heartbreaking question. We have got to see with new eyes that what was our history as a White European here in the United States, I am not part of a family that, to my knowledge ever held slaves. You hear White people say this all the time. But I am a beneficiary of a system that was set up by a country that held slaveholding as a core part of its operating program for a long time. And so all the systems that were set up before I was born have benefited me. And now that I can see that, what are we going to do to fix it?

Jean 34:12

Every time you hear you say that or a variation of that, I feel my whole body start to relax. The knowledge of it is extremely important.

Cindy 34:24

I agree and telling a more accurate history is going to be part of our solution going forward. Because the history is always told by the victors. And I was raised with a lot of American history that made me very proud to be an American and there are things to be proud of. Democracy was a huge innovation, throwing off the yoke of monarchy was huge. And boy, do we have a long way to go before all men are created equal, all people are created equal.

Cindy 34:56

So that I get up to orange which is the greatest gift of science and the reason it's orange is because this is a steelmaking era. And steel forges burn orange. So it's just sort of a reminder.

Cindy 35:11

The newest sort of large group is green. And this is green, because it's reminding us about plants. And so green comes into awareness of ecosystems, and how they're being trashed by rampant capitalism. Unregulated capitalism, which does not account for the cost it's extracting from the earth, is starting to create problems. So you solve problems, capitalism created abundance, where there had been poverty where people couldn't have more than one set of clothes, people couldn't have more than one set of

underwear, which is just the gross thing to think about. You know, people couldn't have enough food. Capitalism builds these huge supply chains, and abundant manufacturing and there's stuff like we've never had before. I mean, you can look in my office, we can look in your office, we have some stuff. That many books, oh, my God, only kings and queens could have had that many books back in the era of blue. So science is great, it brings us a lot of gifts. And science brings problems and green awakens, because it's starting to see we're destroying the planet. And by the way, there are all these other people who are not White, who are not getting a fair shake. So not only are their poor White people who are not getting a fair shake which you start to see with the union movement, but there are people of all non European ethnicities that are not getting a fair shake. And I want to point out that every wave of immigrants that came to the US experienced discrimination, so whether it was the Irish or the Polish or the Italians. Eventually they could blend in because their skin was the right color. And within a couple of generations they could blend in. What of course is different is for people who are brown or black, is that their skin color keeps them in their place in the hierarchy. So green becomes very aware of this is wrong, the way we treated Native Americans or the indigenous of any part of this world is wrong, and we need to fix it. The challenge is, of course, is that as we grow, we tend to forget and disown the things that made us proud of the stage before. So when you move from blue to orange, you're like, so proud of all this cool manufacturing you're doing and people used to call coal smog, like that was exciting that you had cold smog, because it meant you had industry, you had jobs, you know, it was like a good thing. And then all of a sudden it becomes pollution. And it's a bad thing. And now the very manufacturing that helped to get you to the luxurious place of being able to sit around and meditate and think about the meaning of life and to think about the fact that we are treating a lot of people badly. You are now rejecting the thing that helps you get there. It's sort of like kicking the ladder out from underneath you.

Jean 38:04

The way you're putting that that is so true. People struggle to get to a certain point. And then they look and suddenly it's not enough because humans--I say humans are goal making machines and so humans have a new set of goals and suddenly the stuff to get them there is not good enough.

Cindy 38:28

Correct.

Cindy 38:30

Now this is where we are. We're in this stage of human life on this planet, where all six of these first levels are existing together, and they can't stand each other. So people who are at center of gravity blue are fighting with people who are center of gravity red and orange and green and vice versa. And I say center of gravity, because if I'm an orange, I have within me still the blue and the red. But I'm kind of disowning it maybe, because I'm too cool for that now. Like when you go from middle school to high school you kind of forget that you were ever in middle school, because that was embarrassing. So we kind of disown the levels below us. It's not until we get to yellow that we can own and be present in a healthy way, all six of those first levels.

Jean 39:21

Before we get to yellow. Let's stay with people at one level are mad at people at a different level. Can you put that in today's terms?

Cindy 39:35

Yes. So in the pluralistic green, you find a lot of social activity. I'm speaking of White people now. White social activists can engage in a wokeness competition, where I just left my orange ignorance, but you're still in it, other White person. So because I'm a superior woke green White person, I'm going to attack all the not woke White people. And that's going to make me feel superior and important. But it's not going to actually advance the cause I say I love. So that is a form of green, one expression of green that I think is damaging to the whole of our society. By virtue of being White ego manifesting itself in a new form of centralizing whiteness. I'm going to be the best White liberal in the room. It's not really about helping people who are not White in my opinion. So this is a low spiritual intelligence form of green, where it's still about me, me, me, and my ego.

Jean 40:49

Okay, do blue.

Cindy 40:52

Blue has a couple of manifestations. All of these have multiple manifestations. One form of blue is law and order and police officers. It's the FBI, it's the Justice Department. Laws arose to control red. So if you remember gang land era, when the mobs were trying to run the streets of the major cities, when you add all these mob lords assassinating their people. Mafia exists at the purple/red intersection. So they are the family which is purple. And they are red, which is bloodshed. And it's all about power and control. Law and order in the form of some very brave Justice Department people, FBI, police officers had to find a way to shut down some of that mob activity. And within any group of people, there is complexity. So you have the most noble expression of blue arising to control red. But then you also have a polluted version of blue, which still got a red streak happening, where they're really kind of too into the power over thing and they want to have power over somebody. And so you have expressions of policing, that may not be officially written down in law, like it may not be Jim Crow but it may be the knee on the neck during the arrest that leads to the death of George Floyd. And so I would say that that was an expression of very unhealthy blue with an undertone of red power over, like I need to thump my chest and be the powerful one. And so you find within our society now this defund the police argument, and I hate that phrase. I just think it's so unhelpful. But the desire to reform the police, I'm totally on it, would say we can't destroy the police. If we get rid of blue, we get mobs back again, the red is back, right? We need healthy blue to control this natural progression. Every child born is going to go from beige up through these levels. You cannot skip a stage and so you've got to have laws in place and authorities in place that will enforce social safety, but they need to enforce it for, guess what, everybody in this society and they are not the nationally sanctioned executioners of people they dislike So, healthy blue is being challenged in Washington DC these days. Is the constitution going to hold? And Lord, I pray it does, because I think if it doesn't, we're regressing to red. And that's I think, what's causing a lot of people to despair. Where's the healthy blue? What we've been doing for the last 20-50 years is slowly

weakening the structures of blue that we need. And who's been doing that, it's a combination of red, orange, and green, they all have different motivations for not liking blue. Orange business doesn't like blue regulation. So it tries to weaken the regulatory agencies, whether we're talking about the EEOC, or the EPA, or any of the other regulatory bodies that help keep the water clean, and the air clean, and so on. And to make the world fair and safe. Not that regulatory bodies are perfect, they're not. I've been on the other side of being regulated into wanting to just shut down my business. So it's like that's it. Small business, I can't survive all this paperwork. So I get that. But there's this attack on blue that happens from orange capitalism, there's an attack on blue that happens from green that sees blue as part of the establishment that created the problem.

Jean 44:58

Part of the oppressors.

Cindy 45:00

Part of the oppressive system. And red, of course, just wants to go play, and blue gets in the way. So we saw a very obvious example of red trying to break through the laws with the phone call that was recorded a couple of days ago, regarding just find me a few more votes in Georgia. That is red power trying to force its way past the restrictions of blue. So blue is under a lot of attack. And I think one of the most important things we can do in the next 20 years, is to reform and strengthen blue in a way that is healthy and really, really functional. Because without it, this thing will collapse.

Jean 45:44

Wow. Okay, talk a little bit more about orange.

Cindy 45:49

So orange, because it includes capitalism is a very dynamic function in our society. And I look here in Houston, at how relatively smoothly things have gone during this pandemic period, in terms of the response that we've had. And we've had a lovely response from the hospital systems, in terms of I think, coping with and collaborating with each other. So, it's a healthy orange with a touch of green. We've had a lovely response from the blue, orange, green bureaucracy of Harris County and the city of Houston, I think, to try and manage all of this. But orange has this whole range of things. So the capitalist and the business drive, that sets people up to want to be successful, has a sort of strive drive, that's one of the names of it is strive drive. It's like this desire to achieve to conquer the next mountain, I want to be the biggest, I want to be the best. It's why people immediately want to know how high they can get on the spiral and higher becomes better because A is better than B, I always get A's. You know, I always have the biggest company, I have the biggest profits, I have the biggest revenue share, blah, blah, blah. Capitalism is great and must be controlled, must be managed, because otherwise it ends up sabotaging itself. It kills the goose that's laying the golden egg. It also contains

Jean 47:15

How does it sabotage itself?

Cindy 47:18

One of the ways it sabotages itself is it concentrates income. If you concentrate income at the top, you create these oligarchies which, and you know, trust, we remember the old trust busting days in our history classes. It seems great until the whole thing doesn't work anymore. And you're back in the French Revolution with pitchforks. When all the money is with a small number of people, who's gonna be buying the goods and services to keep the businesses going? I mean, a billionaire can only buy so many pairs of shoes, and only buy so many houses, so many cars. I mean, it's truly I think the middle class that is an essential part of powering a successful thriving economy in two ways. It gives hope to people who are not yet in the middle class. They can see oh, there's a lot of people in the middle class, I can get there. This is an achievable goal. I can have a house, I can take care of my family, I can expect my children to have a decent life. That's a crucial part of a democracy that works. But it's also the engine in terms of goods and services and well educated people to be the workforce of an increasingly complicated economy. So if you destroy your middle class and have only lower class and upper class, the system will not work. And capitalism will implode.

Jean 48:41

So, unedited capitalism destroys the middle class, which is what we see is happening in this current.

Cindy 48:49

Unfettered capitalism, and it doesn't have to be intentional, it'll be what happens if it's not regulated. I don't think there's some evil overlords, although there are oligarchs, and they're greedy, and they're doing bad stuff. But I think this can happen without intention, it can happen, because that's how the system is wired. The other problem with the system is something that accountants call externalizing costs. When you produce something like a car, you have certain costs that go into it: labor, materials, transportation. You can factor all of those in and they're on the books, what we don't factor in is that you've taken minerals out of the ground to make that steel or aluminum, that can't be replaced. And it's not on the accounting books anywhere. It's a real cost. It's a real cost to the planet and to society. At some point, will we run out of fill in the blank? Will we run out of lithium for our lithium batteries for electric cars? You know, a lot of people are just very enamored of electric cars. And I think probably they're a good advance, I'm not smart enough to have done the entire systems analysis on it. But I do worry about lithium and the supply of lithium and who's mining that stuff? And is it being mined responsibly? And is there enough for us to keep going? I worry about windmills for the same reason. So systemic thinking is beginning at orange, but it's really not fully online until yellow, which is coming up. And so systems thinking tends to be internal to the company at orange, where I'm going to optimize my manufacturing process. And you can look at companies like Toyota, they really just kicked butt in the marketplace by implementing total quality management procedures early, which was an American design system that the Americans weren't picking up, but Japan picked up on it after World War II, and they really optimized manufacturing, and they looked at all their costs, but they're looking at them at the internal level. So they're improving quality and dropping costs for the first time in a major way. And that was great. It's a

great innovation, we all benefited from it. But now we need to look at costs more holistically, and look at the cost of utilizing resources that can't be replaced.

Jean 51:11

You mentioned natural resources, there are also human resources, who educated the workers? Who's taking care of the health of those workers?

Cindy 51:24

Absolutely. Yes. So if you look at people as interchangeable cogs, then as long as you have a supply of warm bodies, it's fine. And that's kind of the slavery model, you know, it's just a model of give me the next human, give me the next human to do my work. But fortunately, most of us have grown beyond thinking that's okay. And secondly, the work is far too complex for that. You need people who are engineers, people who are physicists, people who are doctors, people who are lawyers, people who are tradesmen who understand the technical trades that support so many of the other things that we do. So, yes, humans, humans apart from their inherent worth, their value as employees is dependent upon many things, including their education, their overall well being their physical health, their mental health, and the kind of work environment you put them in.

Jean 52:20

Yes. Okay. So you've been trying to get to yellow. Let's go there.

Cindy 52:25

Yes, let's go ahead and jump. And there's more that can be said about all of these levels. But what Clare Graves noticed, and this is similar to what Maslow was noticing was that there was a sort of different level of human development where things were changed, these people were different. And what made them different in part was this sort of much larger perspective. And so in Graves', his language, he called it a momentous leap. And you see this here on the slide here between green and yellow, the momentous leap to what he called the second tier, which is where the second part of the spiral is starting. So yellow is directly above beige on the spiral. So I had mentioned that earlier, and here's where it comes to matter. Even though I can't depict this. It's very hard to do these PowerPoint slides, right? But yellow is actually right above beige. If you're imagining this as a spiral staircase. It's responding to survival level threats, but it's integrating all six previous levels. It's saying, let's take the best of every previous level, and pull it together and add next level thinking to it so that we can be flexible and fluid and competent to the problems of life that are arising. And here you find a different kind of leadership. So in blue leadership tends to be a hierarchy of people like an organization chart right, but the king or the queen is undisputed leader. When you get to orange, you might have enterprise wide organization charts, which are far more sophisticated. When you get to green there tends to be a love for let's sit around in a circle and talk about it.

Jean 54:14

Non hierarchical.

Cindy 54:16

Non hierarchical, which is crazy making because for some problems, you just need to make a decision and move on, let's quit talking about it all the time. What yellow will be able to do is to deploy every known kind of leadership style at the moment it's needed, and people will not be limited by a position on an organization chart. Competence will decide who takes the job, not gender, not age, not any other factor. It's going to be who's got the skills we need to do this job right now. And right now, it might be that we need this young person to go do this. And over here, we need an elder who's really seen a lot of this kind of problem to deal with that. And here we need someone who's really in touch with Aboriginal wisdom, because there's this kind of problem going on. And no higher level has a real comprehension of how to deal with that. So someone who's doing purple from a yellow perspective, or is a yellow perspective person who's collaborating with someone who's got a strong purple center. That's how things will get done. It's going to feel chaotic. And most people that I know in this world think Barack Obama was showing signs of yellow thinking; he had this level of complexity of thinking. And one of the challenges that comes towards leaders who are trying to demonstrate yellow thinking is that they are chameleon like, because they are able to speak to green, and speak to orange and speak to blue and mean it. They're not just doing the politician bologna thing. They have identified and found that in themselves, and can genuinely appreciate the beauty and the need for and the strength of each of these things. Well, if you hear them doing that, and you're not yet at yellow, you can't imagine how that can be true.

Jean 56:11

I so remember that. Who is the real Barack Obama?

Cindy 56:14

Yes, yes. So what is awakening, what we hope is awakening is increasing numbers of people at this stage called yellow, and the stage beyond it, which is called turquoise. And they go by a lot of different names if you read in the various books, but and we have an article we're going to share with people that describes this even more. But yellow is often called flex flow, flex flow, flexible and flowing. It's moving and responding to the needs of the moment, for the greater good for the thriving of the whole. So the motivation at second tier is the thriving of the whole. And that's going to be such a relief, but it's going to be hard, because we still have these first six levels. And in the United States, it's mostly, you know, purple and above, warring with each other. So how does someone who looks like a chameleon lead in this crazy, crazy space?

Jean 57:15

Everyone below that yellow is going to think he's betraying them in some way?

Cindy 57:23

He or she is betraying them? Yes. And the challenge is, so let me see, I think I've got a slide coming up, let me jump ahead a little bit, is to remember that we contain within ourselves all of our previous selves. So I have my own little Russian doll set that I've made for myself, my beige baby still exists inside of my purple inner child. My purple inner child still exists inside of my teenage need for red self authority. Like I can separate from my family and prove myself and I can have healthy self power. My red self still exists inside of my blue self, which will defer to authority when it's called for. My blue self still exists inside my orange strive drive, which just loves science and will nerd out all day long and I love theories, and I'll study this stuff forever. But this orange self still has all of those other selves inside. My green self, which I spent a lot of time developing, has all those other selves still inside. And it's my yellow self that loves them all and really can see them all without all the shadow projection on other people. Because I haven't owned my blue I'm going to project it on you in an unhealthy way or I haven't own my red so I'm going to project it on you in an unhealthy way. So we need enough people to get here. One of the things that gave me hope recently was someone was talking about the vortex, it's my word vortex but the vortex that is strong mental health disorders like our current president [Trump].

Jean 59:08

The vortex I literally didn't hear you. The vortex that--

Cindy 59:11

The vortex of mental health energy. You have a mental health disorder, like a malignant narcissist, who can spin massive amounts of energy that twists the experience of reality for the people around them. And I've been around people like this, who if you're with them day in and day out, day in and day out, they wear you down, you are basically numbed to things that are likely to falsify the story being told. You just cognitively block it, your cognitive bias thing kicks in on steroids. And anything to please the abuser starts to be the thing. So you just agree. Yes. And you get sucked into this worldview and this perspective of Yes, votes were tampered with. Yes, whatever you say. What the person was saying and I sure as heck hope it's true, is that what he or she had noticed was once that person was removed from the group, if you put them in a group of people who had previously seemed pretty normal, start acting abnormal, when you take him or her out, give the group some space and some time, they will settle down and a large number of people will go back to acting like normal people again.

Jean 1:00:32

I've seen it an organization Alcoholic, rageaholic, powerful person. It was making everybody bonkers.

Cindy 1:00:43

Yes. And people who would normally never be unkind become unkind. Then you take that energy out of the system out of the family system out of the political system. And we can only hope he's far enough out of the political system after January 20. But it's going to take a while. Some people will go back to normal and be back in their functional selves again.

Jean 1:01:10

So you truly think that people on the fringe, if you take the bell curve, not the people that extreme but the people next towards the middle, may be able to say oh, there's another way, there's another way of being?

Cindy 1:01:24

If you think about life conditions and how they interact with our biology, life conditions in a trauma, high anxiety setting, which is essentially what a lot of, in my opinion, right wing media bubbles have been creating fear at a high level. And fear activates the limbic system, it shuts down higher neocortical functions. How can people think? They are activated at such a level of purple protection of children who are being sold, you know, this whole story about the sort of trafficking of children that's being done by prominent people of what they consider the opposition. They're being told all these terrible stories about Antifa. And whatever, this fear level is so high. Trump is a master brander. You know, I'll give him credit for being masterful at word choicing and poking the right sore spots. If he's not at the center of the vortex, will someone else be able to keep all of this spinning at the same speed?

Cindy 1:02:37

So I had one more thought that gives me hope going forward, and I thought it might be useful for people. Since life conditions help to provoke the emergence of the next stage, one might ask, what life conditions might help people to move from if they've moved down the spiral to move back up to where they were, or if they're at green to move towards yellow, or to move from an unhealthy version of their color to a healthy version. So I would say the change in life conditions that remove as many of the stressors that pushed people into regression as possible, would be the best way. We're not going to argue people out of a bunch of beliefs that they've become highly defended about, but if they feel disrespected and unseen, for any reason, if they feel hopeless, because in their neighborhood, all the manufacturing jobs are gone. All the coal mining jobs are gone, whatever it is that's going on in their lives. They deal with their sadness and depression by getting angry because anger feels better than sadness. So how can we instead of arguing with them about their beliefs, deal with the real problems that are out in our country? And I think that's where a competent administration, which Joe Biden seems to be really working hard to set up, can help. And one particular set of life conditions that I think can help with this is the work of Pete Buttigieg is going to be doing on infrastructure development. Because with that will come life condition changes for a great many small towns as well as big cities, a lot of job training will come from it, good paying jobs, jobs that can support a family. This can remove stressors from every sector of our society that isn't already wealthy. So whether you're white or not white, whether you are middle class, lower class, immigrant, non immigrant, having good jobs available, that are improving the infrastructure of our country that will yield long term benefits on broadband availability, for children for education, all of these things, I think that will start restoring hope. And hope is a better antidote to the sadness and the powerlessness than anger. So that's my most optimistic point.

Jean 1:05:05

Okay. Well, thank you. So let me just repeat it back. In the beginning, I wasn't sure what group you were talking about when you said people who are experiencing stress. So right now, what you're talking about, are not the greens.

Cindy 1:05:25

It could also be green.

Jean 1:05:27

It could also be green.

Cindy 1:05:28

There's been this very strange convergence of green Trump supporters, sort of voting the same way as red Trump supporters. And this phrase on spirituality that's come out where the spiritual but not religious community has gotten caught up in conspiracy thinking and sometimes QAnon. So the QAnon stuff is in both groups. I think all of that is a need to create certainty where there's uncertainty. I think a lot of folks who are at green may have launched out of orange into self employment, and have found self employment very difficult to sustain. So I think, a better economy, you know, how Clinton used to say, hey, it's the economy stupid. In so many ways, it is but the current economy that Trump has focused on the stock market, which benefits only a tiny sector of the population, so we need good jobs, we need good education. And I think all of that is good infrastructure. I think all of that is going to be a focus of the Biden administration. So when I say life conditions drive the spiral. I think that's the place to clean up, clean up the life conditions, so that the toxic expressions of each of these stages and the regression can stop.

Jean 1:06:46

Right. Okay, so, yes. And so, in my language fear drives hatred, fear drives prejudice, fear drives pushing people away and clinging to one's own. And so you're saying clean that up through improving the life conditions by developing the infrastructure, developing jobs, creating a healthy society that works for more people than a few?

Cindy 1:07:13

Yes, cleaning up healthcare, getting the vaccines out, all of those things will reduce the stress because stress creates sadness, depression, acting out, road rage. All that stuff.

Jean 1:07:28

Yes. So bye. And I do thank you.

Cindy 1:07:33

My pleasure.

Jean 1:07:34

That's it.