

## The Pain and the Promise: Descending and Transcending for the Transition — Peter Merry

*Russ Volckmann: Peter Merry is from the U.K., now living in The Netherlands, and is a moving force in the Spiral Dynamics/Integral movement in The Netherlands, on a number of different levels. He's one of the founders of the Center for Human Emergence in The Netherlands. Together with Don Beck, they worked on a project dealing with the challenges of Muslim immigration in The Netherlands and some of the violence that's occurred there. He is the author of "Evolutionary Leadership," dealing with a lot of the valuable models and applications in integral leadership and organizational transformation.*

*Peter Merry: I want to "set the field" by inviting us all to come into our inner space, breathe and ground ourselves, feel our connection with the Earth and Heavens; allow our chattering mind to quiet a bit. Where Heaven meets Earth in our heart, for that to go out horizontally across the planet, connecting up all the people on this call now, and all the people who will access this in the future, because in this space, we go beyond linear time. All the people who access this call at any point in time are present with us now. We remind ourselves that we are the Earth, listening to herself, speaking to herself, right now. We're the Divine listening and speaking to ourselves, right now.*

- I was an environmental/social justice activist and theatre practitioner in the U.K. At some point I started to get*

*disillusioned with that work... sensing the shadow side of Green - the talk of peace, love and justice, and the minimal practice of it, and the polarization and demonization of the rest of the world who didn't believe in the same things you believed in.*

- *At that point I moved to The Netherlands, and read "A Theory of Everything." Embedded in that was Spiral Dynamics, and I started learning and applying that model as much as I could. Pursuing this and the four quadrants, I began to realize the significance of the inner work, in that I can try to change as much as I want in the world outside, but until I do my inner work, I'm purely projecting my own mess into the outside world and making it worse. I developed a meditation practice and form of body energetics.*
- *I did corporate/change consulting for a few years with some good successes; worked in government ministries using Theory U, with Spiral and Integral informing us in that work. Growing in the background had been an increasing interest in energetics, the space in between things, both Earth energetics and subtle energies of whole systems.*
- *I owe a great debt of gratitude to Don Beck for his wisdom and grounded activism in the world. I'm always asking myself how to make the most positive impact in the world, and Integral theory and Spiral Dynamics are important, as well as the energy work, in doing that.*
- *One of the key qualities of the Spiral way of looking at the world is the interaction between Life Conditions and coping*

*mechanisms (the value systems); it's a four-quadrant co-arising. So we can't talk about consciousness development outside the context of our Life Conditions. We need to ask right now: what is the context we are in, and what is it asking of us?*

- *Very few people are really looking this context in the eye. The reason we need to do that is that it's no good just cognitively understanding what's happening in the world. For our body/mind/heart system to respond to what's happening, we need to let it in fully; we have to sit with the reality of what's happening in the world, feel it in every sinew in our body and allow it to penetrate into our cells, however painful it might be.*
- *It's only as we really let it in that our system can respond in a way that's adequate. And the context at the moment is not pretty. I think we're in for turbulence, the likes of which we can't really imagine. We're beginning to see the early stages of it, but this is the tip of the iceberg. The extreme weather conditions we're going to face are going to accelerate. The economy is not going to recover, with the weather extremes putting pressure on social tensions, as people who can't grow their own food anymore are going to move, and others are going to protect themselves from those movements.*
- *There's going to be increasing inter-ethnic tension and as the stress builds up ecologically, we're likely to see far more pandemic diseases spread and challenge our health system,*

*which has tried to control the impacts, rather than get to the source of illness.*

- *All of these things are going to happen at the same time. They're all locked into increasing feedback loops. We're in for turbulence, the likes of which are very hard for us to imagine. There's likely to be large amounts of suffering and conflict. And we really need to look it in the eye... find the sources of information that aren't scared to tell the truth about what's happening.*
- *Even if it is a few minutes a day, sit with some stark fact about what's happening. It's only when we do that do we give our systems a chance to respond adequately.*
- *What's also going on is that as systems collapse, new systems are emerging. We're seeing those spring up cell-like across the planet.*
- *If we only focus on that then we lose our groundedness in the reality of what's happening, and don't give ourselves the chance to respond. So it's very important that we connect with context; right now the context is increasingly complex, increasingly rapid in terms of time acceleration.*
- *Munich Re said recently that they can no longer calculate risk on extreme weather events because they were too unpredictable. They can no longer insure companies any more against extreme weather events. The whole system is cracking and falling apart. This is a moment of non-linear transition, of emergence, of*

*breakdown and breakthrough. We need to do a tonglen practice, to breath it in, let the pain in, and hold it there, and see how our body responds as we hold today's facts of the famine in East Africa - 750,000 people without enough food threatened by starvation. How do we hold facts like that in our heart, and allow our system to respond and take it in. Very important context: to allow ourselves to connect to Life Conditions... not to generate fear, but to practice the "discipline of disillusion" that everything's going to be OK.*

- We need to see the turbulence coming and knowing this by sitting with it, as well as dealing with everyday life... not resolving it, but just holding everything is key.*
- Meshworking - How do we create the collaboration and connections between the different parties and value systems that's needed to match the complexity of the challenges we're facing? It's a systemic law that the complexity of a challenge needs to be met by a requisite diversity, which means we have to collaborate together in ways we never have before.*
- We've been developing processes, approaches and frameworks for how we enable these different players to work together - a Green/Yellow context. The complexity is so huge; for example, with 20 different organizations trying to work together on Millennium Development Goal Five on Maternal and Newborn Health, that you can't really engineer that complexity; we're not going to be able to systems-think our way through this challenge. In fact, we're reaching the limits of the capacity of*

*the cognitive mind to think/plan/engineer our way out of this crisis. We can't rely solely on those capacities anymore.*

- I do believe we're looking for the simplicity on the other side of complexity, rather than trying to match complexity with complexity. As we inquired into where was the simplicity on the other side, I took a look at the Spiral Dynamics transition from Yellow to Turquoise, and it talked about simplicity, grace, energy flows, all these things that were emerging from our conversations about what was needed.*
- So our Center for Human Emergence embarked on a Turquoise research project, the first phase results of which we're about to publish. We realized we needed to get a sense of what this value system was about, to inquire into it, stretch ourselves into what an experienced embodiment of Turquoise really is.*
- Dylan Newcomb did some work on the relationship between sound and movements, and he came up with eight sounds that matched eight movements of core energy dynamics, which also happened to match perfectly with the I Ching. Then he discovered there was a relationship between the eight energy dynamics, and the Spiral. So we explored the physical energy dynamics of the Spiral together.*
- When you go from Beige up to Blue, there's a set of movements. Then it mirrors itself, from Orange up to Turquoise, where the Orange movements are the same as Blue. The interesting thing is that Turquoise mirrors Beige when you choose to look at the Spiral through an octave lens, which*

*isn't the way Graves looked at it - as a series of six. As a system of eight, from Beige to Turquoise, you see a dynamic where Turquoise links to Beige, Yellow links to Purple, Green links to Red, and Orange links to Blue. Like expanding circles out from the center of the Spiral. This isn't just a theory; it's what the dancers felt in their bodies. The key is that the Beige/Turquoise movements/sounds are the fundamental yin/yang dynamic... the "two" level of the I Ching. There's something in how the transcendent resonates with the imminent, earlier systems. I began to see that the transcendent pull toward higher levels fundamentally missed our connection to our pre-cognitive unity (Beige and Purple), the pre-self before we distinguished ourselves out.*

- I then felt a hit to read Ken Wilber's "Up from Eden," which is an incredible description of our collective journey over time. He describes how we move from the "typhon" phase, like the snake eating its tail (Beige/Purple), into the "solar ego" (Red), and how that step was not a healthy "transcend and include," but was rather a "transcend and repress," in what is now the industrialized world.*
- Instead of separating out and "holding" the consciousness and awareness that we are the Earth, fundamentally inter-connected... and the basic trust that comes with that fundamental knowing; we weren't able to hold that connectedness, and we disconnected from those earlier systems. That's the tragedy of our development, the "pain" in the title of my talk. What's happened is that the rest of the Spiral that unfolds above*

*Purple has no roots, is not grounded, is not resting in the fundamental body that we are.*

- So Red goes wild-west cowboy. When Blue emerges in response to Red, it gets super-controlling because Red's gone wild, and Blue needs to clamp down to keep some semblance of healthy civilization so we can live and work together.*
- Then as Red shifts to Orange, under the influence of that strong control system in Blue, what emerges is a strong need for radical freedom, which translates into Orange raping the planet. That never would have happened if we'd held that deep interconnectedness.*
- Then Green swings out to the other extreme and expresses a need for relatedness, rather than Green being the natural path of Self to be able to feel into all forms of life. Instead we see a lot of unhealthy Green expressions.*
- What we've got is a Spiral out of balance, out of kilter. Until we're able to hold the non-rational system (the pre-rational Beige/Purple levels) and the Yellow/Turquoise levels - like "osteopathy" of the Spiral, where you stretch down from Beige/Purple, and up from Yellow/Turquoise, and the other systems form the spine which can click into place. I think that's the essence of the problem that we have on our hands.*
- It's like the mind forgot that it needs a body to be able to exist. If humanity is the mind of the planet, we forgot that we exist thanks to the Earth. We are made from the stuff of the earth and the stuff of stars, quite literally. Our body is sick*

*because we forgot that it's who we are! It's completely nuts, but that's what we've forgotten.*

- *Also from "Up From Eden": When the Great Mother (pre-cognitive Purple - the deep dark feminine that holds everything) is repressed, the Great Goddess is concealed (post-cognitive, unity, upper-Turquoise).*
- *My sense of the real work we have to do is access the parts of our being beyond or outside of the rational. Because the nature of the mind is to distinguish, to separate - but in a functional way only if it's embedded in a basic sense of unity.*
- *All of us have to go back and heal this split, when we moved from Purple to Red solar ego; a split in ourselves, in our own journey, and a split in our collective industrialized world. There's a massive collective pathological shadow that, over history, has led to the murder of millions of people - mainly women - who practiced earth-based spirituality, or who said you could have a direct connection to the Divine which doesn't have to be mediated by a priest. It's a huge shadow that we often don't speak about. But we need to bring it to the fore, look it in the eye, and address it.*
- *Until we are really feeling held, we're not going to get embodied access to the world of energetics that we really need to engage the challenges we're facing today. It's from the place of unity and interconnectedness that we're really going to be able to address these problems. Not a mental systems map, but a completely different capacity we need to develop.*

- *And it's a both/and – we don't first heal the split and then we get access to the other – they emerge together. Ken also says that when we reach the transpersonal, we're able to release the energies of the pre-personal (Beige/Purple). At the same time, until we re-align the spine of the Spiral, we won't get full, embodied access... we can go way up to those subtle realms and get all sorts of trips, but if we can't hold those energies in our bodies, they're no use to the Earth or humanity at this time. We need to bring them into our bodies; reconnect to our bodies, and from that place we can show up with the grace and power that's really going to make a difference.*
- *I first experienced the essence of the work, such as the healing of the pain, through "deep ecology," which is now the "work that reconnects" that Joanna Macy ("Coming Back to Life") and John Seed in particular have worked on; where you really get this experiential reminder of the fact that we are the Earth. "Save the Earth" really means "save ourselves." It's about coming back to life, the pulsing wildness of nature, the wind as it blows, the wildness of Celtic folk music surging through our veins, or whatever it is. Come back to life, get out of our heads, get into our bodies again. We need to speak the language of life, of nature, again. The power that releases when it's held in basic trust, and its fundamental realization of the absolute context, where ultimately everything's already perfect... in that space... AND, we incarnate as a body on the Earth at this time to play the game, and do the work. When we can hold both*

*of those, and the work is a joy because it's ultimately not driven by fear, fundamentally we know that all is very well.*

- I'm in year three of a four-year program of "systemic energy tuning," known as ECOtherapy based on 20 years of work done in Germany originally with the Institute of Resonance Therapy<sup>1</sup>. They take all the concepts that Lynne McTaggart talks about in "The Field," with Rupert Sheldrake's concept of morphogenetic fields, and all these quantum physics ideas, and turned it into a practice of healing at an energetic level large areas of land and organisations.*
- So in Germany they experimented with that at a distance, using a map, symbols of resonance, that, depending on what the system needed, would bring the system into energetic coherence. They've collected lots of data which says this makes a difference.*
- Through this work, they found the trees became more able to deal with challenges they were facing more effectively, becoming more resilient ecosystems. Here in The Netherlands, it's become popular with farmers and flower growers, because they've seen it work... cows are healthier, relationships are healthier, the whole system gets balanced.*
- This level of work at the energetic architecture, is key because it's going to accelerate the impact we can have. And it works in a space which for me is the simplicity on the other side of complexity, ultimately. Up until now our work has been primarily in the area of relational architecture - improving the*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.leadershipalliance.com/resonance.htm>

*relationships between people in order to get greater impact at the material architecture (stuff that gets done, achieved).*

- *Energetic architecture is the container for all of that. When you get the energetic architecture coherent, the relationships align and stuff gets done more effectively as well.*
- *There is a world out there that is resonant with a Yellow/Turquoise sense of reality. We'll be running the first English ecotherapy training here in The Netherlands in September.<sup>2</sup>*
- *I've also been researching various energy generating technologies that work from a similar field. These technologies are consciousness-driven... intention turns them on and off. The developers of these kinds of technologies have found that when the intention shifts to something that, for instance, is only focused on making more money, the product development stops. The stuff stops working. When there's a clear intention that the work is for the good of the whole, then the product development keeps going. There's a number of these I'm watching that are very close to realization.*
- *When we get access to that kind of technology, that's the end of the oil-driven technologies. There are many levels of consciousness in this energy technology now, but this only comes if we can heal the split between the Beige/Purple into Red... when we've healed the pre-cognitive unity split, when the whole thing comes into alignment again and that post-*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ecotherapie.org/cms/index.php?/Training/>

*cognitive unity is released and revealed. We get to go beyond the veil of Isis. The real nature of reality likes to hide from the mind. We only get access to beyond the veil of Isis when we've done our inner work and hold the resonance after we heal this split in our systems.*

*Russ: "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." – Leonardo Da Vinci. I'm reminded of Don Beck's admonition that our task is to make the Spiral healthy. You've added to that a quality of experience and attention that allows us potentially to access all kinds of energies that we're not normally thinking about or including.*

*Peter: We've had this big "transcendent" trip; it's all been about transcending the body, transcending the Earth. We've been afraid, in a way, to go back to imminent, deep, dark feminine of the Earth and the body. We've done the same with the transcendent feminine, like the Mary figure. Or in the Church, the feminine is only allowed to be either a virgin or a whore. We forget the imminence of the descendent feminine. When I was in Chartres, we sat with the black Madonna. There's that other side of the feminine, the dark mother, is full of wrath at the moment. The wrath a mother feels when her child runs out in front of a car... the risk she sees, and the ignorance of the child. The dark feminine in Gaia at the moment, in the Earth, is full of wrath. We are about to experience the dark feminine. Remembering that, just as creation is sacred, so is death and destruction just as sacred. We*

*have to learn to integrate the dark and the light, ultimately, if we're interested in unity consciousness. This is key to what's happening at this time.*

*[Audience Questions]*

*Alia: There was a question of why there is a split. We need to understand the fundamental cause of this split, both historically and in each individual.*

*Peter: What have you picked up about the cause of the split?*

*Alia: In Riane Eisler's books, historically she traces the split to people from the colder climes way back in pre-history developing child-rearing practices that were far harsher, more violent, more "anti-body" because of the harsh conditions they lived in. They came into parts of the world that were more "healthy Purple," and they brought their cultural ways and essentially stamped out the other. That's why you got the genocide of earth-worshipping women; that's where that arose from. For Riane, it originated in the climatic conditions. That's resulted in unhealthy patriarchy, unhealthy feminine.*

*Russ: We have ultimately evolved what are called "dominator societies" in the world. She's offering an alternative model of partnership systems, particularly between genders.*

*Peter: I don't actually know why; I just resonated with what Ken described in "Up From Eden." That raw powerful pre-cognitive energy was something that the Church was afraid of, because they wanted that control and power to be held by them. But what the original cause of the split was, I just don't know. Life Conditions, again, could very well be one of the reasons.*

*Victoria: I'm wondering about the collective being in severe pain, and wanting to distance itself from that pain, as a way of dissociating, climbing out of its skin. People in their own personal journeys dissociate when there's too much discomfort, because they haven't been taught how to lean into these feelings and work with it, ground it and let it process all the way through. So I wondered about that idea of going from Purple to Red, whether there's a process of where we start doing mind-over-matter, rather than relationship between mind and matter; or even mind-as-matter.*

*Peter: Moving away from pain and discomfort, that split, is one of the biggest pains I've had to confront. The fact that we've forgotten that we're actually the Earth... and look what we've done to ourselves. Just look... let it in. How could we have done that? There's a huge pain there. So how can we sit with that in a healthy way? Joanna Macy's work that she calls "Despair and Empowerment," allowing, accessing the emotions to be present. Allow it to be true, that we've forgotten who we are, and ultimately done what we have to the planet... what those emotions*

are. Then out of that comes the empowerment, as we allow that to be true. Society has learned to numb ourselves, to numb pain, at many, many levels. So much of the entertainment world is about numbing us.

*Victoria:* In my own personal healing work around my own pain, there was a combination between finally feeling the pain, not just emotionally, but where it lives in my body. Then to open to something larger than the pain; there are pains that are, on a human level, so big, that the only thing large enough to embrace them is that energetic Spirit, to go all the way to Source to find that soothing container large enough to hold that. I would love to hear more about your own meditation and body energy practice.

*Peter:* Initially I came across the work of Drunvalo Melchizedek and the Mer-ka-ba light body.<sup>3</sup> The practice I worked with probably resulted in releasing the kundalini energy. Then I got into tai chi and then Dylan's work around UZAZU.<sup>4</sup> It combines the Integral framework and energetic bodywork. I can do a daily practice that takes me from Turquoise down to Beige through a set of body and sound movements, and it'll tell me which system is out of sync that day, because my movement would feel a little awkward or something. That UZAZU practice is extremely valuable.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.drunvalo.net/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.uzazu.org/>

*Susan: As you look across the Integral community, do you see it as highly connected to what you're doing? Are there gaps that you're seeing? Are we close to a tipping point, based on where you're going?*

*Peter: The Integral community has been key to my development over the years, both Ken's writings and the community of people around that. The thing I feel needs more attention from the Integral community – the theme and mantra for me, has been "transcend and include." I have a sense that what we need right now is to "descend and include." We've almost been hijacked by Orange to "get to second-tier," or "third-tier," or let's add another one on top. That's not Integral, that's raw Orange – let's get to the top! That's only half the story.*

- It's like a tree... as it branches upward, it also needs to send out its roots, otherwise it'll be blown over. A woman I spoke with the other day said: that the way we (women) think about it is that we do the roots thing first, then the branches open up and expand.*
- I thought: this is interesting – as a man, I think I push my branches out, then I start to wobble a little, and realize I need to dig my roots deeper. It's like we need to do some root canal work, dig ourselves deeper.*
- As Dylan and I were working with Spiral and the Integral model in a non-linear way, instead of "transcend and include," we talked about "expand and embrace." The concept is more of a torus,*

*where energy comes into the center, spins out to the perimeter, then comes back in... that toroidal form is more of the image we think in terms of. As it expands out more broadly, it gets denser at the center, a more crystalline form at the center.*

- *So it's like putting a check on the transcend stuff, and how do we look at things more in a "descend and include"; not as separate from, but related to the transcend work - expand and embrace.*

*Russ: One of the ways we "include" a more deepening relationship with our roots is the investment in the arena where we can make a difference; sometimes through working with local non-profits, so our grounding is very near to us. We don't have to think just in terms of how do we impact starvation in Africa, we can think in terms of impacting starvation in our own communities is just as important a question.*

*Peter: I'll often talk about three key things. The first is context. The second is capacities and qualities of consciousness. The third is community. As we move into this turbulence, the thing we'll need to nurture is resilient community... on many different levels; i.e. the Transition Town level where we ensure our community can access basic needs, independent of the big grid. Food supply will come under pressure, clean water and energy supply... all those things we take for granted being provided for us; those are going to come under stress. Those large-scale systems are not resilient. Supermarkets will be in trouble when*

*that whole supply chain starts to break down. We need to make sure we have a resilient community at that level.*

- *At the level of relationships – the lower-right quadrant “we” – are we investing in the quality of relationship in our community, so the fabric of our neighborhood will hold and stretch as the shit hits the fan? Or is it going to crack, and people contract into just their own needs, and get into conflict about meeting those basic needs? Can we hold it together? Is our practice grounded right where we live, in our local communities? Whatever we can find to do that enables us to build that resilience in our community, which can also be our organization. How are our organizations going to navigate this time?*
- *Then, of course, our individual resilience, bringing in the upper-right quadrant. Are we looking after ourselves: energetically, food, water, etc. All the simple things we often forget when we're activists in the world, spiritual practitioners; we kind of forget the body again. A burned out activist is no good to anyone.*
- *So how we nurture resilience at many levels, particularly at a community level; we all have to live somewhere. And I don't want to be in a big city over the next few years, because they're the least-resilient places we have on the planet. How can we build resilience into our corner of the city? Key questions.*

*Russ: That's interesting, because ecologists are touting the "big city" as the ecological step to the future. That's going to be a challenging aspect of how we move forward.*

*Benjamin: There's a lot of fear-based anticipation and expectations about what's going to happen. In order to more comprehensively prepare, that's where I see your work on expanding and embracing giving me optimism; it doesn't need to collapse in the way so many people are fearing that it needs to, or that it's going to. Why can't we do more work on transforming our food distribution systems into something that does make sense?*

*Peter: I heard you ask about responding with transforming, as well as adaptive solutions. It's about doing both. How do we shift the supply chain is an area we've been working on in The Netherlands with Barrett Brown.*

- At the moment, I look at the capacity I see in organizations and their leadership structures to change in a way that is needed. I'm not optimistic, to be honest. I've earned my way doing that work, but the culture is so embedded, and the structures are so strong that hold people in that space.*
- Leadership structures haven't changed much at all in the past couple decades... different people, same patterns. The level shift needed in our existing institutions to make that happen, I'm not sure that's possible. My sense of what is needed at the moment is to find the new stuff that's emerging that works, and amplify and accelerate it. Buckminster Fuller said don't try to change*

*the old system; build a new one that makes the old one obsolete.*

- *My challenge and invitation is not to blame the old guard that's in power at the moment. Somebody's got to keep the lights on and deliver electricity to me so I can be on this call with you right now. They need to keep running the current system; they don't have the mental space to reinvent civilization. That's going to have to come from the fringes, the undercurrents.*
- *It's our responsibility to create the alternatives and get them as mature as we can, as quickly as possible, so they're mature enough to take over the reins from the old system, and those guys can let go. And I can tell you that a lot of them know exactly what's happening; they can see the storm coming, and they don't know what to do except to keep doing what they're doing. Somebody else is going to have to come up with the alternatives. That's our work.*
- *We need to make sure we don't get into a blame game. Let's hold our hearts open to the people trying to run the world at the moment. Sure there are folks with bad intentions, I'm not naïve about that. But there are also very good people who are really struggling with knowing what's happening, and not knowing what to do. And not having the time or space in their current institution to deal with it.*
- *So I'd find the new emerging stuff, help it to be smart, help it grow, go viral, amplify it, accelerate it so it's as mature as*

*possible so we're ready to take over the helm when the other stuff comes under increasing stress.*

*Russ: Can you talk about the Spiral Dynamics Integral methodologies and their role in initiating new institutions?*

*Peter: Spiral is a map of the landscape; it's a good map, and I like the way it's held by Don Beck in particular. The first thing it helps us do is see the landscape more clearly. Ultimately as we look at these different energies surging up across the planet, it helps us to see them in perspective.*

- As we look at areas like the Arab Spring, and the debate comes up around what are the new governance structures, how to support these societies in their next steps, the question becomes, who are these people? What value system are they expressing right now? Therefore, what's the appropriate infrastructure system that will best meet them where they're at? When you've got an upsurge of Purple/Red coming into Blue, what you don't want to do is put in a Green representative democracy structure, as we've seen with the struggles in Afghanistan and Iraq. We need to put in place stuff that fits people where they're at. That's the key design principle behind Spiral Dynamics. Not what we think is best, but the thing that is needed most in that system.*
- We talk about "stratified democracy." As we look at different societies, you can see their center-of-gravity being at different places on the Spiral. The kind of democratic form - from*

*authoritarian democracy through to representative democracy, and all that's in between – is to find the form that fits the interior dynamics of that place. That's a principle that can be applied anywhere.*

- *But it requires a real discipline of us to be able to look clearly and not project onto other contexts the value system that we get most excited about at the moment, because what we're most excited about probably isn't the thing that necessarily fits the context we're looking at.*
- *So that's the key design principle: get a sense of the need, the context, the Life Conditions, the center-of-gravity value systems. Then where are the best examples in the world, of governance systems or organizational forms, for example, that fit those value systems in those contexts. Then have the local people in those contexts design their system from those principles. We don't cut and paste stuff into different cultures; they'll find their own form. With the Spiral in the background, we can help them to see what the basic architecture of that form would be, then the local cultures will flesh out the details that fit with their Life Conditions.*

*Linda: What do you think about the promise of Holacracy?<sup>5</sup>*

*Peter: Thank god for Holacracy. Brian trained a number of us a few years ago when we were struggling with all the traditional kind*

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.holacracy.org/>

*of strategic planning, going around in circles being horribly stuck. Then we adopted Holacracy, and wow! It just completely released us. So absolutely it's relevant; it's like DNA that can be tailored to many different contexts and value systems. The essence of it includes the concept of dynamic steering, so we're not trying to predict and control, dealing with a rapidly changing world and environment where you take one step and everything changes. So all we can do is "sense and act," as Meg Wheatley often says. What Holacracy has given us is an organizational practice that fits a second-tier culture in the interior. It's like a Presencing practice, continually making us presence ourselves to the tensions now. If it's not a tension now, then forget it, don't waste your time on it.*

- So what are the tensions now, and what's the solution that the collective intelligence can best come up with that's workable for now, not for the next five years, even two months. If it's workable for the next month, then good; implement it. Then we'll see if any tensions come up, and address them if they do.*
- The power of workability... the only question that's important is, is it workable for now? Does this solution fit within the systemic needs of this organization, or does it stretch the boundaries too far? If it's workable, then we go with it.*
- The integrative decision making process is designed to hear every voice in the system, not from the perspective that every voice needs to be heard and included, but because we know that different people presence different pieces of the puzzle. Brian*

*talks about the indicators on a dashboard; you don't ignore the flashing fuel gauge because it's a little irritating.*

- It deals a lot with the people who speak the shadow in the system, who we often move away from because, as was mentioned earlier, it's hard to hold the pain and be with it. Can we see all the contributions as information from the field, from the system? That practice has been extremely valuable for us in coming up with solutions that have enabled us to just keep going. That's the key thing: in these times, just keep moving, and allow the system to grow organically out of the concepts it's embedded in, rather than creating in a vacuum.*
- I would highly recommend Holacracy as an organizational practice to anybody. It's really helped our Center for Human Emergence keep going.*

*Russ: That's a great example of building a better system.*

*Peter: It is a practice that you have to be ready to learn. It requires good quality facilitation as well. You need to be sensitive to who you're doing it with, give people coaching in it; it does take time. Our CHE decided to try it in its pure form for six months, then we evaluated it and adapted it a bit to our needs and our way of doing things more. But it was good to try it out in its full form, following all the rules they'd given us, because that enabled us to get good sense of what it was, how it contributed, and where we felt its limitations were, in terms of our organization.*

*Ferino: Can you talk more about the connection between Beige/Purple and Yellow/Turquoise, and maybe also the differences?*

*Peter: The thing that connects them is that one is pre-cognitive and the other is post-cognitive; pre-ego and post-ego. Exploring it with Dylan in reference to the body, Beige/Purple and Yellow/Turquoise have yin as their foundation; their basic assumption is connectedness. That's what connects them up. Red through to Green are essentially yang based; their foundational energy is based on separation, distinction, discernment. So all four of those are rooted in connection (Beige/Purple and Yellow/Turquoise).*

- Of course, the difference is the ego in the middle, and what that does in a healthy way. When Red emerges healthily, you get this individuation process where we're able to see ourselves distinctly, therefore we're able to act on and with our environment and surroundings.*
- When get up to Yellow and Turquoise and start to re-embrace Beige/Purple in this way, we're bringing the yin as well as all that yang included in it. If you think of it as expanding circles, those fields of Beige/Purple and Yellow Turquoise are fields that hold the yang systems in the middle.*
- In another great book by Alistair McIntosh called "Hell and High Water," looks at change and the human condition. He made a nice distinction that when Red emerges healthily, we get an*

*individuation process where the individual crystallizes out, but is still held in the collective. What happens in our industrialized society, instead of individuation, we got individualization. Instead of individuals being held in a collective, we were unrooted, disconnected from the context, running around like headless chickens, essentially. That's a useful distinction to make, between individuation and individualization. What we saw in the London riots was a great example of the dis-rootedness and individualization, rather than individuation.*

- What a lot of traditional cultures did around Purple/Red was initiation ceremonies for young men, and probably young women as well. As their testosterone kicked in, the elders helped the young men manage that energy in service of the community. That yang surge of energy could be held in the context of the whole. Essentially what we saw in London was a bunch of uninitiated men (and women as well).*
- So to get back to your question, the thing that connects them is they're basically yin based systems, and the thing which differentiates them is the fact of the yang in between. So we're able to individuate out, see ourselves, and then re-embrace.*
- There's a brain scientist looking at the neocortex; what it needs to do in the brain is loop back around into the reptilian/mammalian brain; literally transcends and includes, wraps around and roots itself back into the brain. That's an image of what we need to do. The neocortex emerged first, so we had the set of systems in between that's given us the ability*

*to see ourselves clearly, create conscious collective agreements through Blue. And it holds a world, cosmocentric perspective. So whereas in pure Purple, before it emerged, it was very much ethnocentric. So we'd be at tribal war with each other. What the world-centrism/cosmocentrism has given us is a value set that decided it's really not a good idea to go to war, but instead to think like a global citizen. Whereas in Purple, we're more of a tribal member, with us/them dynamics going on... much more accentuated polarities.*

- *Peter: [after comments by Laurie] We are the world. This is a holographic universe we live in. We're totally a fractal, so when we transform a pattern in ourselves, we transform that pattern in the world. That's the great thing, but it's also a scary thing. Because it means that every single pattern that we express in ourselves is impacting the collective field around us... in terms of responsibility of not only our behavior, but also our thoughts. The way we relate to the world relates to ourselves. Everything that happens inside of us is reflected around us. It's the same thing. We transmute it in ourselves, and there's work to do in the world around us. We meet the patterns in our relationships, layers that need to be peeled off.*
- *What seems to increase, in me anyway, is the ability not to be triggered by that pattern, to be able to catch myself more quickly as it comes up. Just the fact of seeing it helps it fall away.*

- *When we go down to Beige, we're really facing our ultimate fear, the fear of death. What drives the Beige value system is to stay alive. As we descend into those places, we meet our most primal fears. That's why we need the Yellow/Turquoise transcendent space, because from that space, from our deep realization of the absolute, that we can allow that basic fear of death to transmute itself; that's where the alchemy can happen.*
- *What it does is like Spiral acupuncture. We stick a pin in, and this enormous energy is released, surging through the rest of the Spiral. It brings those other systems into alignment, and makes them also more vital and everything.*
- *Regarding symbols, the way it works is there are essentially different functions you're wanting to support in the energetic architecture of a system. For example, a system may need more grounding; or it needs its stressed and blocked energy to be cleared out more; or it needs more self-organizing capacity; or it needs more orgone life energy.*
- *Different symbols have different functions. "Tsadee" is a Hebraic symbol helps with grounding. Or different colors can have certain effects. They've discerned what kinds of symbols, like a mandala with or without color, have different effects on the energetic system of any field. That's just been trial and error over the years. Everything has a certain resonance, and that resonance interacts with the field of the system you're working with, and helps it to heal itself. Sometimes we've used*

*formations that have come out of crop circles to balance things, if the system asks for it. We can ask the system which particular symbol or form would best help it do what needs to be done. Very powerful. Ultimately it's what everything is - frequency and vibration and resonance.*

*Russ: If indeed everything is connected and everything is relevant, how do we bring to light those aspects that are going to be most crucial in addressing the situation at this point in time? That's a lot of what your work is about.*

*Peter: First of all, quiet your mind, then ask the question and notice what shows up. That's it. Basic trust in the interconnectedness of all things.*

*Reiner: Is this the same as, in the 60s-70s, the movement of positive thinking? Some people propose "wishful thinking," and you connected it to "clear intention of action." If the intention is only to make money, like many proposing "positive thinking," what's the clear difference between them and your intention for setting the right action to help our planetary body to get healthy again?*

*Peter: The specific difference is consciousness. If we're doing it for money, there's a certain value system at play there; if we're doing it around the question of how can I best be of service to the world at this time, then that's a different value system that's being activated - worldcentric.*

- *Looking at the whole area of positive thinking, intention, affirmation; working with affirmations is a key part of the energetic work. I worked this morning with a group of people on forestry and climate change and food security. I did a whole visioning process with them, and backcasting,<sup>6</sup> where you put yourself in 2020, then look back at what happened. There's great power in throwing an anchor out into the future, and not just having an affirmation in words, but feeling in your body what it would be like for things to be that way. Then the gratitude that it is that way, as you imagine it to be. Then the release, and letting it go. That's key, letting it go. Otherwise you're attached to something out there, and you're not present to how the Kosmos is actually bringing things into your path that are going to help you get to the place you just uploaded.*
- *A lot of people have picked up on "The Secret" kind of affirmations, intentions, etc." If I just do that, then it'll sort itself out." No, it's doing that... and then presencing yourself to life, that starts to organize itself around you in alignment with the intention or affirmation that you have. Then you're responding and taking action. Often that bit's forgotten by our armchair affirmation experts. It is key... in my experience the power of holding a possibility out there does affect your ability to manifest that. There's no doubt, in my experience. And, we have to do something on the ground as well. We have to respond, pay attention to what crosses our path, take action. It's not just a spiritual trip, as it were.*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backcasting>

*Russ: One of the things you're getting at is that it isn't an either/or. Why you want to make money may be a critical factor. Being in good health, in good relationship, in good harmony, being in good stead requires resources, and being able to attract resources into your life may be a critical factor in your ability to invest your energy, livelihood, and intelligences in whatever ilk they may be, in contributing to a context that's making the Spiral healthier.*

*Peter: Basically, the way I think it works is that with an intention, affirmation, or any inner movement in yourself, it's sending out a certain frequency or resonant wave. That interacts with other waves and frequencies. At some point, if you keep holding that, it draws in other waves, acts as an attractor to other energy frequencies. At some point, that wave becomes a "standing wave," where it kind of "clicks in," and the energy gradually becomes denser. The probability, as they would talk about in quantum physics, is quite low. That's all we're doing when we do this kind of work, is working on the probability of something manifesting. No guarantees. But as we increase that probability, the energy waves become more coherent until at some point they reach a certain level of density, and I guess there's a kind of tipping point where that subtle energetic density "clicks" into material form. Everything's energy at certain densities. What we're doing as we upload intentions or work with affirmations is essentially densify the energy until it comes into a certain level of coherence; until it reaches a tipping point and comes into material form. That's how I make sense of it.*

*Philip: Could you talk a bit about the State of the World Forum 2020 Climate Leadership Campaign and how that connects with your own thought processes and how you bring that down into the real world, and how do they make this a tipping point?*

*Peter: The State of the World Forum 2020 Climate Leadership Campaign stopped its activity awhile ago. I got involved in that when we were developing this multi-stakeholder collaboration work, from the sense of: can we really do the best we've got from all of our integral insights, and the ways of collaborating, to bring together these different parties, and enable them to self-organize in such a way around key acupuncture points that would impact on climate change?*

- We did this work utilizing everything I had available to me out of that paradigm, and there was the realization that it simply wasn't enough. It wasn't an adequate fit to the challenge. That triggered some soul-searching by myself and Jim Garrison, who basically admitted that this approach to address climate change has failed. Jim basically said that we need to go deeper, to get more to the source... from a Green/Yellow to Yellow/Turquoise shift.*
- That's the link back to Wisdom University<sup>7</sup> that Jim is president of. We're going to have to drop deeper into ourselves, expand our consciousness higher, to be able to presence what's needed.*

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.wisdomuniversity.org/>

- *Drawing the bow back into the ancient wisdom as far as we can, and then it'll fly further, often coming around to pierce your own heart. At Wisdom University, we're working on the combination of the ancient wisdom with the new science and the modern wisdom culture. The story I've told today is basically that context: we've reached the limit of the existing approach to tackle complex societal issues.*
- *In a non-linear leap, you won't be able to see the next step from the place you're at. If you try to do it from the same consciousness, we won't manage. This is what it really means... shifting out of that rational yang sense into the domains of the non-rational, intuitive body-based intelligences we have. That's where both Jim and I ended up, and that's the work.*

## **Peter Merry**

Peter Merry calls himself a synnervator (from “Syn-“ to interconnect, and “-nervate” to vitalize). In 2005 he founded the Center for Human Emergence, a vehicle for exploring how to apply an integral perspective to societal and cultural transformation in countries ready to take the next step; and in 2008, The Hague Center for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence through which he played a key role in the State of the World Forum’s 2020 Climate Leadership Campaign. He is also the co-founder of Wisdom University in Europe, and the author of *Evolutionary Leadership*. He is currently writing a new book, to be called *The Pain and the Promise*.



## Russ Volckmann

Russ Volckmann, Ph.D., has worked for over thirty years as an organization development consultant and executive coach. He is the publisher and editor of *The Integral Leadership Review* and *LeadingDigest* and the founder of *Integral Publishers* (having published nine books by integral authors). As an educator he has taught at U.C., Berkeley; the University of Arizona; the United States Army Intelligence School at Ft. Juachuca, Arizona; Sonoma State University; Golden Gate University; John F. Kennedy University; Leadership University; and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology. He has served on dissertation committees for the Fielding Graduate Institute and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology and mentor for Antioch University. As a writer and editor, he was the founding editor of a professional journal, *Vision/Action*, for five years. He is currently on the Editorial Board of *Integral Review* which is published by ARINA, Inc. He has authored two books and is currently working on his third with co-author Brett Thomas on the topic of Integral Leadership.

