

Organising for Integral Impact

Despatches from the Frothy Frontier

By Peter Merry

This piece draws on blog entries from the last couple of years, describing the journey I have been making with the Center for Human Emergence as we look to trigger the transformation into integral evolutionary consciousness, in the Netherlands, for the world.

March 31st, 2006 – Klaar om te Wenden

900 people show up for an experience in a converted factory with Dr Don Beck, Prof Ervin Laszlo, Herman Wijffels and Peter Merry as contributors. We blow the roof off the place and the Center for Human Emergence Netherlands is on the map. Now we have a responsibility to channel that energy.

[KotW Photo]

April 2nd, 2006 – Natural Hierarchy

The last week has been awesome, culminating in the Klaar om te Wenden event with 900 people and an energy that this country will find hard to resist. What we pulled off could not have come out of the old ways of thinking and being—they told us so themselves! This was a test to see if we at the Center for Human Emergence were really serious about walking our talk and making it happen. I believe we passed with flying colours. Always more to learn of course, but now is a time for a major pat on the back, to stand proud and tell the story of this great step. One of things that dawned on me (in one of those by-baby-enforced early morning meditations!) about why we managed what we did, is around how we seemed to embody the concept of natural hierarchy. That is to say that people took on the things that they and others knew they could do best, beyond concerns about status and reward, with the good of the whole as the prime driver.

April 7th, 2006 – Leadership

I wrote a mail today to the group who are developing the CHE's organisational structure. I was trying to express clearly what the nature of Integral leadership might look like. I have no idea what kind of response it might trigger, and all kinds of doubts kicked in after I sent it, yet deep down I know that we cannot compromise on this if we are going to make a real impact. History will tell if I got this moment right...

"The issue is that of leadership, and particularly the order part of the chaordic design. I found in general too much emphasis going on the chaos and self-organising side - particularly statements such as "Amongst the stars [people] there is no leadership." We are going to need very strong leadership in this organisation. By leadership I mean holding the boundaries that will create the right kind of space to make this truly a second-tier organisation. A leadership team from this perspective will contain people

who are a step ahead on the Spiral of the main body of CHE members - that is a core principle of Spiral and Evolutionary Leadership. That means that we will not be electing leadership in a representative democracy process, which tends to return the average rather than leading thinking. Representative Democracy is a manifestation of the Green system and will not deliver the kind of leadership that we need.

“The pull for this organisation to slip down into a flatland Green form will be great. We will need leadership with the clarity and courage to hold the tension into second tier if we are going to be successful in our endeavours. I intend to lead this organisation for the immediate future, and to do my best to make sure that the people we have carrying out different functions are there because they are the best people to do that - and that judgment has a vertical element (centre on the Spiral) and a horizontal element to it (capacities, skills etc). I will take responsibility for safe-guarding the verticality and stratified democracy in the organisation. This will of course encounter resistance (and you may even feel it in yourself as you read this), but if it didn't then we would already have done our job and there would be no need for the CHE. I for one am going to ensure that that evolutionary tension remains in place, and am ready to explain it to anybody who is ready to listen.

“Expect flak, expect projected pain and hurt from the sensitive self, expect people leaving the organisation because they can't handle it. The numbers that remain will give us a true picture of how established second-tier really is in this country. Maybe there are people amongst this very group who don't resonate with the leadership I describe above and decide to leave. I hope not, as I feel deep down the huge potential that we have, and the learning edge that we need to be on ourselves if we are to authentically trigger this edge in the society. However it is ultimately up to each individual to feel where they can contribute most at this critical time.”

April 21st, 2006 – Fitness and Connection

This quest for Integral Leadership and Governance is proving to be a great learning adventure. The email that I shared in the Leadership posting released all sorts of energy. The key tension that it comes down to was between fitness (yang) and connection (yin). Connection was the key driver for people in the group, and also the key theme within the organisation proposal. What my earlier mail attempted to address was the need to be smart about fitness—that is to say, who is fit for what function in the organization? Ken Wilber refers to two perspectives on fitness—one is "vertical solidarity", and that is a stage of development that fits that of your peers and what a function demands, and "horizontal solidarity" which can refer to the specific capacities needed for a certain function. The implications of "vertical solidarity" and depth in the evolutionary perspective can shake people up, for what it means is that some people are more "evolved" than others (which doesn't make them better or worse people, just people with access to greater complexity in whatever line of development we are talking about, e.g. cognitive, emotional, interpersonal etc).

The people that we want in key positions in the organisation need to have the second tier perspective in order to be able to hold that centre of gravity in the collective. That means that when someone jumps in full of passion wanting a certain position in the organisation, first one needs to check the "solidarity", and if that fit is not there, then it means exercising ruthless compassion and trying to help them find another place to channel their energy (inside or outside the organisation). Of course, if there is heavy ego-involvement, then you are in for a rough ride...Following that line of thinking, means that someone or some people need to be the ones to make those distinctions, and they should actually be the ones with the most developed perspective to be able to see the rest as clearly as possible. Which means that if you are not one of those people, then the implications are that you will need to accept that you may reside at a stage that is less complex than that of others. And that's tricky, especially for the ego...

What some people see in this hierarchy is an old pre-modern (SD Red/Blue) hierarchy where the boss decides everything and you'd better follow the rules or be punished, rather than a second tier natural hierarchy where the vertical and horizontal solidarity emerges naturally and is accepted as obvious, without attachment to status or position—purely in terms of the good of the whole. The resistance tells you what stage people are at—you simply can't see stages beyond your own.

Now what happened as I held those boundaries and all sorts of heavy energy swirled around them is that people began to question their own position in the organisation. What is happening, is that the whole is evolving, and we parts are being forced to find new alignments. As a whole develops, the parts refine themselves and their relationships into more functional and natural focus and alignment. Limitation leads to release. If we had allowed that evolutionary tension to slip by trying to keep everyone happy and not holding our integrity, then this step would never have happened. Not always easy, but no-one ever said it would be...

May 17, 2006 – Decision-making and Governance

So here we are at a very interesting point in the evolution of the Center for Human Emergence in the Netherlands. We have been through an extensive Chaordic design process and are now at the point of creating structures, decision-making “processes” and governance models that build on that design and feel adequate to the task that lies before us.

Framing the way we think about the organisation is key to our development here. We are trying to create an organisation that is continually learning and evolving, as that is how the Universe is organised, and we want to align ourselves as much as possible with Universal principles so that we may best be of service to the whole. That means that we need to go beyond traditional thinking whereby you announce an organisational structure with people in different posts, and that's it until a yearly review. The structures and processes and functions need to be in continuous flow with the Universal directionality, with continual reflection on whether they are helping us to achieve our Purpose, in-line with our Principles, to deliver our Product for the world.

A couple of days ago, three of us sat together as the current Board, to get very practical about structures and functions. How did the three of us come to be the Board members? (And a footnote here – we had been using the term “Provisional Board” to show that it wasn’t final yet, and then I realised that actually in an evolutionary organisation the polarity “Provisional” and “Final” dissolves, as nothing is ever final, and everything is always provisional, based on the need that is sensed in the moment and the quality of fitness that is present. So the reality is that we are the Board in this moment, and that that may remain so for a while, or may evolve depending on what goes on in us as individuals, in the collective organisation and in the world around us. What is essential in this is that you have the processes in place to be picking up feedback from inside ourselves, from inside the organisation and from outside the organisation, and to therefore be making as informed decisions as possible about what will best serve the whole.)

So I am energetically the Founder of the CHE in the Netherlands, and hold the seed energy and vision connected to CHE Global. I have gathered people around me with whom I feel “vertical solidarity” (i.e. we resonate on the same levels of development) and “horizontal solidarity” (i.e. between us we have the capabilities to be able to fulfill the functions that need fulfilling to serve the needs of the whole).

So the three of us sat together, looked through the Chaordic design document produced with the Organisational Development and Leadership constellation, and based on that went to work identifying key functions and potential people to go with those functions. The structural design is based on the thinking in Spiral Dynamics, around three core templates : the X-Template is where all the activities happen that interface directly with the world around us, the Core Product of the CHE in action; the Y-Template includes all of the support systems that enable the X-Template activities to happen; and the Z-Template is the overview body that helps to keep the whole aligned, and senses the broader flows around the organisation.

In traditional organisational HR work, capacities are emphasised but Value Systems (e.g. Spiral) are not even recognised. That vertical element immediately introduces some interesting evolutionary tension into the whole story, as it means that someone has to make that judgment call on who is vertically fit for what. In our case, it started with me as the Founder doing that, and has now expanded to a conversation within the Board. We are taking responsibility for those judgment calls. The way it has worked in practice is a combination of intuitive feeling that someone is right for something (does it give us energy to imagine that person in that function, and, by the way, if not, is that more to do with some interference in ourselves or are we picking up a clear signal?), and checking out their competencies as we have experienced them so far and to the best of our knowledge. The next step is to have an honest conversation with those people to see if their passion aligns, and if the competence is indeed present. So no job descriptions, recruitment procedures, “democratic” elections—which I imagine is going to be tricky for some people to accept. The thing is that so far this way of organising has served us

well. We are using senses that transcend the cognitive combined with a system of checking with each other that our vision is clear and unpolluted.

Core to this is the web of conversations, and I believe this concept and practice is the best way to ensure best-fit in functions in the organisation. I have seen too many well-intentioned organisations fall apart dramatically because they have developed a set of processes to ensure fair selection procedures (actually out of fear for corruption and to try and protect the integrity of the procedure), only to find that someone or some people have been able to use those procedures to get themselves into positions where they do not fit—generally to further their own ego-driven self-interest. But because they have used the established democratic procedures, no one can do anything about it. Generating procedures out of fear to try and protect something will always cast a dark shadow. Acting out of trust that the right people will show up at the right time to carry out the functions that need doing, combined with skilful insight (not naively), is in my opinion far more likely to create the kind of organisation we need to really make an impact on the very serious issues we are facing in the world today.

So each person in the organisation needs to be embedded in a web of conversation that helps to keep each of us aligned with the higher Purpose. And now comes a serious crunch. In order for this concept to work there needs to be a critical mass of people in this web of conversation who are able to act beyond their ego (sense of separate self) for the good of the whole. If we can hold that space and have our conversations from there, then decisions around fitness and functionality will flow with ease. The moment there is ego-interference it will be a struggle.

Key also to the success of this is making sure that as many people as possible are engaged in this very conversation about how decisions are made. It is a new way of working, and rubs up against many of our old preconceptions about how things should be done, so is likely to create some confusion and resistance. Learning space for those conversations to happen in is essential. The learning will be on all sides. At the same time, final decisions will rest with the Board. We as the Board are also of course experimenting and need to maintain our curiosity and alertness for insights that can help us to best serve the whole. Should any individual have feedback about a certain appointment or process, the space needs to be there for that person to be taken seriously and responded to authentically. We enter such a conversation with complete openness and curiosity, looking for learning, and if it is there, act on it. At the same time, it could well be that the Board (or whoever is the appropriate decision-making body at that level) does not feel that the feedback needs acting on, and so be it. That will be a test of all our attachment to our own ideas! Are we truly in it for the whole or are we more interested in our own idea being adopted? So that's the story so far. It is the first time I have stopped to become more conscious of it all, which is an important step in itself for me. Sharing this enables us all to be more conscious of what is unfolding, to make the implicit explicit (which is the nature of the evolving universe!), and to learn from our experiments. On we spiral.

Nov 25th, 2006 – Collective Alignment

This is how we are currently aligning ourselves as the Center for Human Emergence (Netherlands). This concept and the organisation form is designed to be scale-free.

Core Purpose

To become a catalyser and crystalliser of action for the planetary transformation into integral evolutionary consciousness

Core Principles

- We practice full presence and radical authenticity.
- We open our hearts to the voice of the whole.
- We pay attention to the evolutionary impulse as it arises as us.
- We move ourselves as that impulse with swiftness, precision and love.

Vision and Mission

External Vision (An inspirational statement that describes the contribution we want to make to the world),

A catalyser and crystalliser of action for the planetary transformation into integral evolutionary consciousness,

Internal Vision (A statement that describes organizational fulfillment),

To serve Spirit as its unfolding,

Internal Mission (a. What is our core business? b. What do we need to grow and develop as an organization?),

To support rapid self-organisation as the evolutionary impulse, by developing our compassion, insight and skillful means,

External Mission (An inspirational statement that describes the service we provide to our clients, a statement that will inspire our customers),

To rapidly co-emerge vital and resilient individuals, organisations and cultures fit for present and emerging realities,

April 22, 2007 - Dutch Emergence 1

Time to share what is going on over here, as it is truly amazing...We are living through emergence and it is very cool!

As you may know, the Netherlands has been identified for a while now as a place where

the potential for "integral" and "second tier" consciousness (what I call "integral evolutionary consciousness") is particularly high on our planet. [Dr. Don Beck](#) has been coming here for 10 years and telling people that, but the Dutch themselves found it hard to believe—and challenging to accept. Others have added their voices more recently, such as Deepak Chopra and [Lynne McTaggart](#). It now seems like this nation is ready to step up to it.

We set up the [Center for Human Emergence](#) over here late Spring 2005, as part of the network of [CHEs](#) emerging across the planet, under the guidance of Dr. Beck. We've come a long way since then, via a 900-people event March 2006, and ongoing experimentation to walk our talk in terms of our organisational form. It seems the society is now really ready for what we have to offer.

In February of this year, a new Dutch government was formed under the guidance of Herman Wijffels, called back from his role as the Dutch Director at the World Bank by the Queen to see if he could create a Government from parties across the political spectrum (Christian Democrats, Labour, and Christian Social Union). He took the party leaders away from the media spotlight and party spindoctors on a journey round the country accompanied by an oval table which they kept at all the various locations (good Purple for those Spiral Wizards out there)—and succeeded in creating a coalition that radiated a fresh new energy and, what is more, came up with what many are calling the first ever attempt at an integral governance model for the coming years.

Now, Herman Wijffels was the first person to accept a position on the Wisdom Council of the CHE NL. He is a strong advocate of Spiral Dynamics, integral thinking and [Evolutionary Leadership](#). (Other members of the Wisdom Council include Prince Carlos de Bourbon—son of the Dutch Queen's sister—, [Fred Matser](#), [Fons Trompenaars](#), and [Marianne Spangenberg-Carlier](#)).

We have been exploring how we can best support this experiment with integral governance. An exciting project is unfolding, in which we will facilitate an integral innovation lab for each of the six streams in the agreement (economy, public sector, sustainability, security, international role, social cohesion), woven together by a seventh stream. This will involve [meshworking](#) Coalesced Authority Power and Influence ([CAPI](#)) to create integral prototypes around the challenges that the government has identified. We will work with a development of the [U-Process](#), with six facilitation teams working in parallel and learning from each other as we go. We have contacts at the highest levels and Herman will help us to get the right people around the table for the different streams.

There are a couple of related developments that are worth sharing for now. The [Environment and Spatial Planning ministry](#) has landed the two most complex portfolios—environment and social cohesion (including integration). It "just so happens" that we have recently trained up their interim managers department in SDi and equipped them with the [PeopleScan tools](#). We are also supporting them in their internal organisational change process, and recently gave a talk on the whole perspective to a group of high potential middle managers at which the Minister of Environment was

present—and she got very excited about our approach, and what is more already knew of Spiral Dynamics and Don Beck!

On the Social Cohesion front, a few of us were invited to a graduation event at the Police Academy of twelve leaders in the Police who have just completed a Personal Leadership course in which Spiral Dynamics Integral played a major role. They'd all be given a copy of my Evolutionary Leadership book (which is full on SDi, Integral and Evolutionary Enlightenment). Herman Wijffels was invited to speak and said he accepted because he was so excited by the fact that they were working with SDi. It is releasing a huge amount of energy in the Police and enabling them to see the issues around integration much more clearly. Via them we have access to the Minister for Integration, and so are beginning to build CAPI for that stream. Maria Jeukens has played a key role over years in getting the Police to where they are now.

The field is truly crystallising rapidly at the moment. It's playtime.

June 6th, 2007 – Core Functions of a Healthy Society

We have co-emerged these as core functions of a society that practices sustainability, resilience and emergence, as part of the project [we](#) are involved in to facilitate the current transition in the Dutch society. They act as a checklist to see to what extent the diverse policy areas and implementation projects support these core functions. We wrote them originally in Dutch (below), so this is a translation:

Survival (*beige*) : to provide basic needs for people who can not look after themselves

Belonging (*purple*) : to take care that people feel they belong

Power (*red*) : to trigger self-expression and action

Purpose-Structure (*blue*) : to name and protect our collective Purpose and the agreements that are necessary to fulfil it

Entrepreneurship (*orange*) : to continually stimulate high performance, successful entrepreneurship and innovation

Sensitivity (*green*) : to offer the possibility for personal growth and participation for everyone in the society, while caring for the natural habitat that we live in

Integral (*yellow*) : to stimulate functional connection and vitality across the whole society aligned behind the higher Purpose

Holistic (*turquoise*) : to facilitate the emergence of holistic solutions that serve life as a whole

June 17, 2007 - Dutch Emergence 2 : Healing Collective Trauma to Enable Action

“The ego ... in its zeal to assert its independence, not only transcended the Great Mother, which was desirable; it repressed the Great Mother, which was disastrous. And there the Western ego demonstrated not just an awakened assertiveness, but a blind arrogance... The Western ego did not just gain its freedom from the Great Mother; it severed its deep interconnectedness with her... When the Great Mother [Purple] is repressed, the Great Goddess [Turquoise] is concealed... And one may—it is a terrible realization—look in

vain through Judaeo-Christian-Islamic religion for any authentic trace of the higher touch of the subtle Goddess herself. And that, we will see, would become a perfect and terrifying comment on an entire civilization.” (Ken Wilber, *Up from Eden* - my additions in [square brackets])

We are entering a new phase of our work and evolution as the [CHE Netherlands](#), and it feels like this step we are taking is a fractal of the step the nation is being called to take, and indeed the planet as a whole.

During our recent retreat we were called to a new step. It manifested in patterns such as the need to create clear structure, process, agreements etc, combined with a call to make explicit dissonance that we are feeling as individuals about the way the organisation might be shaping up, and about the way we are choosing to behave as individuals. The general theme was for more earthiness, realness, authenticity, clarity—basically “descending” energy as compared to the “ascending” energy that had been guiding us in recent months. The physical gestures that often accompanied the conversation included a strong slapping of the belly region!

In November last year, we made a conscious choice to push outwards, expand, explore, diverge, ascend—and then to take stock in May. Now we are being called to put the foundations in place so that the many initiatives that are emerging can become rooted and fully manifest (descend).

[Marieke de Vrij](#), a highly respected Dutch intuitive, added another element to the picture that I feel is not only Dutch-related, but connects to the dynamic that Ken Wilber describes for Western civilisation in the opening quote.

She said that the Dutch have a tendency to stay very much in the head and analytical domain, and that the whole belly and groin area is constricted and cramped. Given that we should move ourselves from that area, it means that there is a sort of action-paralysis, whereby people often find good reasons not to act. Sensing deeper, she explained how the amount of animal suffering in this country is truly unbelievable if you let it in (there was a programme on TV the other day showing young chicks going through a shredder). Somehow, we have managed to cut ourselves off from our sensitivity to the experiences of the animal world, and nature more broadly. That denial has as one consequence the paralysis of action.

In Spiral terms, you can see what she is describing as the transcendence and repression of Purple (the Great Mother Ken talks of above), which is leading to the lack of a solid foundation for the healthy expression of Red warriorship and creativity (to learn about these colour codes from Spiral Dynamics, [click here](#)). The way she described the Dutch dynamic was one wherein when people do act it tends to be fairly harsh action that creates turbulence around them, and so rather than act in that way, they hold back and don't act at all. An emasculated culture. Without the embeddedness of the masculine Red action system in the feminine Purple sensing system, it cannot function healthily for the whole. In the Martial Arts, this is represented in the way you bow to each other, where

the action hand is always held in the compassion hand.

The lack of healthy Purple over here is bound to have repercussions for the Blue system (Blue emerges out of Purple, under influence of Red). Blue is also a system that makes things happen—responsibility, commitment to a cause, discipline in the application. The reputation the Netherlands has as a liberal country reflects a more individualistic tendency—people can choose what they want to do. That freedom of choice, if not embedded in healthy collective systems, can lead to paralysis. Healing the individual interior Purple and Blue, will create healthy and rapid action out of Red and Orange. Healing the collective interior Purple and Blue should enable the emergence of new systems in the collective to manage the life conditions threat that is now on the doorstep. Revitalised Purple and Blue will also lead to a functional Green where the capacity to engage the diversity in the nation is activated to enable the country to deal effectively with the complexity of the challenges it is facing.

Sept 12, 2007 – MeshWorks

MeshWorks are one of the core products of SDi and Human Emergence practitioners. A MeshWork is a form of next generation network, where different parties are consciously woven together to serve a higher collective Purpose. What a MeshWork can achieve is way beyond anything that any of the individual parties could achieve on their own.

In a MeshWork, special attention is given to what the specific qualities of the different parties are, how their uniqueness can be enhanced and vitalised through their connection to other unique parties. We release a part by limiting it to its specific place in the whole. The combination of alignment behind one higher Purpose, buy-in to a collective set of Principles, and the uplifting of the identity and capacity of each of the parts, creates a powerful dynamic MeshWork that has a clear identity of its own, is diverse in its make-up, and is rapidly responsive and adaptive to the world around it.

Good MeshWorking requires giving attention to an integral combination of Leadership, Culture and Structure, reinforcing each other and strengthening the fabric of effective collaboration. It is the next emerging form as we explore how to organise ourselves to deal with the complex and urgent challenges we face in the world today.

Dec 2nd 2007 – Leadership as the System

If you have been following this story, you may remember [an earlier blog](#) in which I described a previous important step that we made in the [Center for Human Emergence Netherlands](#) and the decision-making around that. One of the key elements of that early phase was my decision to essentially gather around me the people who I most trusted, and with whom I felt vertical and horizontal solidarity—i.e. resonance at the level of consciousness and with appropriate skills. There was no formal structure or process around this—it was essentially a Purple system of leadership (colour code references to [Spiral Dynamics Integral](#)).

It has worked for a while, holding the centre and going deep into what it is we really want to be creating and what kind of organisational form could best support that. As a Purple system, it has by definition been pretty inward-focused, with justified complaints from outside the inner circle of a lack of transparency and little idea of what we were actually up to. In hindsight it would have been possible to hold that space and to have continued informing others of the process we were in, but somehow that energy does not support it. Anyway, we kept our focus and intention clear, through periods of insight and enthusiasm as well as phases of confusion and self-doubt.

In the last 6 months, we have been increasingly focused on how to put in place the kind of structure that would serve an integral evolutionary perspective—to walk our talk as an organisation. Spiral's Natural Design templates, Dee Hock's [Chaordic](#) flow, and the [Holacracy](#) concepts have all played an important role.

In the last few weeks we have had the feeling that we were very close to manifesting it, but that it just wasn't quite there yet. In that time it dawned on me that we were missing an important piece of the puzzle. Our focus had primarily been on the structural perspective (Wilber's LR quadrant) and we had not been giving much attention to the LL Collective Field quadrant. This is where the link to Purple comes in. I realised that if we were going to move beyond where we were now, then we were going to have to release the energy of our Purple field. Structurally what we are trying to do is put in place a healthy Blue system (designed from Second Tier) that will lift the organisation beyond a co-dependancy upon me as its founder, into a space where it has clear structures and processes, so that anyone looking at our governance from outside would be able to see clearly how we are organised and why certain people are in certain positions. At the moment it is just because I have asked them to be there, and we need to move beyond that. To do this required a serious energetic intervention.

What I realised was that the only way to do this was for me as the Purple founder ("tribal chief") to step in to make that happen. I decided that we needed to actually dissolve ourselves as a Board before we would really be able to let go of the past to let come the future. If we did that, the only function that would be left would be mine, as the "lead-link" from CHE Global, and that for this transition period I would have to hold the leadership on my own to enable the next phase to emerge. So we would create an energetic vacuum into which the future would be sucked, rather than trying to create it from the old structure and culture. Scharmer's [Theory U](#) backs this up.

I got a reinforcement of this position during our recent retreat, when the core group (Board and others) were skillfully guided through a process of becoming conscious of any claims we had on the CHE as a system, i.e. what are we demanding that the CHE system gives us before we can be a whole person (e.g. a place to be recognised and loved, a place to be heard etc)—and then letting go of those claims. As we went round the circle and people stood up to release their claims, I became aware of a huge energy flowing through me, and realised that as the founder, people's claims on the system were also energetically claims on me.

So during our Board meeting last Friday, I decide to take things into my hands again, pull the energy of the organisation to me once more, and see if I could facilitate a letting go. A core element in what helps a group to let go is that they feel they have been honoured for the work they have done in the past period—after all, we are only where we are now thanks to the path that has been walked. So in the days before I contacted the next circle of people around the Board and I asked them to send me a testimony/appreciation of the work that this group had done. Beautiful things arrived in my mailbox, including poetry, and as I pulled them together the evening before our meeting I had a strong sense that we were on the right path.

During the meeting, after we had checked in and dealt with practical stuff, I explained what I felt I needed to do, and why I felt I needed to step into a different leadership role for the moment and hold the space as the founder. I had no idea how people were going to respond, and it was a great relief to hear the group's appreciation of this step and indeed the relief that they felt at me taking that leadership position. We were well placed for release. Next I handed out the testimonies I had received from others and we read them in silence. You could feel the field deepen and expand. I then invited us all to go into a round of appreciation of our time and work together over the last period, which proved to be very powerful, for me as much as for anyone else.

As I sensed into that question ("what do i appreciate about this group?") i could feel the emotions surging up, and what powered its way through was a deep sense of gratitude that a group of people would have the faith in me and the vision I held to step into a journey which had no clear destination. I can offer no result—only a clear commitment and intention—and yet this crazy crew was ready to devote their time and energy to manifesting whatever it was we had to do together. These Dutch have explorer genes in them—their ancestors got into flimsy boats to cross the oceans without knowing what they would find—and bless them for that.

Once the circle was finished, one of our company who is particularly sensitive to the collective energy field said she could see that it had shifted—our letting go had happened. I don't really know what the implications of this are going to be, it just feels like the space we have created is what we need to hold if we are really going to allow the next phase to emerge. We are working with Brian Robertson from Holacracy this coming week, and I have a sense that the last pieces might just fall into place.

Dec 19th 2007 - Landing

We've been through an intense few weeks! Following on from the "releasing our claims" session and energetic dissolution of the Board mentioned in the [last blog](#), we spent two days with Brian Robertson and Tom Thomison on [holacracy](#), and an afternoon with [Terry Patten](#) from the Integral Institute.

One of the key things we learned from Holacracy was to look really clearly at what is actually there at the moment in terms of organization—what is the organisation actually counting on people to do (accountabilities)—and to organise around that, rather than

around the grand visions that we have of what we would like to be doing...That has provided great clarity and simplicity as we move into creating supportive organisational structure and processes that enable what is, whilst holding space for current tensions to manifest next steps.

There was a similar theme in our work with Terry, which was facing up to what is really present for people—surfacing the current tensions—"face everything, avoid nothing", as one of Andrew Cohen's tenet's goes. It's amazing how much we don't say to each other, even though we consider ourselves to be "brothers/sisters-in-arms" on this evolutionary edge. Naming the judgments and tensions we are carrying releases huge energy to actually do the things that need to be done—engaging the issues that have been unspoken. It felt like a collective landing in the messiness of our relative reality—re-entering the marketplace as friends.

It feels to me as if dissolving the formal roles in the organisation has also helped people to be more themselves and get clearer on what their actual work is. And the funny thing is, the work that people are feeling called to still happens—without any formal structure! And that is what we are looking for—how can we create a minimal structure that simply aligns and supports the work that people are naturally being called to—whilst at the same time consciously identifying work that the organisation needs that currently isn't being done—and finding the people that best fit that work.

It feels as if things are naturally falling into place, the dust of letting go attachments and fears is settling, and an eerie kind of calm is forming—fragile, delicate and real. As we enter the darkest period of the year, our roots are dropping deep, and we gather ourselves for the return of the light. The Spiral spins, the cycles turn and all is very well.

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He works in many different sectors. Current projects include facilitating Integral change processes in a multinational technology corporation, major airline and Dutch ministry, and advising on the development of a global problem-solving framework with key global stakeholders. He is a recognised expert in the field of evolutionary systems dynamics and Spiral Dynamics Integral in particular. He has had his first book published in Dutch *Evolutionary Leadership*. His passion is to help us connect with clarity to our current condition and organise ourselves rapidly to take the necessary action. He also has strong roots in theatre and music.