

Thinking Systems and Spiral Dynamics

*Understanding the value codes that shape human development*

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Clare W Graves

In the chaotic years after *World War II*, Clare Graves, a professor of psychology, wanted to determine exactly what lies beneath human nature.



He wanted to know *how and why* people change.

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Clare W Graves

He decided to dump the conflicting theories of the day, behaviouralism, humanism, cognitive theory etc...



...and figure out for himself exactly *why* and *how* humans change and develop.

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## Clare W Graves

The more he studied how humans think, the more he observed patterns of *human values* and patterns of *coping mechanisms*. He discovered that different patterns were based on the *life conditions*...



...people found themselves in and the mental, emotional, physical and psychological solutions to those conditions.

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## Clare W Graves

Over a period of thirty years, he identified the reasons behind the historical waves of *civilization and social progress* and...



...mankind's *preparations for a momentous leap in consciousness itself*.

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## Clare W Graves

Graves contended that when an individual, group, or organisation's life conditions demand a change...



... then *human values must change* because what you value has to change in order to progress.

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## Clare W Graves

Graves developed an *integrative model* of human development that reveals the hidden *complexity codes* that shape human nature. He termed his model...



*'The Emergent, Cyclical, Double-Helix Model of Adult Biopsychosocial Systems Development'*.

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## Clare W Graves

The model examines and explains many of the *deep forces* in human nature which shape our *values*. It lays out both a *pattern* and *trajectory* for change.



*Memes* are the psychosocial equivalent of *genes*.

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## Clare W Graves

They're cultural units of information which *self-replicate* from mind to mind on a vast scale, appearing within society as new trends of *thought* and *beliefs*.



*Collective agreements* about jobs and money are forms of *memes*.

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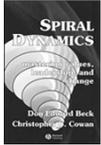
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## vMEMES

“A **vMEME** contains the basic package of thought, motive and instructions that determine how we make decisions and prioritise our lives. Each has its own sending and receiving channel...



“...organisation design, intensity level, code of conduct, and set of assumptions regarding the way the world works.”

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## Clare W Graves

By exploring and describing the *core intelligences* and deep *values* that flow beneath what we believe and do, the model offers an incisive, dynamic perspective on...



**How** people think *about* things (as opposed to 'what' they think)  
**Why** people make decisions in different ways

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## Clare W Graves



**Why** people respond to different motivators  
**Why** and **How** values arise and spread  
The nature of human **Change**

Graves maintained that human nature is not fixed and that when *forced by circumstances*...

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## Clare W Graves

...humans are able to adapt to their environment by constructing new, **more complex conceptual models** of the world which then allows them to handle new problems.



These models are organised around systems of **core values** and **collective intelligences** available to individuals and entire cultures.

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## Clare W Graves

Each thinking system can (co)-exist in both **healthy** and **unhealthy** forms. Any stage of development can lead to...



...**undesirable outcomes** with respect to the health of humans and social environments.

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Life conditions		Coping mechanisms
Yet to be determined	?	Suggests many more systems to come
A universal, spiritual single living entity	?	Seek the order beneath earth's apparent chaos
Dramatic changes bring risk of chaotic collapse	50	Free thinker. Principled economic and personal independence
Shared habit... concerns for sustainability with all humanity	150	Join community of like mindedness to experience shared growth, consensus and sharing of resources
The world is seen as being full of variable alternatives. The age of science	1,000	Pragmatically test for alternatives to succeed. Entrepreneurialism
A dangerous world needs more safety transition to one god - higher power	5,000	Learn to obey hierarchy, dogma, higher authorities and be faithful to belief systems.
Populations increase, the world becomes dangerous	10,000	Fight to survive. Impulsive war lords, power and violence at the expense of others
World becomes mysterious and frightening	50,000	Placate spirits and join together for safety
A state of wild and untamed nature exists	100,000	Act in the way that animals might act in order to survive

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## Spiral dynamics

Graves discovered that most people don't change their model of the world until, or unless, their *life's circumstances change* which then necessitates a *change in thinking* and coping systems.



Change requires new and more expansive *thinking* and *coping* systems.  
(What does this mean for all of you who are doing "change" work?)

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## Clare W Graves

The same level of *awareness, thinking or consciousness* that got you to where you are today will not get you to where you want to be in the future.



Your model of the world may be effective for where you are right now but it cannot be effective for where you want to go.

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## Clare W Graves

The way you *perceive* and *understand* your world, and the *collective agreements* you currently work under, need to change. The heroes journey is to...



*'Awaken to who you are and learn to become whoever you're capable of becoming'.*  
Apologies to Robert Louis Stevenson

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