Creative Thinking Styles

Creativity in 4 Dimensions

Rules & Facts	Spontaneity
Organise	Integrate
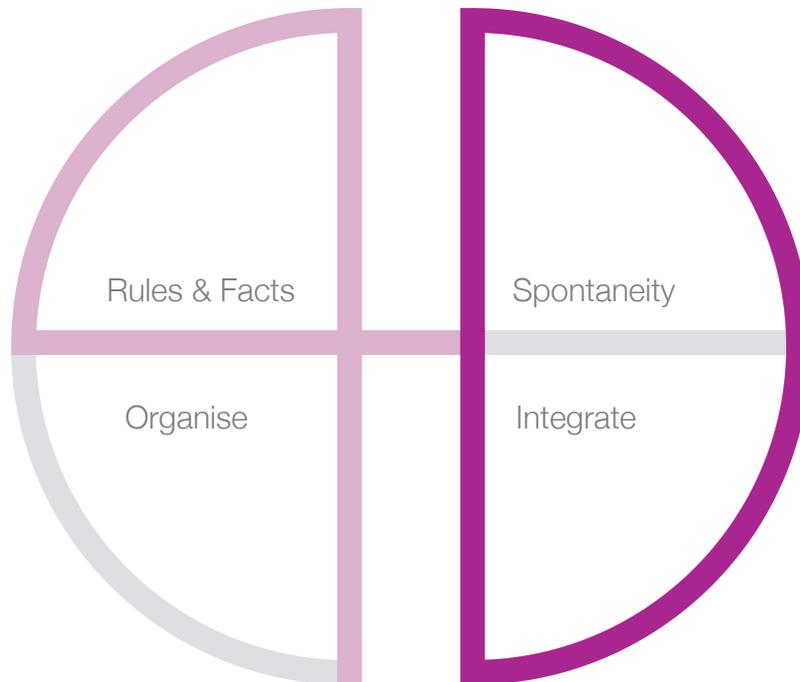
An Integral Approach

To Personal and Professional Evolution

Most people in business today understand that organisations must embrace change and creativity in order to stay competitive in this ever changing, global marketplace. The good news is every company that employs human beings has all the resources they need to help them innovate.

It's their people!

Our experience has shown us that everyone has the ability to think creatively about common day-to-day challenges and a culture of creativity is about utilising diverse thinking styles and approaches to problem solving. It's also about allowing people, up and down the hierarchy, to suggest solutions and ideas for anything they see that could be useful for the business. And finally, it's about offering positive incentives and acknowledgment to people for sharing ideas.

However, knowing this is not enough. There also has to be an understanding of - What motivates Whom to be 'creative and innovative' and Why?

There is mounting evidence from creativity studies to suggest that the drive towards creativity is essentially intrinsic.

Harvard's creativity professor, Teresa Amabile posits that:

"People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself, and not by external pressures or inducements."

Which means that each of us could be encouraged to be creative and share ideas if the personal, value systems that drive and motivate us are recognised and rewarded.

Spiralling towards innovation

The theory of Spiral Dynamics Integral was developed by Dr Don Beck and utilises some ideas from the Integral philosopher Ken Wilber, included during their brief association.

However the core of Dr Beck's theory was drawn from the research and work of Dr Clare W Graves. For around 10 years Don Beck worked very closely with Clare Graves exploring how an individual's value systems developed through life in a process of transcendence and inclusion.

The central idea is that what we humans feel, think and believe shifts and changes depending on what we're doing, where we are in life and who we're with. As our values change, so does our behaviour and drivers.

Integral Idea Generating

4D human being takes an integral approach to creativity and Innovation that utilizes the diverse thinking styles, personality types and motivators of diverse groups of people. This is where Spiral Dynamics Integral becomes indispensible as a map for understanding an individual, a team and an organization in terms of the potential for creativity.
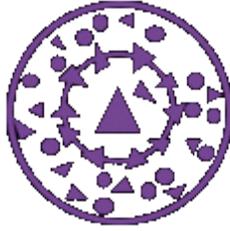
The central idea to our approach is to acknowledge and utilise people's 'Value Meme' (vMeme) perspectives as a motivator for creative thinking. Time and again research has suggested that 'creative' problem solving is best served when there is a diverse mix of perspectives around an issue. Therefore it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is a need to elicit creativity from each and every individual across all departments in an organization in order to maximize idea generation.

However, as people are more inclined to be creative if they are intrinsically motivated, an idea generating session may be less productive if there are individuals expressing conflicting vMemes because people will express vMemes that represent their adaption to a given situation. For example some people will become more inclined to seek and impose order if the situation they are experiencing seems chaotic and out of control. Of course this will be a matter of degrees and personal preference.

However, when bringing people together to share ideas it is important to both determine which value systems best represent the issue being discussed and which idea generating processes will appeal to the intrinsic drives of the individuals in the group.

The following descriptions outline the various value systems (signified as vMemes) that can provide creative energy from a Spiral Dynamics Integral perspective.

![4D HumanBeing logo]

PURPLE

RED

Purple vMeme – Team orientated and loyal to their own community and tribe. Someone expressing Purple will seek agreement within a group but will tend to defer to an authority figure. Their position is self-less, sacrificing their own ideas for the greater good of the tribe. The thinking style can be insular and limited to their own field of experience, knowledge or understanding. It can be challenging sometimes to get them 'outside of the box.' However, they will have a very strong emotional connection to the group and their work so can often bring deeper levels of meaning to a project or idea. This thinking style presents as an ability to capture core brand values in a strap line or campaign. Someone with strong Purple values will be invaluable when it comes to keeping a group 'on message' or 'on brand' and instilling trust and loyalty within a team.
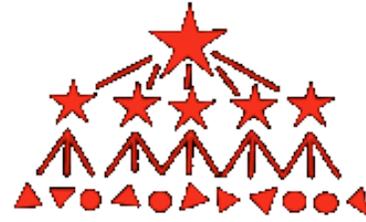
Red vMeme – Egocentric and sometimes a contrarian asserting self for dominance, conquest and power. The expression of an unhealthy set of Red values doesn't easily fit into society. This vMeme is "pre-law and order". It cannot control itself sufficiently enough alone to follow rules. It is expressed in raw displays of power with minimal regard for "right" and "wrong". Someone with strong Red values usually prefers to generate their own ideas alone and expects solo acknowledgement for their creations. Red's bright ideas can be revealed in the need to grab the limelight and be different and unique. A person expressing a healthy Red may be able to identify the opposite of any category and turn everything on its head to destroy (or invigorate) evolution. The Red vMeme can be useful if there is a need to break out and transform a situation, idea or process that is stuck in sameness.

BLUE

Blue vMeme - Blue's core needs are for rules, knowledge, and competence. People expressing energy generated by a Blue set of values can be 'Fact Finders' who want to understand and learn and/or develop rules and theories for everything. They value expertise, logic and consistency. Their bright ideas can be revealed in an ability to analyze a situation through research, analysis - searching for laws and patterns as well as identifying and defining the available data to uncover the rules. Risk-averse, Blue values can sometimes mean a person restricts themselves to a tried and tested way of doing things. However, they will also be the value set that can keep a project or idea rooted in reality.

ORANGE

Orange vMeme -This vMeme is strategic, enterprising, rational and organizing. Driven by multiplicity and pragmatism to achieve results and get ahead. The energy generated by the orange vMeme is rational but can reject blue's authoritarianism. They value the individual and as such will put "rights" over "responsibilities". They will listen to other people's ideas and use any that will get them ahead. Ultimately they will want to do things their way and will be able to negotiate with and persuade others that they are right. Their bright ideas are revealed in the ability to re-organize what already exists in order to move forward and innovate. They like to bend the rules to get ahead, but not too far. A person operating from the orange vMeme will adapt, substitute, modify and re-combine to collate the existing elements to form a new whole.

GREEN

Green vMeme - This vMeme is relativistic, communal, sharing, affiliate and consensual. 'Everyone' is right. Green's core drivers are energized by working with others towards some greater, collective good. People expressing Green will value unity and authenticity, preferring cooperative interactions with diverse groups of people and helping individuals realize their potential in harmony with each other. No one is better than anyone else - just different. They build bridges between people through empathy and acceptance. The questions they ask are: How does it make you feel? What does it mean for you? On the down side, Green thinking can lead to lack of clarity or consensus as people are unable to make up their minds and go round in circles through fear of causing offence. Green can often avoid conflict and enjoy being in an ego-less space, not recognising that conflict is vital for creativity.

YELLOW
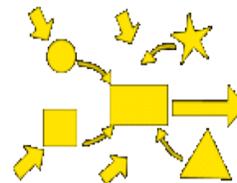
Yellow vMeme - Systemic, objective, improvisational, integrative, existential, flexible and questioning. The focus of people expressing the yellow vMeme is on flexibility, spontaneity and adaption. They like to find connections between conflicting views and value discovery and personal freedom without harm to others or excessive self-interest. They can stand outside a situation and quickly shift their subjective experience into an objective perspective. They see, hear and feel the big picture and their bright ideas are revealed in an ability to integrate disparate elements, blending and creating hybrids at the intersection of two or more positions. Everyone's ideas are considered partially valid and can be integrated in some way. They understand the value of all previous vMemes and seek a process of transcend and include when working creatively.

By understanding the vMemes of your team, you will be better able to plan for idea generating meetings, orchestrate diverse perspectives into one process and get the best out of everyone in your organisation.