

## **Spiral Dynamics – the upward moving spiral**

### **Order and Discipline in the School – One Step on the Path to Dynamic Harmony in the Classroom, Fortbildningsförlaget, Stockholm, 2006.**

[Translated from pages 49-52]

The educators we help see that Purple is in tatters, Red is running amok, Blue is powerless, Orange is dead, Green is in majority and has power, and Yellow and Turquoise are conspicuous by their absence. The Spiral is like the Göta canal with its system of dams and locks. There are two critical blockages preventing people from rising upwards. The first is between Red and Blue and the other is between Green and Yellow. In this book we focus on a) teachers and other staff working in schools who are trapped in Green and b) children and youth who are trapped in Red.

We also point out two other critical conditions present in society. The first concerns Orange strive drive, which like Blue authority, is seen negatively from a Green perspective. Green's own future - which must be Yellow - is seriously weakened without Blue and Orange. The other condition is that for the first time in history there is a considerable majority of people (youth and adults) in Green. We live in a very exciting time.

#### **Spiral Dynamics in schools**

To apply vertical leadership in schools means that we ourselves must change at the same rate as the change we are creating. We can not treat all people equally any longer. We can't continue to teach or lead all people the same way (i.e. using the same value system).

Different individuals should be treated differently depending on where they are in their own development. All people have the same value and must be given the chance to develop. But today's school - which is centred in Green values - uses a Green leadership style where not everyone is given that chance. We who work in education are challenged to take the leap to a "Second Tier" perspective (Yellow and Turquoise) in order to design the conditions and environment necessary that will lift students and colleagues from one level to the next. The vertical leader can either use all the leadership styles herself or coordinate and integrate them so as to design and create the best possible conditions for development. An example is the desperate need for Red and Blue leadership in many Swedish schools. Red and Blue demand a clear hierarchy. But as opposed to a power hierarchy which focuses on the teacher and prevents upward development, a second tier perspective creates a natural hierarchy which makes possible everyone's upward development.

To avoid total chaos and motivate students who are trapped in Red (egocentric impulsivity) to make good choices demands that the successful teacher first satisfies the need for Purple by creating safety, security and belonging. Next, it's not good to too early persuade a student in negative Red ("I don't give a damn about what anyone else says") to accept the Blue memes

"one way, one truth." This only confirms for the student that life is unjust and makes his resolve to stubbornly fight against and stand outside of societies norms even more resolute.

Red likes a teacher who takes on the role of the Big Boss, she who controls, can show Tough Love, set definite limits, rewards individually for good choices and at the same time shows zero tolerance for breaking of boundaries and negative choices. When negative Red changes to positive Red, the conditions are set for Blue wanting to obey a higher power and doing what one "should" do in order to satisfy ones consciousness, which otherwise is good for a student who is already open in Red. With Blue - awakening to a transcendent purpose or "sacred cause" - questions arise in the student that only the Blue meme can answer.

## **Respect**

Respect is defined differently depending on what level of development we are located at. The colours describe levels and differences in thinking.

Respect in Purple for my class and our rituals.

Respect in Red for me and my weapon.

Respect in Blue for order and structure, for teachers and the principal.

Respect in Orange for success and status.

Respect in Green for all groups and for the group in everyone.

Respect in Yellow for knowledge and action.

Respect in Turquoise for kosmos and consciousness.

Sir looks at his coloured map

## **RED TO BLUE**

"Let him go!" says Sir to an adolescent boy who is holding another boy in a firm grip. [Because Sir sees a Red youngster standing in front of him he has to be unwavering in standing for what is right. He must not show any sign of being uncertain or afraid, even if he is.]

"What? Don't just tell me!"

"Let him go now!"

"He's been annoying me!"

"I said let him go. Do as I say, now!" [After he has given the order Sir must stay until he wins the power struggle, everything else is a victory for the Red adolescent boy. And the more Red boys who witness his victory the better.]

"What happened?" asks Sir after the Red boy has let go his grip. [Matching Red is very demanding. Sir feels nauseously sick from the self restrained adrenalin now in his body. The first time took twenty minutes for the Red youth to give in, this time only one.]

"He's been irritating me!"

"I didn't ask you. What happened?" [Sir turns to face the boy who was held. He remembers not to ask "what they are doing" or appeal to feelings. Red is at least thirty kilos heavier than his prey.]

"He said that he wanted fifty crowns from me."

"Borrow! I said borrow!" Replies the Red kid.

"I have to tell your parents about this." [Sir must not show understanding towards a thirteen year old bully who forces his school friends to pay him money.]

"And?"

"I'm going to ring home. I promise."

## **BLUE TO ORANGE**

Even harder are the dark Blue girls who never drop their concept or style. You can't joke with them and you must always be well mannered.

"Does Sir know more than Ms. T" asks a Blue-Orange girl.

"I've studied five years at university. I have also worked in industry."

"Ms. T showed us two different methods. The students at Sundstad school can chose between three different methods. Their whole course program is described in detail on their website! Why do we only have one method described in our syllabus? I want to learn the method which gives me the best results."

"Okay, there are four methods. I can show all of them if you like, but after six years as a teacher and four years at Ericsson I recommend the one in our syllabus. It takes a little longer than the other three to learn, but those that know it get better results. [With students in Orange one has to impress and give challenges.]

## **ORANGE TILL GREEN**

"My shares have gone up fifty cents!"

"Do you have shares? Don't you know that the share market causes massive injustices between people?"

## **GREEN TO YELLOW**

"I think this feels good for everyone," says the teacher.

"What difference does that make? How it feels doesn't mean that it's right!" says a student.

"No, it doesn't mean that it is right. Can you say more about that? [With students in Yellow one is challenged].