Chapter 13.   Culture and Levels of Consciousness in Organizations

Introduction

In 1990 I began to study eastern spirituality, influenced by my travels in India This is the first of my papers to derive directly from those studies. I had never been completely satisfied with my culture model, although it has nearly always satisfied others. Although the model, and the questionnaire based on it, (Harrison and Stokes, 1992) adequately differentiated organization cultures as to style, it did not discriminate the higher, finer, variants of a particular culture from the lower, darker examples. I have always had a strong interest in and commitment to humankind's striving towards the light, and I was convinced that each of the four cultures I had manifests in organizations in both higher and lower forms.

For example, the Power culture, which in our questionnaire is presented in a somewhat unfavorable light, can be seen in some organizations in a higher form. In its higher form, those with power show a strong concern for the welfare, education, growth and development of those in their care. Benevolent paternalism may be nearly dead in the US, and perhaps we need not lament it deeply. However, it has a long tradition and is still alive and viable in much of the world. I wanted my model to reflect the differences between light and dark in each of the four organization cultures I had identified.

I thought I could create from the culture model a more comprehensive theory of organization dynamics which could serve as a guide to differential diagnosis and intervention into organizations. I had long observed that different organizational

cultures seemed to call for different kinds of interventions. For example, team building was often much my intervention of choice in what I was calling the Achievement culture, whereas I got better results working one on one with individual leaders in Power cultures. I wanted to create a model that would explain these differences, and permit me and others to plan change strategies which would be more effective and less painful for all concerned.

I also wanted my model to account for differences in *enlightenment* or *level of consciousness* between examples of a particular form of organization culture. I had been working since 1987 on a model of levels of consciousness in organizations, and I found support for my thinking in the ancient idea of the *gunas* in Hindu spiritual thought. The idea is of a progression from lower levels which are heavy, dull, and self oriented, to higher levels which have more energy, more light, and less attachment to sense gratification.

I could see similar differences in organization cultures. For example, the Power culture can be expressed in oppression and exploitation of underlings, or it can be seen in a benevolent idea of the responsibilities of the powerful for those in their care. The latter and higher form of the Power culture includes ideas of stewardship, protection, loving support and responsibility that are missing in the former and lower form. The idea of the gunas was also helpful in pointing to possible organization cultures that are different from those we observe, cultures we do not see because the right conditions for their flowering do not currently exist in our society.

I presented the first version of my new culture model in the spring of 1990, at a meeting on the future of organizations convened by the Association of Teachers of Management at Stratford-Upon-Avon. The model, though ragged, was well received. I was asked by the conference organizers to write a longer piece for inclusion in a book on organization futures. The request was a real gift, because it provided me with the impetus to think through the details of my emerging model. However, the editors had difficulties finding a publisher, and by the time the book was finally published in 1994, I felt my new work on organization learning (Harrison, 1994*)was more appropriate to its audience. Therefore, although it has been much circulated in draft form, this piece has not yet been published. In this volume of my collected papers, the earlier model of four earlier organization cultures is fully described in the preceding paper, "Organization Culture & Quality of Service.

Since writing that piece in 1987, I have worked over the model several times. My new work has found its way into a book on the planning and management of change, *Humanizing Change: Matching Interventions to Organizational Realities.* (Harrison, Cooper, and Dawes, 1991). I now have two models I am happy with, one "big" and one "little." The more elaborate and complex model satisfies my need for completeness and elegance, and it stimulates the interests of more theoretically inclined colleagues. The briefer one is useful for presentations to more general or pragmatically inclined audiences. I am satisfied with each, and the work feels complete, in that I am ready to move on. Both models are presented in this revised version of the original paper.

Adding Depth to the Culture Model: The Concept of Levels of Consciousness

One of the beliefs and principles underlying my work as a consultant is that organizations differ in their *levels of consciousness,* just as all living organisms do. By a higher "level of consciousness" I mean a greater awareness, the ability to take in from the environment a wider range of information, and also more complex information, organize it, and *respond to it* in a way which enhances the survivability and the quality of life of the organism.

The "good" organization has a higher level of consciousness which permits it to deal more effectively with internal and external change and stress, play its part in taking care of the environment, and provide a healthy and satisfying place to work for its members. For an organization, higher consciousness leads to greater success, not only as measured by limited financial criteria, but also when judged against the same sorts of criteria we might apply to evaluating a person's life: contribution to society, morality and godliness, quality of relationships with others, and so on.

For those who cannot accept the idea of an organization having a consciousness, or indeed, being more than a collection of people, all I ask here is that you join with me in exploring how organizations act *as if* they were living systems. Think of it as a metaphor or construct, no more real, but perhaps as useful as the idea of a "national character." In Table 13.1.below, I show how I anchor the definition of higher and lower consciousness in organizations.

Table 13.1　　Characteristics of Higher and Lower Consciousness in Organizations

Lower Consciousness in Organizations	Higher Consciousness in Organizations

Fear is an important element in controlling and directing behavior.		Internal commitment is the important element in controlling and directing behavior.
Links between organization parts are few; information flow is typically one-way and rigidly constrained.		There are many links between parts; communication is typically two-way and unconstrained.
The organization tends to react without reflection, or consideration of alternate responses. Short-range considerations usually prevail. The organization's behavior is "caused" by outside forces and events.		The organization reflects on its alternatives before acting. Long-range considerations often prevail. The organization's behavior is internally "caused" by the conscious desires and decisions of its members.
The organization has a narrow and stereotyped repertoire of responses to situations. It deals poorly with diversity and change.		There is a wide range and variety in responses. The organization deals well with change and diversity.
The organization learns by trial and error, rather than by design. Time and energy are directed into action, not learning.		The organization invests significant time and energy in learning about its environment, and studying and improving its performance.
The organization is closed to information from outside which disconfirms its self-		The organization actively seeks feedback from outside and engages regularly in

image; internal questioning is discouraged.		self-questioning.
The organization is fragmented. The parts are isolated from one another. They act to maximize their own performance without considering the effects of their actions upon the whole.		The organization is integrated. Parts understand the needs of the whole. They consider the effects of their actions on the whole and act to maximize the overall results.
The organization is motivated primarily by the hope of material gain.		The organization is motivated by a sense of high purpose and a wish to serve.
The organization is untrusting and exploitative in its stakeholder relationships (with customers, suppliers, employees, the community).		The organization tends to trust other entities and it follows high principles of "right action" (integrity and fairness) in its stakeholder relationships.
Conflict between parts of the organization is personalized and is resolved by who is strongest or can muster the most allies.		Conflict is about what is the "best way," "what's right," or "what is the caring thing to do." Conflict is resolved by reference to reason, principles, and love.
There is a split between the sacred and the secular. The organization's life is almost entirely materialistic. Higher values are seen as inappropriate criteria for decisions.		There is a merging of the secular and the spiritual. Work becomes to some degree spiritualized, and non-materialistic values are invoked as criteria for practice.

Current Issues of Consciousness in Business Organizations:

The importance of shifting from lower to higher levels of consciousness in organizations has surfaced recently in management writing and thinking, although others do not usually use my terms. My model resembles others in the *genre* of transformational thinking about management. From the "excellent companies" work (Peters and Waterman, 1982), Peters's *Thriving on Chaos* (Peters and Austin, 1985), through Pascale's *The Art of Japanese Management* and *Managing on the Edge* (Pascale, Incomplete citation-a; Pascale, Incomplete citation-b) there runs a theme which relates organizational effectiveness to such qualities as those I have identified as typical of higher states of organizational consciousness: integrity; high purpose; ability to manage diversity, tension and contention; the integration of the spiritual and the mundane; and an emphasis on serving the organization's stakeholders. These qualities are in the air today. The idea of levels of organizational consciousness seems to me a useful way of talking about them and planning how to develop them.

Consciousness and the Management of Diversity

In his interesting and useful book, *Managing on the Edge,*(Pascale, Incomplete citation-b) Richard Pascale makes a strong case for the skill of "contention management" as a central factor which differentiates consistently successful organizations from their competitors. Organizations which are good at contention management do not choke off controversy and debate through the use of power, or through the avoidance of conflict. They seem to be able to tolerate more or less continuous disagreement, even on rather fundamental issues of strategy, structures and

policies, without becoming overly anxious, or disorganized and chaotic. This ability to tolerate diversity of views is certainly typical of higher levels of consciousness, in organizations, as in individuals.

Consciousness and Spirituality

Pascale also notes that in the West, work and spirituality have been radically separated, and he gives some credit for the greater energy and commitment in Japanese business organizations to their ability to integrate the secular and the sacred. He points out the role of science in splitting our minds from our souls, and our doing from our feeling, and he asserts that our current task is to heal those splits. After all, people in our society experience most of their social contact at work, and often socialize outside of work with people they meet there. Our organizations tend to split people into their personal and productive parts, and then deny themselves access to the higher, finer part at work. Thus it is small wonder that business, in the US at least, focuses so exclusively on such material values as profit and market share, neglecting the care of the soul, and the care of the whole society. Higher levels of organization culture lead to more integration of the whole person into work. They permit the business to broaden as well, taking on the function of making meaning as well as making money, and giving employees an opportunity to contribute to making a better life for others (Pascale, Incomplete citation-b)..

Motivation and Consciousness

A New Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow popularized the idea that a satisfied need is not a motivator. Human needs exist in a hierarchy, and as soon as one is satisfied, the next higher one emerges (Maslow, 1954). Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs is now known by almost every manager who has ever attended a behaviorally oriented course. My understanding of Maslow's model is outlined in Figure 13.1.

Figure 13.1.   Maslow's Motivation Model

Maslow's Motivation Model

Self Actualization Needs: Integrity, altruism, creativity, "being values."

Ego Needs: Recognition, status, competitive achivement.

Social Needs: Belonging, affection, connection, intimacy.

Security Needs: Regularity and dependability of gratification of survival nee

Survival Needs: Moment to moment needs for air, water, food, bodily safety, shelt etc.
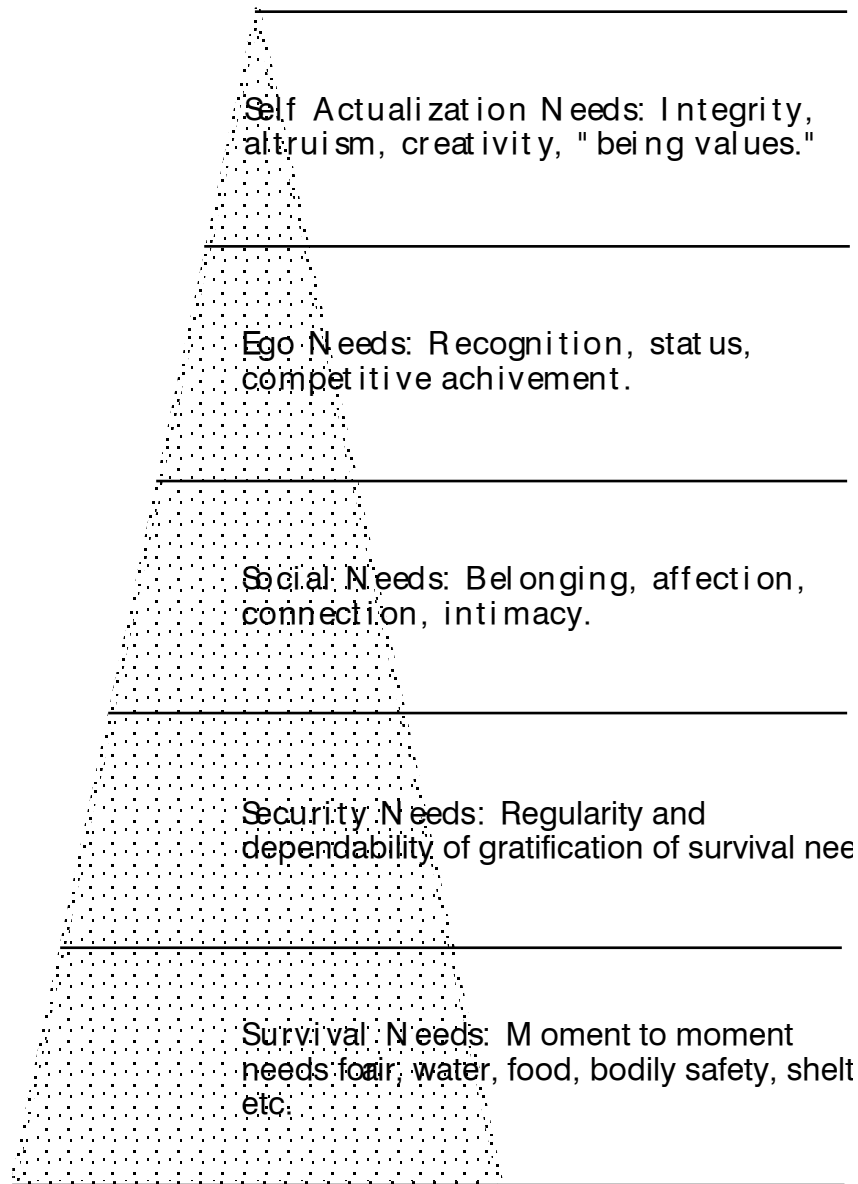
When I was teaching organization behavior at Yale in the sixties, I asked my students to conduct some informal research on Maslow's model by interviewing their friends. Most of their respondents reported that their Ego needs were rather well satisfied, but they felt deprived in their Social needs. I pondered these results, which seemed to me to cast some doubt on Maslow's model, and I looked at another model of

human needs, McClelland's tripartite model of motivation. He identified *Power, Achievement* and *Affiliation* as the basic human motives (McClelland and others, 1953). Eventually, I hit on the idea of a new model in which Maslow's idea of a hierarchy was combined with McClelland's idea of the three basic motives.

I believe that Maslow mixed up motives with what I call "levels of consciousness" in his model. A better map of the territory of human needs would define the Survival, Social and Ego needs as basic, and universal. As each of these three basic needs is met at a lower level of consciousness, the individual moves up the ladder, and begins to operate at the next higher level in meeting his or her needs in that area, or *motivational domain.*

Maslow's Survival need seems to me a basic human motive for physical sustenance and protection from harm. I see it as the root need behind the drive for power, one of McClellands basic motives. There are different "levels of consciousness" at which one experiences the need and meets it. One begins by depending on others for everything one needs, and then reaches out into the world to exert more and more control and self determination over the sources of gratification (food, shelter, clothing, and the sources of sensory pain and pleasure; also money, the means to procure and secure these things). We compete with others for material goods and sensory pleasures, but we may also become altruistic, taking pleasure out of giving these to others.

Maslow's Social needs refer to the basic human need for love and nurturance. McClelland has called this domain the need for Affiliation. We know that this need, too, is fundamental and present in all humans, from studies which show that infants do

very poorly when not held, stroked, etc. Again, there are different levels. As infants we first respond to loving from others, then develop means and skills for drawing it to ourselves. Later we may discover as much joy in giving love as in receiving it.

Maslow's Ego needs seem to me to refer to basic needs for competence, mastery of skills and knowlege, and learning. McClelland labels them the need for Achievement. Because they are higher up on Maslow's pyramid, they are described in his model in terms that suggest a higher level of consciousness than does his description of Survival and Social needs. As I see the need, from the lowest to higher levels, I see the infant needing help in learning how to do things and how the world works. Very early, though, children begin to explore and experiment on their own. They begin to learn from their own experiences, and they practice their skills. They are still sensitive, however, to evaluation of their competence by others, whether adults or peers, and thus their self esteem is dependent upon others. Later, the individual competes with others to demonstrate skills, learning and creativity. At higher levels of competence, the individual may become quite immune to criticism and praise. She or he develops internal standards of achievement and competence that are used to reward the self for good work. At the highest level, competence is exercised for the sheer joy of the art, and for the intrinsic satisfaction of learning new skills and knowledge.

For my derivative model, I have chosen to call these three *Motivational Domains* by the names that McClelland has given them in his careful research to classify human needs and motives (McClelland and others, 1953). Thus, in Figure 13.2. I use the terms, *Power*, *Achievement* and *Affiliation* to refer to three basic domains, each of which can exist

at one of four levels, *Survival, Security, Self Expression* (Maslow's Ego Gratification

level)and *Transcendent* (Maslow's Self Actualization level).

 Figure 13.2.   Integration of Maslow's Hierarchy with McClelland's Three Basic Motives

Integration of Maslow's Hierarchy with McClelland's Three Basic Motives

Transcendent

Self Expression

Security

Survival

Power   Achievement   Affiliation
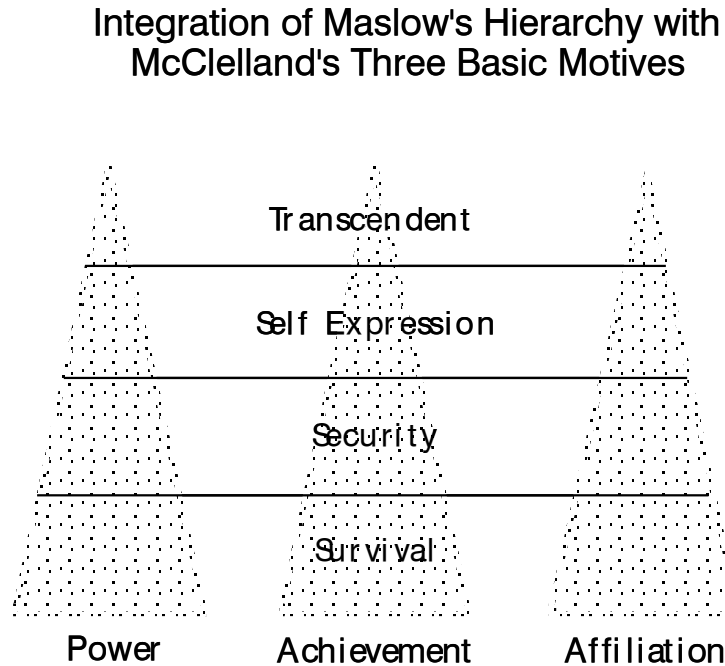
The four levels point to different means or processes for gratifying our needs. I

think of them as different *levels of consciousness.* At the Survival level, we go for

immediate gratification in the moment, without much thought for the future. At the

Security level, we are dependent upon others for gratification of our needs, and we

endeavor to find and maintain stable relationships with others, in which they will meet

our needs.

At the level of Self Expression, our interest is in taking charge of the means of

gratifying our needs. As adolescents and young adults we rebel against those who seek

to control us, or keep us in the dependence of the Security level. We compete with

others to be the strongest or wealthiest (Power), the cleverest or most skilled (Achievement) or the most attractive (Affiliation). We take satisfaction from recognition of our qualities in these areas, from seeing ourselves as exemplifying high levels of personal development. We seek to increase our skills, our artistry, our creativity and our level of functioning in whichever of the domains we are operating.

At the level of Transcendence, we take pleasure in giving, creating, and behaving according to the highest values of a given domain. We obtain intrinsic satisfactions from "right action," regardless of the fruits of the action. We operate from a state of consciousness that is seen in the world's great ethical and spiritual systems as a very high level of being and doing in the world. For example, in the domain of Power, a person might take satisfaction in securing justice for others, in protecting the weak from exploitation and harm, and in exercising power as for the highest good of the whole (stewardship). In the domain of Achievement, the person obtains intrinsic satisfaction from learning, from craftsmanship, and from creating, regardless of whether anyone else sees or values one's achievement. In the domain of Affiliation, one enjoys giving love and nurturing others, whether or not the affection is returned.

Differences within Individuals in Levels of Consciousness

An individual may be at different levels on each of the three pyramids, because the circumstances of life offer varied opportunities for challenge and fulfillment in the different domains. Thus, the Yale students whose interviews provoked my original venture into theory building had lots of opportunities to internalize self concepts of competence and achievement—just to be selected to attend Yale was a recognition of

scholastic attainment. They came from families that valued and rewarded achievement. Their personal Affliliation histories were probably more mixed. For many, love and affection were problematic needs, uncertain of gratification.

I worked on my integrated model for a number of years before I thought I had it right. I was interested in the way individual growth seems to cycle between polar opposites, in this case between separation and connection. At the lowest level, Survival, the individual is isolated and alienated. Then he or she connects to others in a dependent mode, Security. As the egoistic Self Expression needs emerge, the individual differentiates, perhaps rebels, and separates emotionally from those on whom he or she is dependent. Once having freed themselves, people are able to establish connections and relationships on a more equal, mutual basis.

Adapting the Model to Organizations

I first published my model some years after I did the original work (Harrison, 1979). When I began to think about levels of organization culture, I reviewed the earlier work and decided the model would serve my needs well. It seemed to me that organizations I was working with were going through the change from Security to Self Expression, and in those that had made that shift, I could feel longings emerging for renewed connection and cooperation. When I shared my emerging model of levels of organizational consciousness with colleagues and clients, the feedback confirmed my impressions. Here is a description of the model as applied to organizations.

Levels of Organization Consciousness

I think of organizations as providing "fields" for their members' growth and development, whether or not they have been designed to do so. The qualities of the organization's culture determine which of the domains of human motivation will be open for members to obtain satisfactions and to evolve through the levels. Similarly, the qualities of a society's culture channel our energy into those domains where satisfactions and growth are to be found, and put barriers in the way of our growing in other domains. Therefore, in building a model of organization consciousness, I have kept McClelland's three domains, Power, Achievement, and Affiliation, as fields of organizational activity and concern. Because these domains are associated with basic human emotions, they attract our energy and provide issues and dilemmas to be resolved in our organizational lives. Every organization has to provide for the satisfaction of human needs in each of the domains, or for the control and suppression of the motive which it represents.

Form—a New Domain

In adapting the motivation model to organization levels of consciousness, I have added the domain of *Form*, because that is another *field* in which organizations show their levels of consciousness and channel human energy. No theory of organizational consciousness could be complete without dealing with Form as it manifests in organizational structure, systems, procedures, and rules and regulations. How these are designed, and how they are experienced by organization members, are important aspects of the qualities and styles of an organization's culture. When form is narrowly controlling and constraining it constricts the human spirit and it limits growth in

consciousness. When form is created in service to the task *and* the organization

members, then it supports evolution into higher levels of consciousness.

Levels of Conscousness in Organizations

      I have identified five levels of organization consciousness which apply across the

four domains: Survival, Defense, Security, Self Expression, and Transcendent. The

model is shown in Figure 13.3.

  Figure 13.3.   Levels of Organization Consciousness in Four Domains of Organization

Culture

Levels of Organization Consciousness in Four Domains of Organization Culture

Transcendent

Self Expression

Security

Survival

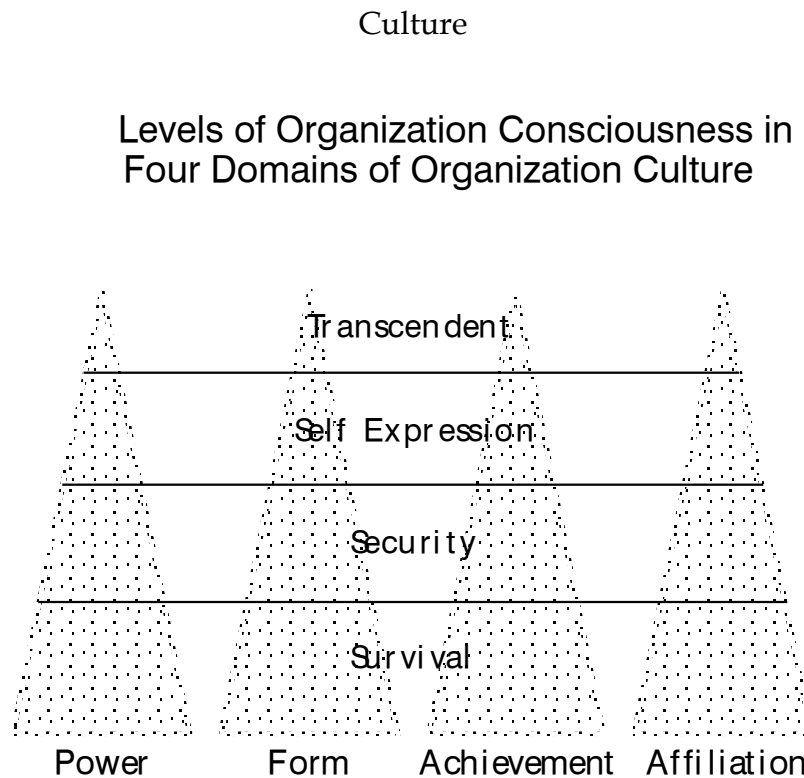Power   Form   Achievement   Affiliation

      Figure 13.4. gives an expanded overview of the levels of consciousness. These

are similar in look and feel to the four levels of individual consciousness in Figure 2.,

with the addition of the level of Defense, which I explain below.

      Figure 13.4.   Five Levels of Consciousness in Organizations

FIVE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ORGANIZATIONS

TRANSCENDENT

A culture of meaning, purpose and love. People join to give rather than to get. Work, contribution and relationships are enjoyed for their own sakes, not for rewards. Thus, people are not easily managed by the application of incentives or punishments. They value diversity.. They operate according to high principles and eithical standards, because it feels right to do so. They see the organization as part of a larger whole, and manage it for the benefit of all stakeholders.

SELF EXPRESSION

The culture is irreverent, self-reliance and individuality. Structures are fluid and open. There are few sanctions for violating rules. There are few supports for individuals. It is "sink or swim." Members compete strongly. Loyalty, common purpose, responsibility, and mutual support are devalued or given lip service. Autonomy, energy, confusion, conflict, and constant change are characteristic. Often there is more learning and creativity than productivity.

SECURITY

The culture is stable and exerts strong control over members. Rewards provided by the organization are reliably available to conforming members. Norms, rules and standards are consistent, known to all and conformed to by most. Sanctions are applied to bring deviants into line. Energy of members is devoted to maintaining the system and doing the work. People act and are treated as though the organization is more important than they are.

DEFENSE

The culture is out of balance and not working. The demands made on members are not compensated by matching satisfactions. Organization members feel deprived or in deficit, as more energy is required for less results. In denial of failure, and in the attempt to prop up the system, leaders exhort or coerce people to do more of what is not working. Although almost all may recognize the need for change, people are too busy keeping their heads above water to find time and energy for learning r

SURVIVAL

The organization struggles to survive and grow, moving from crisis to crisis. Motivation is from hope of success and fear of failure. People accept strong control from the top and will sacrifice for the organization's survival. There are few systems, little planning, many short term "quick fixes". Learning is by trial and error; "organizational memory" is lacking. Typical situations include turnarounds, new plants and business startups.

An organization's culture alternates between the poles of alienation and connection as it evolves through the levels, first differentiating, then integrating what has been differentiated into greater wholes. Figure 13.4. shows how the isolation and fragmentation of the lowest level of integration, Survival, gives way to the ordered, hierarchical patterns of the Security level. These ordered but constraining and rigid

cultures make way, in turn, for openness, personal freedom and expansion of the human spirit at the next higher level of Self Expression. Then at the level of Transcendence, cooperative connections reestablished, but without the rigid, hierarchical, partriarchal forms of Security cultures. I struggled a bit with the name for that higher level. Some of the candidates were: Actualization, Mutuality, Integration, and Alignment. I finally settled on Transcendence as having the fewest misleading connotations!

The Special Case of "Defense"

The level of consciousness I have called Defense is not on the path of progression to higher levels, but describes the "holding on" reaction that can often be seen when an organization is becoming ready to make a transition from the Security level. Many organizations operating at the Security level are experiencing strong internal and external stresses at this time, from rapid changes in markets, competition, technology, work force characteristics, and the environment. The Security culture does not deal effectively with rapid change, because of the barriers to communication and cooperative problem solving that are built into rigid, bureaucratic systems. Nor does the Security culture get the best out of its people's skill, will and spirit, because it tends to honor these qualities only in people at higher levels of the organization.

With vision and wisdom, the leaders of a Security organization under stress may prepare it to move to the level of Self Expression, loosening controls, empowering individuals, flattening organization structures, and so on. It often happens, however, that the leaders, and indeed the whole organization, deals with stress in the time-

honored way of denial and defense: doing harder, faster, and with great determination the things that aren't working. That quality of redoubling the effort to hold onto outmoded forms, systems and values defines the level of consciousness I have named Defense. I describe how the Defense orientation manifests in each of the four domains in the figures and the discussion below.

<center>**Power and Levels of Consciousness**</center>

In Figure 13.5. I show how the five levels of organization consciousness manifest in the domain of Power. I have given each of the levels a name and description that show how power is used and experienced at each of the levels of organization consciousness.

<center>Figure 13.5.   Five Levels of Power</center>

FIVE LEVELS OF POWER

TRANSCENDENT

Stewardship
Justice and principled action are the norm. Leaders are servants and stewards, chosen for wisdom and statecraft.   They influence through respect and loyalty, exercising power for the good of the whole. They are mentors to subordinates, giving responsibility commensurate with readiness.

SELF EXPRESSION

Political
Political sophistication is needed to get ahead. Leaders tend to be self oriented careerists. People enjoy power, playing power games for fun. They are adept at "wheeling and dealing, " forming and maintaining alliances, and "empire building."

SECURITY

Authoritarian
There is a stable hierarchy and "pecking order. People serve the leaders in return for rewards, favors and protection. Leaders are directive, demanding compliance and punishing errors and failures . They are generous and indulgent with loyal followers.

DEFENSE

Tyrannical
Domineering, threatening leaders exploit weakness, influence through fear, manipulate information to maintain power. Power is exercised for personal gain, arbitrarily and capriciously. Political infighting is ruthless, and to the death..

SURVIVAL

Organizational Jungle
Power is fragmented. There is constant jockeying for position. Each is out for him or herself, "and the devil take the hindmost." Alliances are shifting and unstable, built on immediate advantage.

At this time, many organizations are moving from the Security/Authoritarian uses of power to the Self Expression/Political configuration. In organizations where power is an important domain, this transition means that one can no longer count on "pleasing the boss" for safety and steady advancement. Those eager to get ahead must learn to form coalitions, trade favors and information, and become sensitive to the poltical consequences of what they say and do. Not all organizations operating at the level of Self Expression are highly political, however. In others, much of the energy is invested in the Achievement domain, and the relevant behaviors are very different, having to do with being recognized for creativity and competence (see Figure 13.7.).
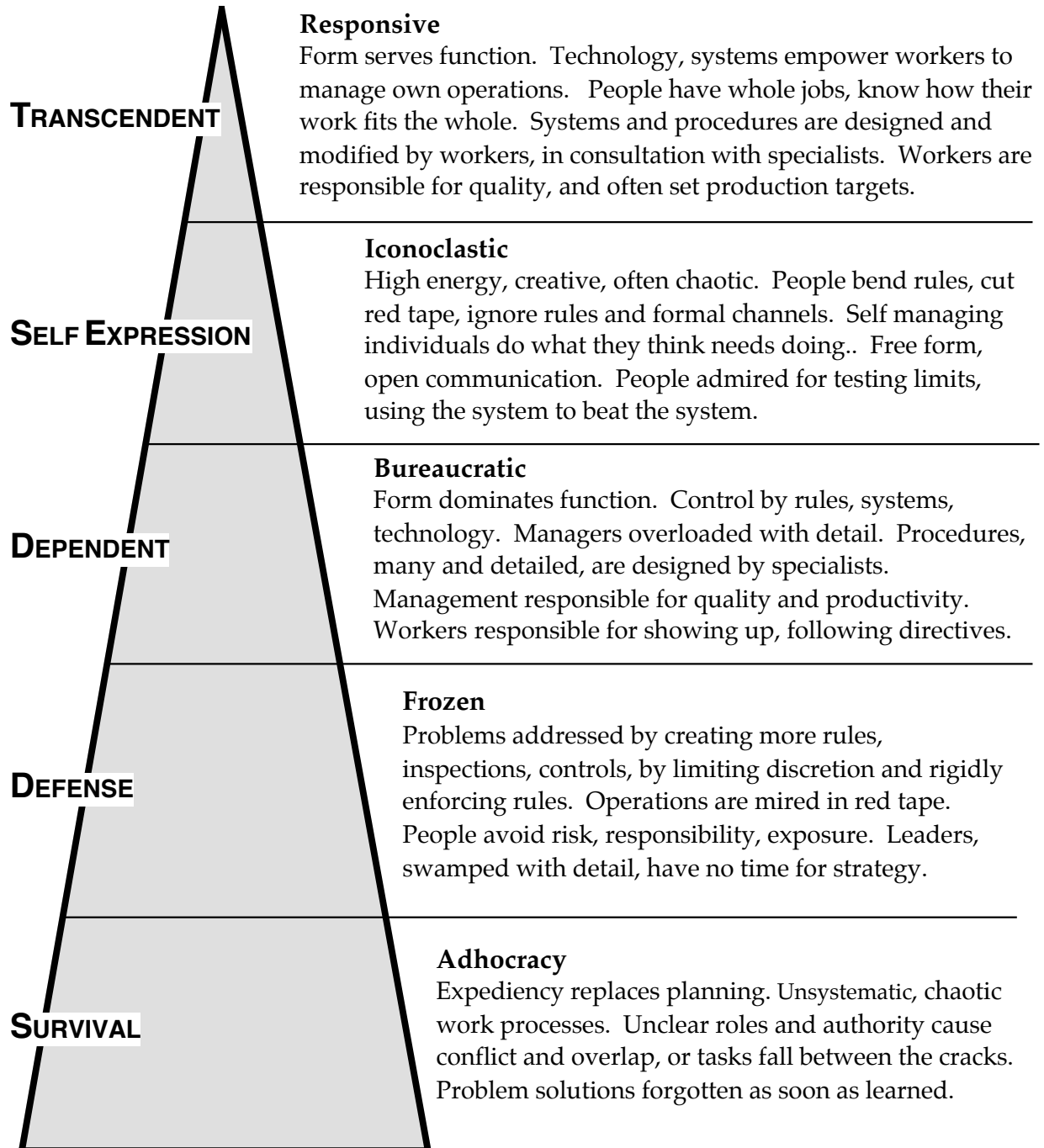
Form and Levels of Consciousness

The domain of Form has to do with structures, systems, and other impersonal means of channeling human energy and controlling behavior. I can make a case for considering it an aspect of the domain of Power, because it is about control. It also overlaps, however, with the Achievement Domain, in that we invent and use structures and systems in organizations in order to solve problems in producing goods and services. Note, for example, the close correspondence between my descriptions of the way the Survival level of consciousness manifests in the Achievement and Form domains.

The ways the levels of consciousness manifest in the domain of Form are shown in Figure 13.6. below.

Figure 13.6.   Five Levels of Form

FIVE LEVELS OF FORM

TRANSCENDENT

Responsive
Form serves function. Technology, systems empower workers to manage own operations.   People have whole jobs, know how their work fits the whole. Systems and procedures are designed and modified by workers, in consultation with specialists. Workers are responsible for quality, and often set production targets.

SELF EXPRESSION

Iconoclastic
High energy, creative, often chaotic. People bend rules, cut red tape, ignore rules and formal channels. Self managing individuals do what they think needs doing.. Free form, open communication. People admired for testing limits, using the system to beat the system.

DEPENDENT

Bureaucratic
Form dominates function. Control by rules, systems, technology. Managers overloaded with detail. Procedures, many and detailed, are designed by specialists. Management responsible for quality and productivity. Workers responsible for showing up, following directives.

DEFENSE

Frozen
Problems addressed by creating more rules, inspections, controls, by limiting discretion and rigidly enforcing rules. Operations are mired in red tape. People avoid risk, responsibility, exposure. Leaders, swamped with detail, have no time for strategy.

SURVIVAL

Adhocracy
Expediency replaces planning. Unsystematic, chaotic work processes. Unclear roles and authority cause conflict and overlap, or tasks fall between the cracks. Problem solutions forgotten as soon as learned.

There are hopeful signs in some organizations of a movement towards the level of Form I have called Responsive. An example is the empowerment of operators through information technology which is being used to give them finer control over their work, instead of using the technology to exert tighter control over the operators. Sociotechnical work redesign, where operators work with engineers and managers to improve production systems is another development that moves Form into this higher level. The same is true of programs where workers are educated and empowered to identify and quality issues. Unfortunately, many quality programs are little more than training in quality methods, and there is little or no change in level of consciousness. The provision of information alone is unlikely to affect much of a shift in level.

Other organizations, faced with competition and the need for increased productivity and quality, go in the other direction, moving into Defense. The leaders assume that what is wrong with quality and productivity is insufficient control of worker behavior, so they institute systems that provide closer surveillance and tighter control, or they replace workers with computers and machinery. While there may be some short term improvement, their assumptions about the causes are often wrong. Most people in our society are at a level of personal development where autonomy and respect are quite important. Distrust and tight controls are demotivating. When this is the case, the management action results in having more of what isn't working in the first place, and the eventual results can be disappointing. We see this in organizations where repeated reductions in the workforce have created a climate of mistrust, anger and sense of betrayal that sucks energy away from the work and into negative channels.
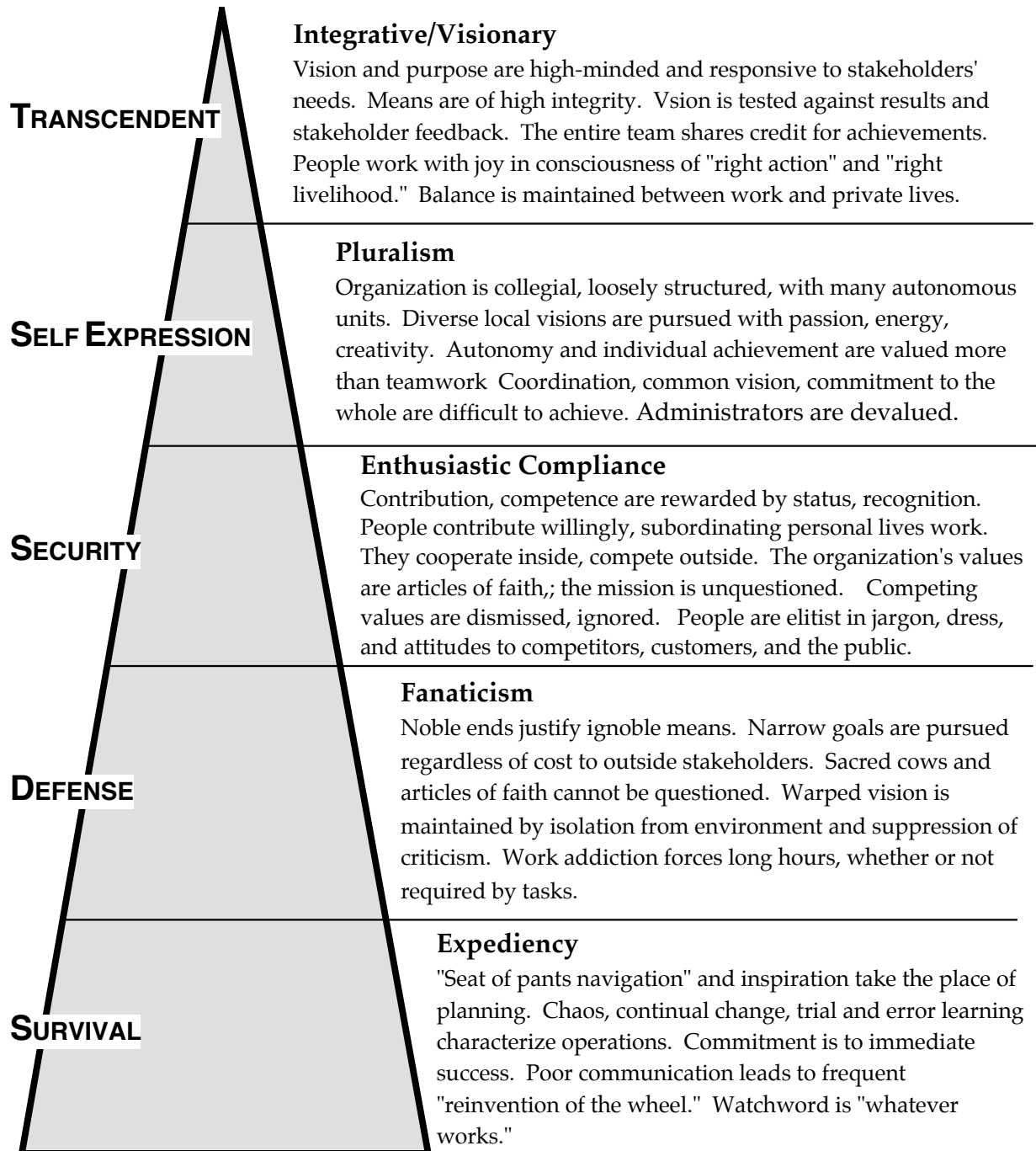
Achievement and Levels of Consciousness

The domain of Achievement is about work, productivity, quality and creativity. It relates to the domain of Form, in that Form provides the structures and the context for work. We can think of the domain of Form as "social architecture." When we design systems and organization structures we are creating the walls, rooms and corridors which channel activity, information and energy. Then the domain of Achievement has to do with how people work, lead and manage in those structures, and the spirit which they infuse into their work. Figure 13.7. shows how the five levels of consciousness manifest in the domain of Achievement.

Figure 13.7.   Five Levels of Achievement

FIVE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

TRANSCENDENT

Integrative/Visionary
Vision and purpose are high-minded and responsive to stakeholders' needs. Means are of high integrity. Vsion is tested against results and stakeholder feedback. The entire team shares credit for achievements. People work with joy in consciousness of "right action" and "right livelihood." Balance is maintained between work and private lives.

SELF EXPRESSION

Pluralism
Organization is collegial, loosely structured, with many autonomous units. Diverse local visions are pursued with passion, energy, creativity. Autonomy and individual achievement are valued more than teamwork Coordination, common vision, commitment to the whole are difficult to achieve. Administrators are devalued.

SECURITY

Enthusiastic Compliance
Contribution, competence are rewarded by status, recognition. People contribute willingly, subordinating personal lives work. They cooperate inside, compete outside. The organization's values are articles of faith,; the mission is unquestioned. Competing values are dismissed, ignored. People are elitist in jargon, dress, and attitudes to competitors, customers, and the public.

DEFENSE

Fanaticism
Noble ends justify ignoble means. Narrow goals are pursued regardless of cost to outside stakeholders. Sacred cows and articles of faith cannot be questioned. Warped vision is maintained by isolation from environment and suppression of criticism. Work addiction forces long hours, whether or not required by tasks.

SURVIVAL

Expediency
"Seat of pants navigation" and inspiration take the place of planning. Chaos, continual change, trial and error learning characterize operations. Commitment is to immediate success. Poor communication leads to frequent "reinvention of the wheel." Watchword is "whatever works."

The Achievement motive is manifested in organizations in the different levels of consciousness, with Expediency at the lowest level, typical of startups, some new product introductions, business turnarounds and other rapidly changing situations. In my work with high technology companies and R & D organizations, I have found a number of rapidly changing organizations that remain in a chronic state of Expediency, kept there by their inability to progress beyond the level of Adhocracy in the Form domain. Without systems and structures that work, it is hard to move beyond this lower level.

To my eye, the organizations characterized by such writers as Tom Peters as having "a passion for excellence" (Peters and Austin, 1985) often have cultures that are a mixture of Enthusiastic Compliance and Fanaticism. There is often a strong addictive quality to such organizations, which has been well described by Schaef and Fassel in *The Addictive Organization* (Schaef and Fassel, 1988). They are places where people can find in overwork and continual crises some solace for loneliness, unsatisfactory relationships, and spiritual emptiness. These states are characteristic of the darker side of life at the level of Self Expression. Unfortunately, members of such organizations spend so much of their time and energy in work that it is often impossible for them to address the sources of their dispiritedness directly and effectively. Their addiction to work sets up a circular process from which there seems to be no escape, and the organization supports and rewards their workaholism.

I do not believe that we in the profession of Organization Development have yet found anything approaching an effective way of addressing addiction in organizations,

partly because we are seldom asked to address it. On the contrary, our more addicted clients go to considerable trouble to throw us off the scent. I wish I could propose something helpful in regard to this issue. Probably an organizational version of the Twelve Step Program developed by Alcoholics Anonymous is a way to begin, but how to get an organization to enter and stay in treatment currently has me stumped!

The description of the Collegial organization above describes how the level of Self Expression manifests in the domain of Achievement. Readers will recognize many technical, scientific and professional organizations in this description, including medical and legal practices, universities, and some quite large research and development organizations.

I have experienced one or two organizations at the highest level in this domain, the one I call Integrative/Visionary. One was the Procter & Gamble plant at Lima, Ohio, which I visited in the mid eighties. It was a culture which seemed to me to operate at a very high level of consciousness in all the domains. It is characteristic of the highest levels of consciousness that the domains blend together. It is hard to maintain high consciousness in one domain and to be at a much lower level in the others. Consequently, the domains blend together quite a lot in organizations that are operating at the level of consciousness I call Transendent, and that was the case in this plant. There was an almost palpable feeling of love in the plant, and at the same time there was a very high energy for quality and productivity. People in teams competed for production and quality records, but they were very supportive and caring as well. Shop floor level workers had designed and implemented major innovations in the

systems and the equipment they used, resulting in such great savings to the company

that the innovations were closely guarded secrets. The teams managed themselves, and

the plant manager saw himself as a facilitator, a coordinator, sometimes a mediator, and

often a liason person and advocate with higher staff and management in Cincinnati.

There were humorous stories told about how managers transferred in from other parts

of Procter & Gamble would sometimes try to overuse their power to direct and control.

The point of the stories is that they were always foiled, and either learned to work in a

more collaborative way with workers or had to transfer to another plant.

Support and Levels of Consciousness

Figure 13.8. shows how the levels of consciousness manifest in the domain of

Affiliation, which deals with the qualities of relationships.   As before, the Survival box,

Alienation, refers to a culture of separation, in which people are blocked or unclear how

to meet their relationship needs. For example, in new or chaotic organizations, the lack

of accepted social norms, stable groups, and networks is a barrier to connecting and

belonging.

We then jump past the Dysfunctional box to the level of Security. I have called

this box Comfortable, because it represents a stable social system in which issues of

membership, inclusion and exclusion, and affection are well defined and understood,

and in which most of the members are able to meet their needs by conforming to social

norms.

Again, when something disturbs or breaks up the established patterns of

relationship, the culture can evolve to the Self Expression level, or go into Defense, the

box I have labelled Dysfunctional. When a culture defends its established patterns in

the Affiliation domain, people put a lot of energy into maintaining their threatened

patterns, rather than learning new ways of meeting their needs. This usually takes the

form of tighter social groupings, tougher sanctions against nonconforming members,

and stronger barriers against entry by outsiders. The groups "dig in" and "hunker

down."

Figure 13.8.   Five Levels of Affiliation

FIVE LEVELS OF AFFILIATION

TRANSCENDENT

Mutuality
Keynotes are giving affection freely (not giving to get); appreciating diversity; inclusivity; and cooperation. Interdependence and part/whole relationships are understood; inner/outer connections are nurtured. Process sophistication and climate of support permit working through of sensitive issues (e.g., performance, value differences).

SELF EXPRESSION

Narcissistic
Image is valued above substance. Diversity and flouting of social norms admired and emulated. Transient, competitive, manipulative relationships are common. Enhanced ego is major relationship goal. Pairs and in-groups isolate themselves from the whole, in "mutual admiration societies."

SECURITY

Comfortable
Conformity to group norms is price of belonging. Conflict is avoided to preserve relationships. Harmony may interfere with task performance. People are treated equally when their competence is unequal. The organization is often run by an "old boy network," or its mixed gender equivalent.

DEFENSE

Dysfunctional
Gossip and covert back-biting are prevalent beneath surface harmony. People are preoccupied with relationships and process to the neglect of tasks. Cozy groups and cliques isolate and scapegoat nonconforming members. Outsiders are experienced as an intrusion. Socializing with colleagues is often a condition for acceptance.

SURVIVAL

Alienation
Everyone is a needy taker; there are no givers. Deception and manipulation are used to obtain acceptance, belonging and affection. Relationships are therefore shallow, short term, and exploitative.

The more individualistic and separated relationship culture described in the Narcissistic box is what one would expect from a group of self oriented egoists, people who have been released from the constraints and the dependency of the level of Security. They take charge of their own social lives and rely upon their own attractiveness and social skills to meet relationship needs. They tend to compete with people with whom they are in relationship, which makes for high levels of intensity. They have high expectations for relationships, and when they don't find what they want, they look elsewhere. In California's Silicon Valley, where I live and work, this pattern is fairly common in organization cultures that have strong Self Expression orientations. It is also prevalent in organizations of talented individual contributors and successful professionals. Observe, for example, the national conferences of organizations like the Organization Development Network, or the Association for Training and Development.

In those few organization cultures that fit the criteria for the Mutuality box, people are connected, but relationships tend to be both cooperative and free of compulsion. There is not only a tolerance for diversity and difference, as in the Narcissistic box, but there is a deeper attempt to understand and appreciate people for who they really are, and to find ways of using differences for mutual learning. Relationships are more about giving than receiving, and the culture fosters a higher level of emotional maturity on the part of its members than do the lower levels. Again, I have seen only one or two organizations that seemed to me to meet the criteria for this box. One was a group I worked with in the Peace Corps that inspired one of my early

papers (Harrison and Hopkins, 1967*). Another was the Procter & Gamble plant at Lima, Ohio, referred to above. These organizations combined high task performance with close ties of affection, giving me cause to believe that Achievement and Affiliation can be compatible and mutually supportive. The more common view in business organizations is that the energy that goes into relationships is taken from the task. My observation is that loving, as distinct from seeking love, is energizing. When people can meet their relationship needs in organizations in healthy ways, they have more energy to give to the task, not less. Although we are far from knowing everything there is to know about the social architecture for facilitating the development of Mutuality cultures, what we do know from experiments such as the Lima plant is mostly ignored and violated.

Differences in Energy , Activity, and Level of Consciousness among Domains

In understanding any organization's culture, it is important to identify not only at what levels of consciousness it operates, but also which of the domains carry the most energy, excitement and activity. It is also true that organizations, like people, may operate at different levels in different domains. For example, most business organizations operate at a lower level of consciousness in the domain of Affiliation than they do in the domain of Achievement. There is less energy put into the Affiliation domain, and less opportunity for satisfying one's Affiliation needs at work. There is therefore less opportunity for the organization to move up the levels of consciousness in the Affiliation domain than there is in the Achievement domain, which is so highly valued and nurtured in our Western societies.

Having asked for a good deal of patience from the reader while I have laid out the results of my model building, I now want to show how we can use it as consultants and change managers to diagnose and intervene effectively in real live organizations.

Progression between Levels of Consciousness

A useful feature of this model of levels of consciousness is that it shows us where an organization is heading in its evolution. In my experience there is a "natural" progression in individuals from lower to higher levels of consciousness. Unless blocked, the internal forces of growth will move the individual along the path. I see the same tendencies in organizations. In both organizations and individuals, there is nothing inevitable about such a progression. Most of us are cases of arrested development in one or more domains, and so are most organizations. What is important to know about ourselves, and about our organizations, is that the inherent forces towards growth are there, awaiting release, and it is seldom too late to grow.

Some individuals seem to be born with higher levels of consciousness "wired in," so that they evolve to higher levels more quickly and easily than the rest of us. Some organizations, too, are "born" at higher levels of consciousness, because their founders have the wisdom, vision and values to make them so. Others never leave the lowest level, often because of the stamp placed upon the organization's culture by a founder's consciousness and will.

How Organisms Shift their Levels of Consciousness

Following Gurdjieff (Ouspensky, Incomplete citation), who in turn followed more ancient traditions, I think of an organism as existing at a given state of

consciousness until there is some external shock to the system. The shock is an event or series of events that renders the organism's current way of being and doing untenable or inadequate. Beliefs and value systems are brought into question by the shock; the world becomes unacceptably unpredictable and senseless. The organism's ability to survive and/or thrive is threatened, and its thought and behavior become disorganized and chaotic.

If the external shock is light enough, or of brief duration, the organism, whether individual, group, or organization, will intensify its efforts to force fit the new reality to its old values and beliefs, and it may succeed in doing so. If the shock is too great, the organism may not survive as a viable system. Individuals become ill or go mad; organizations, too, sicken and die. If an organization is well resourced with talented people and finance, it may take a long time to die, living on its stored energy, and growing weaker over time.

If the shock is optimum, the organism will go through a process of disorganization, followed by reorganization at a higher level of consciousness (e.g., greater ability to process complex information). As the "New Science" has discovered, both inorganic and organic systems undergo these processes, (Wheatley, 1993). Like so much of the wisdom of the ancients, the idea is np longer esoteric, but is becoming generally accepted at the leading edge of scientific thought as "the way things work."

What Can We Do to Help?

If we know that it is "natural" for organizations to move to higher levels of consciousness, and we know the qualities of the next level, then it becomes easier to

help the transition along. We identify those forces that are moving in the direction of the natural progression. We work to strengthen them, and to remove barriers in their path. We don't always have to invent forms and solutions. Rather, we can trust the self organizing properties of the organism to find forms, systems and processes appropriate to the new demands that are placed upon it.

What this self generated process of healing (moving towards wholeness) most needs in order to progress is a loosening of constraints to communication and action. We can aid the communication by bringing the parts of an organization together in a atmosphere which is supportive of open communication about what people are seeing, feeling, and doing. In the same vein, self organization is blocked and hindered by anything which restricts the free flow of information and energy in the organization, keeping the parts isolated and ignorant of what is happening in the whole.

The Normal Path of Evolution

Organizations tend to progress through the levels in this order: Survival, Security, Self Expression, Transcendent. In normal progression, the Survival stage separates the strong from the weak. The strong become the leaders if the organization survives, and they set the norms and the cultural tone of the organization as it moves into the more stable and, for most, more satisfying Security phase. In the Security phase, the organization develops and maintains a cultural system in which people are inducted into their parts when they enter the organization. Their relationships are *given* to them by the organization when they enter it. The focus is on the *part*s the individuals play, not on the individuals themselves.

Normally, an organization will be propelled into moving from the Survival phase into the Security mode by the successful problem-solving activities of organization members, and by growth in size. As organizations grow, they must learn to process information more efficiently, create forms of "organization memory," coordinate effort between people who may never see one another face to face. The shocks that propel Survival organizations into movement often have to do with the breakdown of their inadequate structures and systems under the pressures of rapid growth. To make the shift from "hands on" control by a strong leader or dominant coalition requires that those leaders give up personal control in favor of more efficient and impersonal systems and procedures, and a structure of delegated authority.

The Current Movement from Security

In many organizations today, there are strong internal and external pressures to move out of the level of Security, because of the mediocre results in quality, productivity and innovation that are characteristic of traditional organization cultures. Under the pressures to evolve, organizations are leaving the comfortable and well known level of Security, but as I have pointed out above, they are not all moving to higher levels of consciousness. Some move down the evolutionary scale to Defense.

In those that are making the upward shift there is a loosening of coercive controls, an increase in empowerment of the individual, greater levels of autonomy and personal responsibility. In organizations which are subject to the same pressures, but which are resisting or unable to make the shift, there are signs of Defense: tighter controls; closer supervision; and pressures to conform to ever more demanding

organizational norms regarding level of effort, hours at work, adherence to standards, etc.

The Potential Movement from Self Expression

At the level of Self Expression, the focus is once more on the individual, and not so strongly on the collective. The organization provides opportunities for personal success, learning and growth, but the risks of personal failure are much higher than at the level of Security. The organization is looser, more fragmented, and there is more space for individuals to "do their own thing."

One challenge of the Self Expression organization is to evolve ways to coordinate and cooperate which serve the individuals and the work, rather than disempowering and inappropriately constraining their use of their skills, intelligence and creativity. Another challenge to to overcome the isolation, burnout, and addiction to work which seem to be endemic to Self Expression organizations. Both these challenges require reconnecting people in forms and systems that are more collegial and cooperative than the bureaucratic and controlling structures of the Security level. Task forces, project teams, matrix organizations, are all ways that have been used to meet these challenges. Organization development interventions such as Dialogue and Future Search (Weisbord, 1993) also serve the need to create cooperative and noncoercive connections among peers. The connections so created not only improve information processing and planning in the organization; they also nurture the development of bonds of caring and support. Thus they favor movement towards Transcendence in an organization's culture, both in the domain of Achievement and in that of Affiliation.

I have not studied examples of transition from Self Expression to the Transcendent stage. It is clear to me, however, that many organizations which have stable Self Expression cultures are struggling with issues of coodination and alienation, and that some are experimenting in directions that should lead them towards the constellation of qualities I have called Transcendence.

Using the Model in Planning Change Strategy:

The levels of consciousness model can be used for differential diagnosis and intervention in organization change. A complete treatment of change strategy is the subject of my book, *Humanizing Change: Matching Interventions to Organizational Realities*(Harrison, Cooper, and Dawes, 1991), and will not be attempted here. However, some signposts can be erected to illustrate the utility of the model in planning and managing change.

Let us begin by being clear that organizations do not usually enter into change processes primarily in order to change their cultures. If they do, they are making a mistake, because their target of change is the most elusive, least concrete and most difficult to manipulate of the organization's attributes. Calling a change effort a "culture change program" invites people to spend a lot of time sitting around talking about how they are going to change the culture, when they could be figuring out how to do their work better or smarter. It plays into the hands of those people who want to appear to be changing without really doing anything.

Organizations generally undertake conscious change because someone wants them to perform better. Then, when people begin to identify the things the

organization would have to do to improve its performance, culture appears as a limit or barrier to doing them. To take one simple example, improving product quality seems to require a high degree of employee participation. In Power oriented cultures, people are reluctant to speak up to the boss and take initiatives to change the way things are done. Their willingness to withhold their participation is often greater than the boss's commitment to the quality program. This becomes a serious cultural barrier to the success of the program.

My approach to using the culture model in a change program has two aspects: organization diagnosis, and intervention strategy and tactics. The first strategic question to be addressed is to define the desired changes in as concrete terms as possible. What are the variances (areas where results are not acceptable) and weaknesses which are to be overcome? What competencies must the organization acquire (what must it *learn, know and be able to do*) in order to eliminate these variances? Many organizations have instituted change in order to solve some problem, only to find that the solution weakened the organization in unanticipated ways. It is as important to specify the strengths to be preserved as it is to identify the weaknesses.

The next task is to identify the nature and extent of change in the culture which is required in order to support the acquisition of the required competencies. In doing this, it is helpful to think of the organization as a living organism, and to remember that the more you ask it to change, the less energy it will have available for daily work. It behooves us to intervene no more than is required to obtain the desired competencies. By the same token, when we intervene strongly in an organization, the organization

members not only have to deal with their work problems, they have to deal with the intervention. If the intervention has been imposed on them, it will usually be experienced as an alien force, rather than the aid and improvement it is supposed to be. We can best aid transition to a higher level of consciousness when we empower and support organization members to become aware of how what they are doing affects the whole, and then helping them to diagnose and solve their own problems, rather than imposing a solution to a problem they may not experience themselves having. Of course, that homily has been given over and over again since the earliest days of our profession. It bears repeating because it is true. It continually needs repeating, because it is so much harder to facilitate people's planning and problem solving than it is to plan and solve problems for them!

Culture Shift: The Deepest Level of Intervention

Long ago I wrote about the importance of intervening no more deeply in an organization than is required to achieve the desired results (Harrison, 1970*). What I wrote then is especially applicable to making decisions about "culture change." By "depth of intervention," I mean the degree to which the change impacts deeply held attitudes and preferences of organization members about who they are, the values they hold, and the ways they prefer to relate to one another. For example, groups to which I expose my model often express a need to move from a Power or Role culture towards Achievement, or from the level of Security or Defense towards Self Expression. These interventions demand substantial changes in organizational and personal identity, and in operating values. They not only require a shift of level of consciousness, but they

also change the amount of energy and activity invested in each domain (Power, Form, Achievement, Affiliation). Such changes are difficult to achieve, requiring long periods of time and creating considerable turmoil and stress within the organization. When people talk about "culture change," they usually mean a shift of this magnitude, one which requires people to give up deeply imbedded beliefs, values and behaviors.

Strengthening the Current Organization Culture

There are some ways of working with organization cultures which require less thoroughgoing change, and are thus easier on the organization and its members. One way is to strengthen the current culture, raising it to the highest level of functioning that is possible within its most cherished values and beliefs. Most organizations that are looking to change are not at the highest level of functioning that can be obtained within their current basic cultural assumptions. For example, the leaders may use power in ways that serve their own personal needs and wishes, but weaken the organization. Or the systems, procedures and structures may be poorly designed, so that they hinder, rather than serving the task. Strengthening a culture means bringing it to the top of its capability, without changing its fundamental values and beliefs.

Usually, when people get excited about culture change, they want to overturn some established values and beliefs that are cherished in powerful parts of the organization. I would be the last to say that the values and beliefs of most business organizations are ideal as they are. However, I am greatly opposed to undertaking adventures with deeply held values and beliefs which we cannot bring home with success. Often the organizations that are targeted for culture change prove the most

resistant to change, having put off needed changes for too long already. If we work *with* their energy and *within* their belief systems at first, then they will experience the change process positively, and they will be ready for bigger leaps later on.

We shall of course use our intuition and judgment to determine what kinds of changes will best make use of the ways the energy of the organization is currently invested. The levels of consciousness model tells us where to look. We shall want to move the level of consciousness higher within a domain in which the organization is highly invested, rather than shifting between domains. The most difficult is a double shift, moving up a level and across domains at the same time, yet that is just what some business leaders are asking for from their consultants and their organizations.

Strengthening a Power oriented Culture

My observation is that when organizations have most of their energy invested in the domain of Power, they are more comfortable with changes in the way power is used than they are in moving to a major focus on another domain altogether. People can discriminate good power from bad, and they can tell the difference between power used for self oriented purposes and power which is exercised in service to the organization. The first step in moving a Power oriented organization to a higher level of consciousness, then, is to shift its use of power. We don't try to shift its focus to the domain of Affiliation or Achievement, though we might try to get some work going to transfer energy from the processes of personal control to control by systems and structures.

In a Power oriented organization, strengthening the culture means moving from the capricious and arbitrary use of power on the part of the leaders, towards a management style in which expectations are clearly stated, and people know what will be the consequences to them of complying or not. The ideal Power oriented leader at the Security level is firm but fair, and generous towards loyal subordinates. However, even predictable injustice and harshness are more stabilizing to the culture than random rewards and punishments. As long as people know what they can and cannot get away with, they can achieve some degree of security.

Power oriented leaders can also strengthen their cultures by decisiveness, and by setting a clear direction when others are fearful and confused. They can use their authority to focus the energy and resources of the organization in those areas which are critical to success, provided they have the competence and wisdom to know what these are.

To further perfect a Power oriented culture requires true wisdom, statesmanship and integrity on the part of the leaders. They set an example of fairness, compassion and personal responsibility. They use their power to insist on the organization's doing what is right. In their personal conduct they are above reproach. Their judgments are tempered with mercy. They act for the good of the organization and not for their own personal gain. They are mentors to their subordinates, fostering their growth with a judicious combination of challenge, discipline and love.

To me, it is more than a little sad how "old fashioned" the above qualities read. They remind me of stories about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln that were

told to me in school, and of some of the great business leaders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The virtual disappearance of these ideas, at least in the USA, seems to me to have left business leadership with too low a moral ceiling for the health of our businesses.

Strengthening a Role Oriented Organization

In a Role oriented organization, strengthening the culture means having well designed and clearly articulated systems which direct and channel members' energies into efficient task performance. It means having rules and procedures that relieve members from having to make the same decisions over and over. It means tracking what works and what doesn't work, and making sure that the organization learns from its experiences.

It means, also, that policies affecting the welfare of organization members are clearly set forth and consistently applied. Again, it is ideal if the policies are fair and just, but it is a step up if there *is* a policy, and everyone knows what it is, and they can count on its being applied.

Complexity and endless elaboration of rules, procedures and policies are hallmarks of an organization in Defense. The best systems are comprehensive, but simple and elegant, where people know how to find out what they don't know, and where the required approval processes are direct and uncomplicated.

Further evolution in Role oriented cultures means subordinating the systems and structures to the needs of the task and the organization members. Participation and empowerment at the working level are the keys to making this transition. We invent

information systems which allow people to track their own results in "real time," rather than the information going to a manager who then controls the workers. We create structures where influence and information travel laterally and diagonally, rather than information going up, and directives coming down. We involve people in creating their own rules, methods and procedures. We design jobs so that people can control the outcomes for which they are held accountable.

Whereas at the level of Security the individual gives up autonomy and submits to control by a system which he or she cannot readily change, at the Transcendent level the systems empower the people doing the work, and the people are empowered to change the systems when they do not work. The Procter & Gamble Lima, Ohio plant referred to above in the discussion of the Transcendent level is typical of this orientation, where the systems serve the workers, rather than the workers serving the machine.

Culture Change—Biting the Bullet

There are situations where organizations have already squeezed all the competitive advantage they can out of their cultural orientation. They are bumping up against the true limits of their current culture. An example comes from two consultants who attended one of my workshops on "Humanizing Change." They were from a tobacco company which had a long tradition of enlightened paternalism. Most of the people in their plant were from families in which multiple generations had worked for the Company. There was a strong family feeling in the organization; people were "good soldiers," doing what they were told with commitment.

In the domain of Form, the equipment was the latest and best, and it was designed to take as much possibility for human error out of the production process. The systems were likewise machine like, and their quality matched the quality of the equipment. Both were the best that could be bought.

Production management in the Company had reluctantly come to the conclusion that a major culture shift was the only way they could accomplish further significant changes in quality and productivity. After listening to the two consultants tell their story, I could only agree.

Although I do not know what eventually became of this change effort, it did meet some of my criteria for undertaking culture change, so I had modest hope for the consultants in their project.

Criteria for Success in Culture Change Projects

There are four criteria, and they all make a difference in the success of an attempt to make a major shift in culture (Harrison, Cooper, and Dawes, 1991). They are stated strictly, and that is intentional. The lack of any one of them can render our efforts ineffectual, or extend the resource drain on the organization intolerably.

Leadership Able and Committed to Operate In the Mode of the New Culture. The leaders have the values and modes of perception typical of the culture to which the organization is supposed to move, and they are able to "walk their talk"—demonstrate by practice and example what the new culture will look and feel like.

A "Critical Mass" of Members with Latent Needs to Operate at the Higher Level. Organization members are ready and able to become more responsible, self managing

and empowered. They are not basically dependent or authoritarian in their personal

makeup. They live personal lives outside work that use the skills and ways of behaving

and perceiving that are typical of the new culture. It is not required that everyone, or

even a majority of the organization's members meet these requirements. It is enough

that there be a significant minority who do, and that the change be managed in such a

way as to link these members, and give them visibility, status and influence.

Organization Slack: Resources that May Be Invested in Learning. Making a change in

organization culture requires that almost everyone in the organization learn to behave,

think and feel in new ways. While people are learning, they will not perform at the

same level as they have in the past. I counsel clients that if they are serious about

making a cultural shift, they must be prepared to suffer a decrement in organizational

performance for a time, or provide additional resources to achieve the same level of

performance. Change may be paid for in the currencies of money, time, people, and

acceptance of substandard work, or, more likely, all four. There is some choice of mode

of payment, but the payment must be made. Needless to say, clients do not want to

hear this.

Optimum Pain: Enough to Make It Uncomfortable to Stay Where the Organization Is,

But Not Enough to Paralyze People's Problem-Solving Capacities. Optimum pain for

change exists when people recognize that significant aspects of the way the

organization operates are not working; they believe that if they knew a better way to

operate they could adopt it successfully; and the organization is able to provide the

resources of time, money, and personnel to invest in making improvements while at the same time continuing to meet current operating demands.

Organizations that are "fat and happy" don't feel the need to change in transformative ways. They are content to make incremental changes that do not threaten established ways of thinking and behaving. The level of pain is suboptimal for change when people generally feel things are working well enough. They perceive the costs of change to outweigh the gains.

When the organization is in continual crisis, and is using all its resources just to meet current operating demands, it is probably in too much pain to undertake substantial change. Since change requires learning, nearly every significant change results in an initial decrement in organization performance while people are "on the learning curve." In such cases, diversion of resources to manage the change process may well reduce the organization's current performance below the level required for survival. The organization can only afford to adopt "quick fix" improvements which require little basic change. It "can't win for losing."

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Loosening Organization Cultures :

The Essence of Moving from Security to Self Expression

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Although *planned* culture change efforts do not yet have a great track record, I believe many if not most business organizations are going to *evolve* towards higher levels of consciousness. They will do this because they need to cope with rapid change, and because global competition requires them to evoke a much greater proportion of

their members' will, skills and creativity. There definitely are things we can do to help them make that shift, and they have to do with the process of loosening rigid cultures.

Much writing in the management literature today is about the need for looser structures and systems: greater local autonomy, fewer rules and regulations, more open communication, etc. These changes give the essential flavor of what it is like to change a culture from Security to Self Expression.

When we move from Security to Self Expression, we loosen the culture's control over its members in whatever domain the shift occurs, making room for greater variability in individual behavior and in the different parts of the organization, and allowing greater flexibility. Such shifts also result in more chaos and confusion, especially at first. Later, the design of more flexible and supportive systems can support the both the task and the people.

Anything that Reduces Fear Helps the Shift Along

Many if not most people in the work force today are able and motivated to operate at the Self Expression level, and they want the satisfactions which such organizations can give. Only the coercion and fear which are used to control behavior at the Security level prevent their moving to a higher level. Thus, anything which reduces the fear and coercion in a Security level organization will tend to propel its level of consciousness upward: supportive and participative management, Employee Involvement programs, loosening the rules and approval processes, giving more local autonomy and budgetary control, etc.

Of course, we all know to our sorrow that it is not that simple. In the first place, Power and Role oriented managers in Security level organizations generally have strong personal motives for keeping the controls in place, and even when they are convinced to experiment with looser management, they do so gingerly, in a tentative way that sends mixed messages to the organization members.

The recipients of those messages have their own reasons for keeping the status quo. In order to take advantage of the looser controls, they have to take personal risks. They have been so long accustomed to narrow boundaries and to coercion, control and mistrust that they are fearful of stepping into the hitherto forbidden territories of autonomy and freedom. They act a bit like the concentration camp inmates after World War II who, when the gates were opened, still huddled inside the camp. The machine gun turrets were deserted, but the fire zones around the camp were still active in their minds. They could not will themselves to step into their fear. They were so terrified of the consequences of acting autonomously that they had forgotten that it had once been satisfying.

I once worked with a young, idealistic Engineering Manager who took over plant maintenance after his dictatorial predecessor retired. He had been on a management course, and he was looking forward to introducing participative management to his maintenance Supervisors. When time for the next scheduled maintenance shutdown approached, he called his Supervisors together and asked them to write down their ideas on improving the process, and to present them at the next meeting. At the next weekly meeting he called for their contributions, but got only bowed heads and

shuffling feet in response. This went on until, with the shutdown fast approaching, he took over and planned it himself. In a later interview he said to me, "My predecessor told me these guys weren't too bright; I guess he was right." In interviews with the Supervisors I heard, "We knew he didn't mean it." Everyone said they wanted the change. No one was willing to pay the cost in risk and fear of failure. I decided the score was, Security Culture—1; Organization Members—0.

Often the only way trust and confidence in the leaders' intentions to open the culture can be established is for courageous managers to create a power vacuum by pushing authority and responsibility downwards. Then they have to hang out there with all of the responsibility and not much control, until their subordinates move in and take hold. It does work, if the leaders can stay the course, accepting the inevitable betrayal of their confidence and trust as part of the price. Most cannot stand the anxiety and stress, and who can blame them? The good news is that it is getting easier, as more young people come into the work force prepared to take autonomy and personal responsibility.

Programmatic Culture Change

What makes programs such as Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management so attractive is that they endeavor to create *structures* which support participation. By giving training in participative techniques (working in groups, collaborative problem solving, etc.) they build confidence and reduce the risk for people at lower levels to take more initiative and responsibility. They certainly seem to have been successful in improving quality and productivity, and the quality of working life.

It seems to me, however, that the organizations where such methods have been tried often resemble cultures at the level of Security more than they exhibit the characteristics of Self Expression. Management stays firmly in charge, running the quality and involvement programs. The organization exchanges a system that doesn't work well for one that works better, but the gains in energy and creativity are incremental, not revolutionary. It seems trite to repeat the aphorism, "no pain, no gain," but it may be accurate; in my experience, people do not obtain their freedom and learn to it responsibly without at least going through an inner struggle, and usually an outer one as well.

The Environment Is a Stimulus to Change:

Loosening up tight cultures at the level of Security is uphill work, because the culture resists, and both the leaders and the people consciously or unconsciously cooperate with the culture. There is, however, a countervailing force which presses some organizations inexorably to at least try to loosen the culture and shift to a higher level. It is that traditional Power and Role oriented organizations at the level of Security do not work very well in fast-moving, highly competitive environments. They take too long to change, and they underuse the intelligence and creativity of workers. So we shall continue to see organizations making the commitment to change and taking the attendant risks, because it is the most viable competitive alternative. For example, see the recent culture changes at Ford Motor Company described by Richard Pascale in *Managing on the Edge* (Pascale, Incomplete citation-b).

Choosing a Style of Intervention to Fit the Culture

The culture model can help us choose an appropriate style of intervention and leadership for a given level of consciousness or pattern of dominant cultural values. Organizations at the level of Survival or Defense need structure, and firm but fair leadership. They need to get out of chaos and into a stable state in order to devote their members' energy to solving long term organizational problems, rather than crises. Consultants can provide helpful systems and structures. It is not uncommon for successful consultants to an organization "turnaround" to be asked to take on management positions.

A corollary of this principle is that Survival and Defense organizations do not respond well to interventions in which issues are aired but not resolved. Issues which cannot be dealt with quickly are best handled in less public ways. The organization already has more problems than it can handle; people, whether leaders or consultants, who surface more issues than solutions will quickly come to be seen as "part of the problem" Harrison, 1981 #13].

The Survival and Defense organizations respond well to consultants and leaders who are doers and problem-solvers and who can provide "quick fixes" for sticky organizational problems. Conversely, those whose contributions are primarily conceptual, or whose orientation is to facilitate the organization in solving its own problems, tend to make members of such organizations feel anxious and helpless, or impatient to the point where the helper's own survival in the system will soon be in question!

Security organizations require that consultants and managers "earn their stripes" by meeting organizational norms. Such issues as manners and dress can count for a lot at the outset of the relationship (especially in Role cultures), as can the ability to pick up and use language and metaphors of the organization (useful in Achievement cultures). This is not to say that competence will not be recognized and appreciated in the end, only that consultants can set up needless barriers for themselves by failure to pay attention to such "superficial" norms.

Much of the work which consultants do in working with Security organizations is in helping the culture to work better, rather than changing it. As an example, many Role oriented organizations run ineffective, time-wasting meetings, and their strategic planning is often more of an extension of past trends into the future than it is real planning. Interventions which offer more efficient ways of performing such tasks can provide a real service, but in order to be effective, they must eventually be installed as standard operating policies. Mere demonstrations of a better way will usually not stick.

In working with organizations at the Security level, one can and usually must use the strengths of the culture to influence it. This means that in Power oriented organizations one works through the boss. In Achievement oriented organizations one uses task forces and offsite problem solving meetings. As a consultant one can get away with interventions which are unfamiliar in the culture, but it means the organization members use a lot of their energy in learning how to play the consultant's games. One cannot easily introduce interventions which violate strongly held organizational norms, or beliefs about what is proper and what works.

Consultants' Difficulties in Working with Security and Defense Cultures

It is common for organization development consultants to be firmly committed to a particular process of change, usually one which is compatible with the control processes of Achievement and Support organizations. In my experience, we need help from those control processes which are accepted and effective in the dominant culture of the organization. Most organizations are mixtures of Power and Role cultures and rely heavily on personal control and the use of systems and rules. I find that when I honor the dominant culture and obtain support for my work through it, I can be more successful later on in introducing interventions which violate the norms and ask members to go outside their accustomed patterns. It is as though we have to bow to the old gods of tradition before we can introduce the new gods of change.

The principle is just common sense, but it bears mentioning. It is another way I use the culture model to sensitize myself to what has to be attended to in the change process. For example, if I am planning an offsite meeting for diagnosing organizational problems in a traditional organization, I know that before I can successfully implement any changes in response to the problems surfaced in the meeting, I have to find the appropriate power persons or the appropriate functional unit to sponsor the follow-on work. It is not enough to "turn people on" and develop lots of enthusiasm for the possibilities for change. I have to hook the change process back into the organization in such a way that it is energized and managed when the great ideas that people had on the offsite have to compete with the daily task of "getting the wash out."

The Problem of Sustained Effort at the Level of Self Expression

In organizations at the level of Self Expression, resistance to change is not the problem that it is at the Security level. People are looser, more autonomous, more ready to experiment with new methods and ideas. Such organizations are often high energy places where people are very committed to their work and have little patience with anything that interferes with it. The problem is to get people's attention in the first place, to get them to set time aside to look at organizational issues. Then, once something has been tried and found successful, it is difficult to get any sustained cooperative effort going to implement change beyond the local area in which it is first tried.

Organizations at the Security level resist change, but there is such an emphasis on control that once a change proves successful in one part of the organization, the tendency is to apply it across the board (whether that makes sense or not). Organizations at the level of Self Expression are much more open to change, but there is so much local autonomy that dissenting members can easily agree to disagree about the value of the change. This organizational looseness means that one usually has to work the same issues over and over again as one works through the different parts of the organization. Consultants working in such organizations easily come to feel frustrated and undervalued. It helps me when I can understand the problem as systemic, rather than as an indication of personal inadequacy.

I know that in working with a Self Expression organization, I shall have a lot of little successes, but the big ones will elude me. For example, I once worked for three or four years with the top management group of a very successful national research and

development laboratory, trying to get the group to agree on common policies for such things as career paths, budgets and overhead charges, and the way the matrix organization should work. This very Achievement oriented organization was receptive to organization development, and frequently used consultants to facilitate team-building and problem-solving meetings at lower levels. The top group, however, successfully resisted all my efforts. Privately, individuals would agree that some of the things I was endeavoring to get their agreement on were desirable; as a group, they were unwilling to force consensus on dissident members.

Such cultures are *metastable.* That is, they can tolerate a lot of changes without changing their fundamental culture much. Universities and colleges are excellent examples of this stability. They tolerate a great deal of individual variation in their members, and they have successfully resisted fundamental systemic change for centuries.

The Centrality of Values in Transcendent Organizations

Organizations at the Transcendent level are much more likely to make decisions on the basis of fundamental values than are those at lower levels. While they are interested in doing things right, or better, their first commitment is to *doing the right thing*, particularly where people are concerned. They are able to manage the tension associated with inaction while they explore alternatives and build consensus, even when it seems to an outsider that action is imperative. I worked once with a Zen church which operated several businesses and was going through a serious leadership and financial crisis that had the organization deeply split into factions. It was a

situation that would have torn most organizations asunder. I marvelled at the capacity

of the leadership group to hold their painful feelings and their anxieties, patiently

exploring the alternatives, and carefully sounding people out on their opinions,

trusting that wisdom and "right action" would eventually emerge from sober

discussion and meditation. It was such a contrast to the "ready, fire, aim" approach

that is typical in the high tech organizations with which I frequently work. I marvelled,

too, at the success of this approach over time, as the organization slowly coalesced

around new leaders and pruned their businesses back to what they could manage, staff,

and sustain financially.

The culture model helps me to make sense of these very different experiences

with organizations. It helps me, too, to size up an organization much more quickly than

I could without it, to tailor my approach to the culture, and to understand and correct

for the inevitable surprises and reverses that I encounter in helping clients to manage

their change processes.