

# Paradigm Shifts as Informed by Ancient Consciousness

Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference

Lane Community College, Eugene Oregon

February 4 & 5, 2016

Milt Markewitz

[miltm@aol.com](mailto:miltm@aol.com)

# Assumptions

- We've institutionalized (incl. education) not being sustainable.
- A change in Western consciousness is required — an ecological integrity that leads to social order and equitable economics.
- Current actions raise consciousness incrementally — they are necessary but not sufficient.
- Our desired state is one of homeostasis — balance and harmony.
- This state is understood and well articulated by many Eastern and Indigenous Peoples who have lived it for 1000s of years.

---

What is it we don't know that we need to know?

# Consciousness Orientation

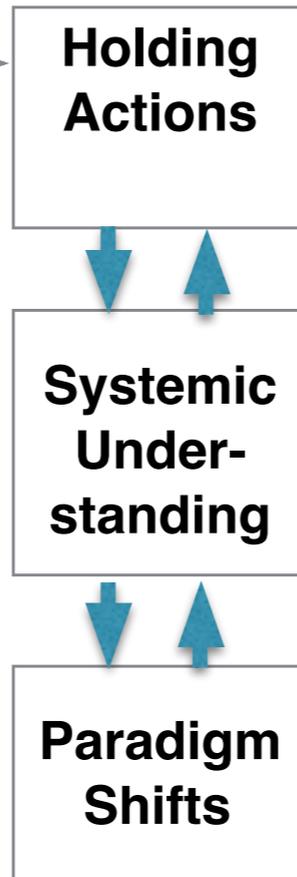
Reductionist

Holistic

Millions of well meaning people reduce, reuse and recycle, garden, conserve energy, engage in social activism, etc. Their incremental change in consciousness is necessary but not sufficient to combat Global Climate Change.

-----  
Systems are perceived as mechanical with fixed structures that lack critical attributes of living systems.  
-----

Note: This chart was inspired in part by Joanna Macy as a framework for articulating more clearly 'Systemic Understanding' and 'Paradigm Shifts'.

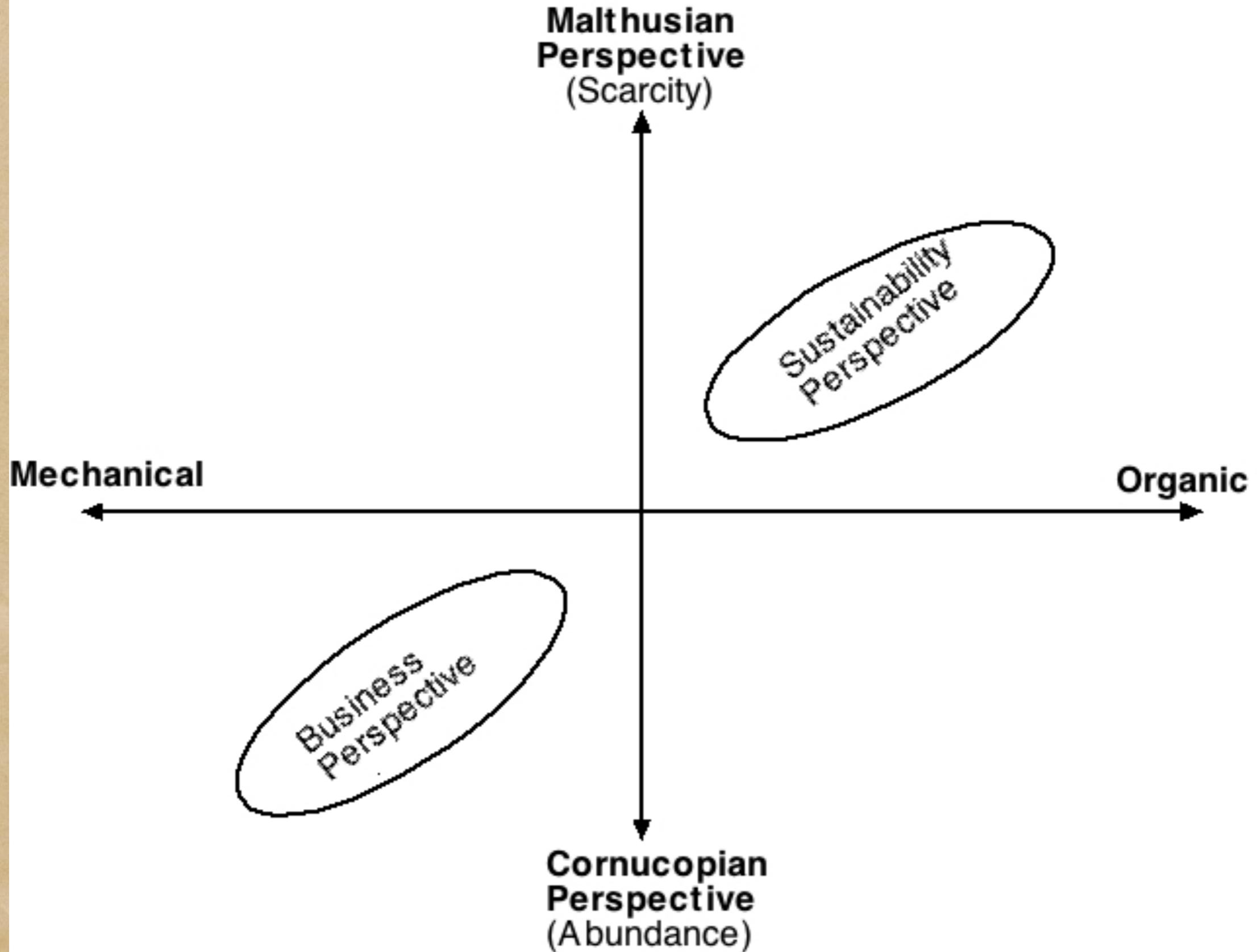


Opposing non-systemic forces, overwhelm systemic activities.

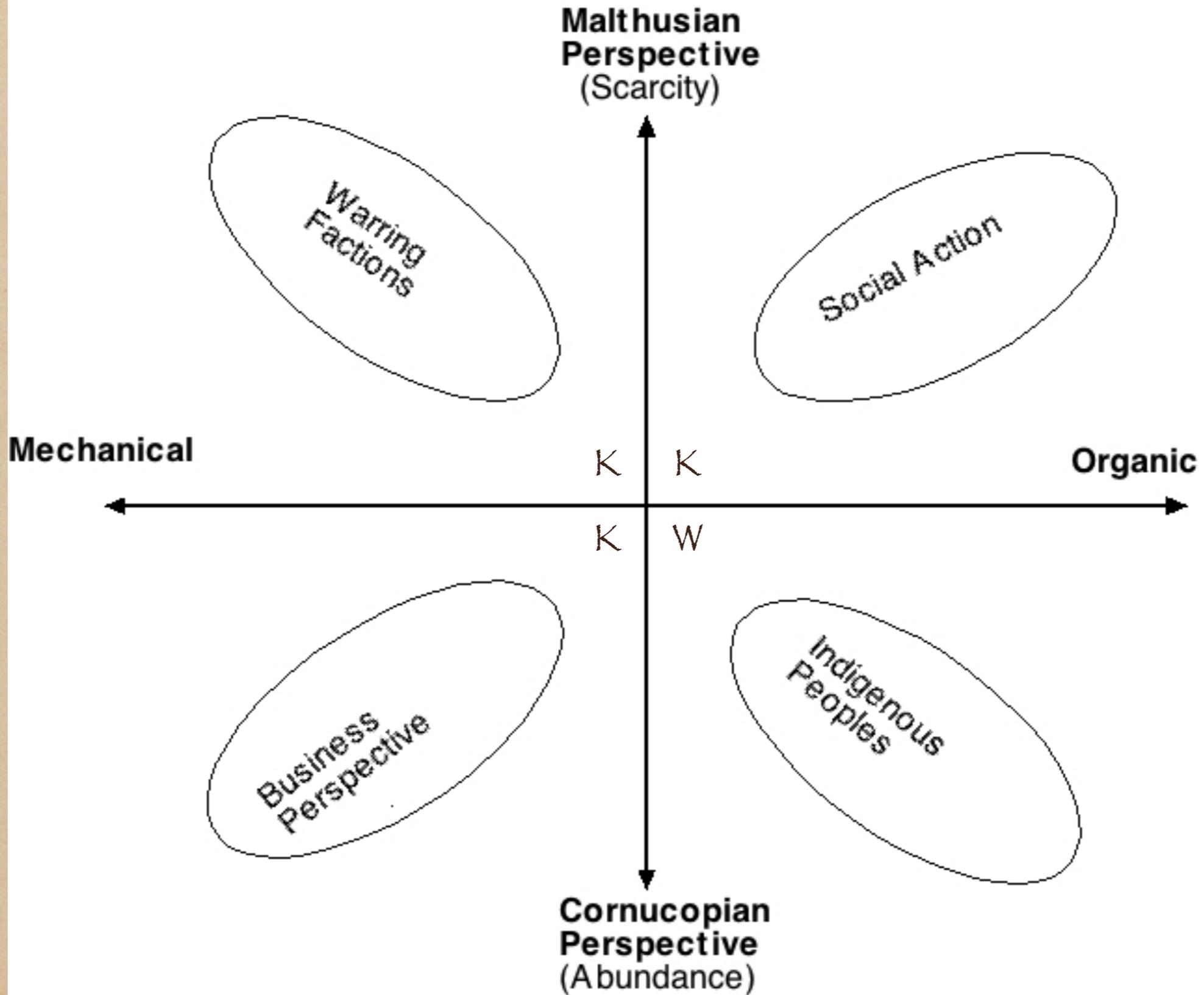
All systems are alive with the capacity to cleanse, heal, and continually restructure in order to adapt and thrive. Movements are in place around the world to preserve water and land rights, inhibit drilling and mining, end nuclear proliferation, ban the use of and stop the flow of toxic substances.

Cultures with a listening to those who have lived for millennia in balance and harmony with the Earth have accepted their leadership and successfully transformed. e.g. Water rights in Bolivia.

**ARCHETYPES FOR SUSTAINABILITY**  
Tom Gladwin's Initial Construct



ARCHETYPES FOR SUSTAINABILITY



# Spiral Dynamics

1 BEIGE	survival; biogenic needs satisfaction; reproduction
2 PURPLE	safety/security; protection from harm; family bonds
3 RED	power/action; asserting self to dominate others; control
4 BLUE	stability/order; obedience to earn later reward; meaning
5 ORANGE	opportunity/success; competing to achieve results; influence
6 GREEN	harmony/love; joining together for mutual growth; awareness
7 YELLOW	independence/self-worth; fitting a living system; knowing
8 TURQUOISE	global community/life force; survival of Earth; consciousness

Extracted from, <http://www.spiraldynamics.org/Graves/colors.htm>

The key to Transforming from the **Green** to **Turquoise** meme

- ◆ Discerning the Earth and all its systems as 'Living Systems'
  - Shifting our Thinking from Mechanical to Organic
  - Shifting our World-View from Perceived Scarcity to Sufficient Abundance.
  - Infusing our Education with Indigenous Wisdom of Life

# Living System Attributes

## Dissipation -- Re-Composing

Everything in Nature is biodegradable so there is zero waste. All living systems gain sustenance from the dissipation of some other form of life.

## Emergence

When suited to its environment, life flourishes. There is mystery with novelty -- how do hydrogen and oxygen create water? Unlike mechanical systems where the energetic whole is always less than the sum of its parts, in living systems it seems to always be greater.

## Reproduction

Each living system has the capacity to reproduce itself so that the integrity of its structure is maintained. A pattern exists between parents and offspring and across species for all time. Yet each offspring is unique.

## Structural Coupling

There is a web of life and we are more than just connected -- we are highly interdependent. We require the trees to breathe, the ozone layer to protect us from radiation. There is a 'bandwidth' of natural phenomena required by each specie in order to exist.

## Organization

With Nature serving as a Mentor and a Model, we learn the importance of clear Purpose and Guiding Principles, how to minimize infrastructure, appreciation of Life Processes, and how to blend apparent opposites. Complex situations are often perceived as chaotic, but are actually quite orderly.

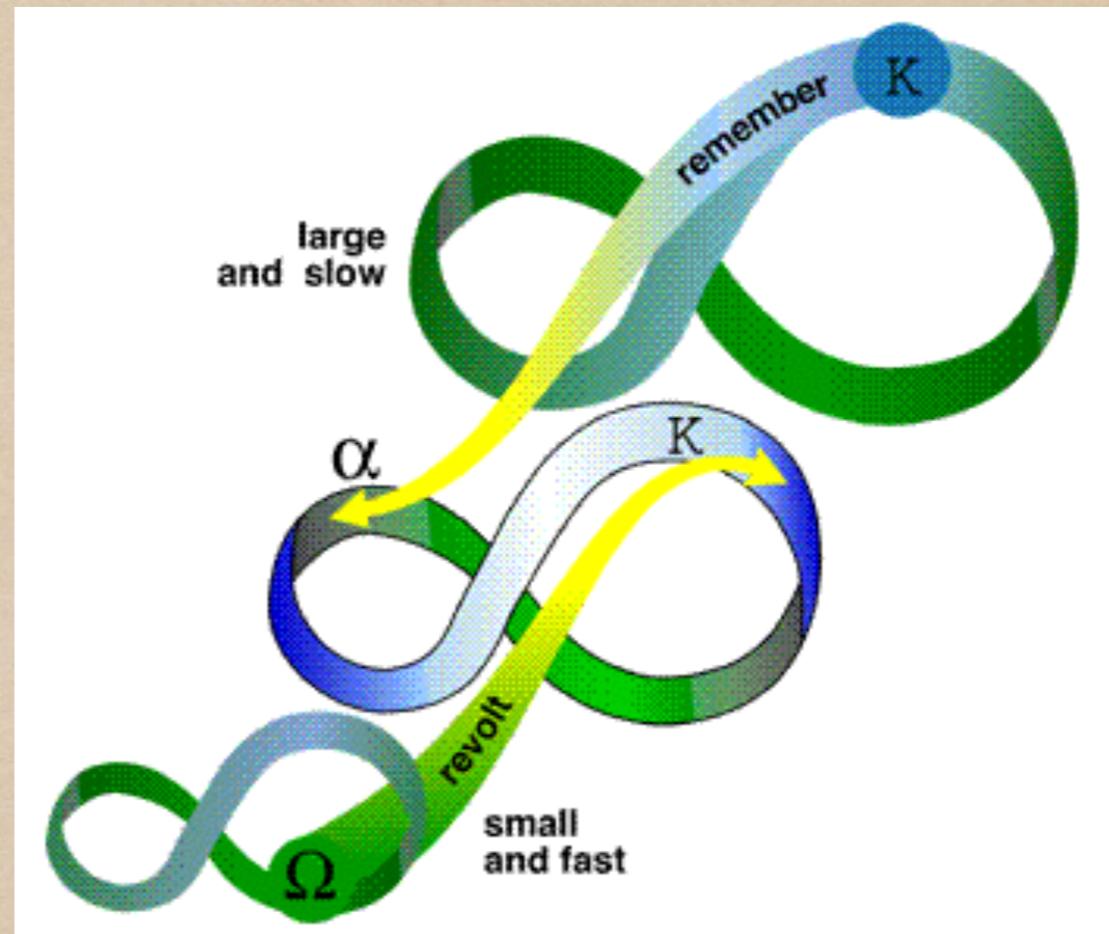
# Living Systems Flow

What gives (and takes) life from the system?

## *Panarchy*

- (Activating Energy/Force)
- Release
- Reorganization
- Exploitation (Lushness)
- Conservation (Over Growth)

A similar drawing is shown and explained in 'Panarchy' by Gunderson & Holling, pg 75



- Scaled from the geological to microscopic
- Applicable to every facet of life

# Mechanical -Living System Comparison

	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Organization</u>
<u>Mechanical</u>	Fixed	Variable
<u>Living</u>	In Constant Flux	Fixed Life Processes

- ◆ Aren't all Systems Alive, many with Mechanical Sub-systems?
- ◆ "In Constant Flux" — Living Systems are self organizing — continuously recreating their own structure (Autopoiesis)
- ◆ "Fixed Life Processes" — My belief is that these are the gifts endowed to all life at Creation. (See 'Life Languages' chart)

# Living Languages

: Adapted from Carlo Suares',  
Cipher of Genesis: The  
Original Code of the Qabala  
as Applied to the Scriptures.

## Ancient Hebrew as a Living Language

Graphic Created by: Milt  
Markewitz — [miltm@aol.com](mailto:miltm@aol.com),  
[www.natureslanguage.com](http://www.natureslanguage.com)

Processes Necessary to Create and Sustain Life?	Life-Death-Life-Contium	Nature's Order & Structure	Organic Life	Birth with Resistance	Universal Life	Fertilization	Possibility	Energy	Attraction: Sensuality & Beauty
<u>Archetypal</u>	א 1	ב 2	ג 3	ד 4	ה 5	ו 6	ז 7	ח 8	ט 9
<u>Existential</u>	י 10	כ 20	ל 30	מ 40	נ 50	ס 60	ע 70	פ 80	צ 90
<u>Cosmological</u>	ק 100	ר 200	ש 300	ת 400	ך 500	ם 600	ן 700	ף 800	ץ 900

- Each of the above columns contains the energy of a Life-Process that is Bestowed to every Living System
- Every Utterance expresses a Life Energy
- Every 'word' is a Story
- Speaking such a language connects both the Speaker and the Listener with an 'Already Knowing'
- Cultures who speak such languages develop an Intuitive Understanding of all that's Necessary to Create & Sustain Life

# Living Systems, the Theory that Underlies Sustainability

- ◆ How Living Systems inform the three Paradigm Shifts
  - Thinking Organically
  - Living lives of Sufficient Abundance
  - Infusing Indigenous Wisdom into Environmental Education

# Thinking Organically

- ◆ Discernment of the Earth (and Universe) as Alive
- ◆ Nature as a Mentor and a Model
  - Blending Apparents Opposites
  - Knowing that Life Thrives on Variety
- ◆ Defining Sustainability
  - Ecological Harmony -- Living within Nature's limits to Renew, Cleanse and Heal
  
  - Social Harmony -- Communities, Local to Global, who are governed by Ethics of Peace, Sufficiency, Sharing, and Supporting the Common Good
- ◆ Decision Making Priorities — Ecological then Social then Economic
- ◆ Relationally Orientated
- ◆ 'Living Languages'
  - Express life energies
  - Action (verb) oriented

# Sufficient Abundance

- ◆ Belief that the Earth always provides
- ◆ Communal capacity for dealing with shortages
- ◆ Accepting responsibility for maintaining balance and harmony
- ◆ Perceiving Generational Consequences
- ◆ Learning from Nature
  - Relational Ways and Structures
  - Valuing Variety
  - Communal Orientation
- ◆ Reverence and Appreciation for Life
- ◆ Ethics for living — Protecting Basic Resources like Air, Water, Soil, & Food Sources
- ◆ Happiness — Contentment & Bliss

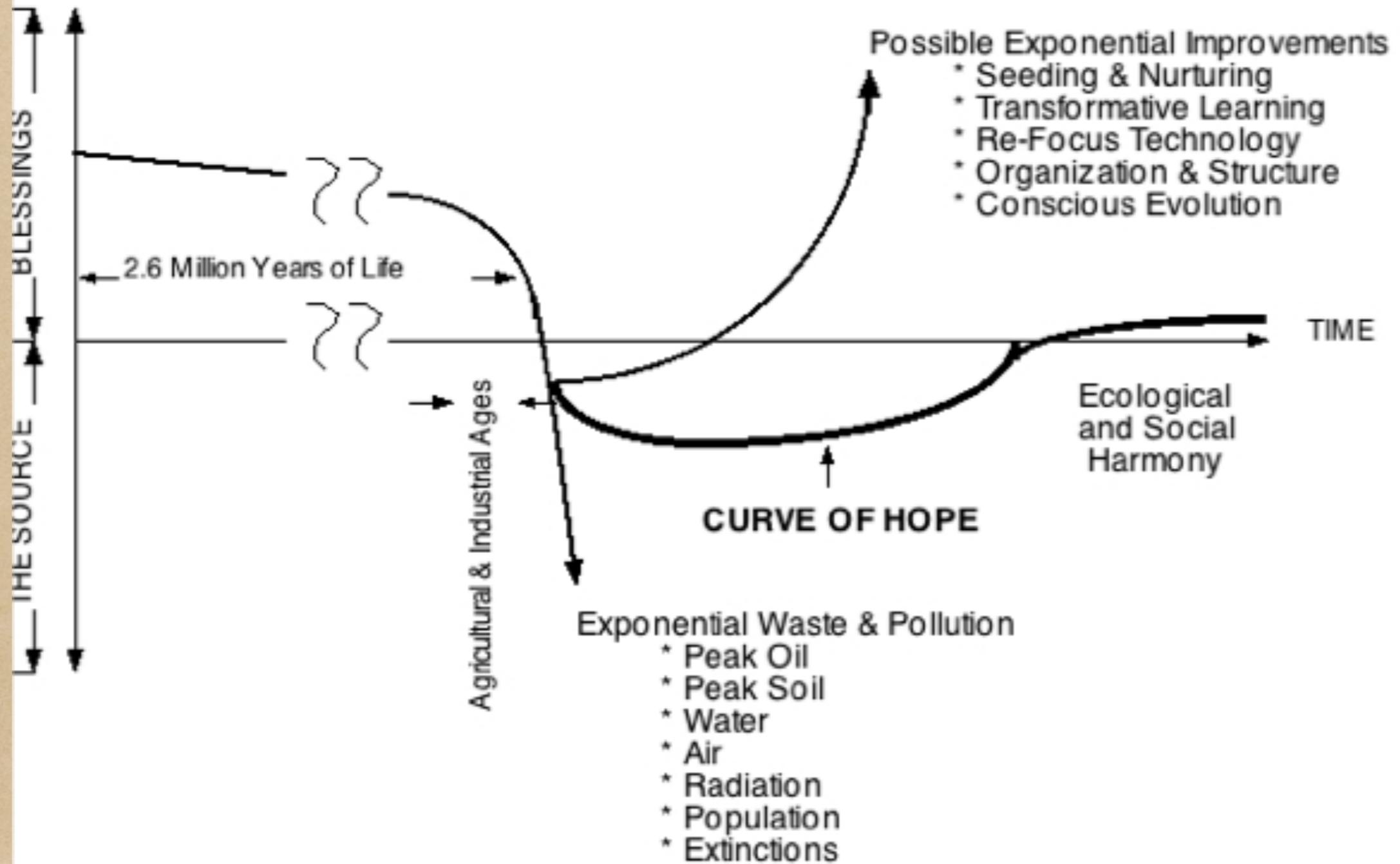
# Infusing Indigenous Wisdom

- ◆ Teaching Living Systems
  - Developmentally Appropriate — Basic attributes & flow to internalizing autopoietic systems
  - Developing 'Systemic Understanding'
  - Connection to the Land and to all Life
  - A Critical Component of STEM both teachings and standards
- ◆ Both formal & informal experiential learning
- ◆ Interdisciplinary Studies with Departmental Enhancements such as Living Languages, Philosophy and Ethics, Art Appreciation, Native Science, Re-Focusing Technology, Tribal Sustainability, Interest based Learning, Elder Wisdom, Ceremony, Governance, Leadership, Conflict Avoidance and Reconciliation, Healing, Community, Creation Stories, and Native approaches to 21st Century Adaptation.
- ◆ Transforming Consciousness to live in Balance & Harmony

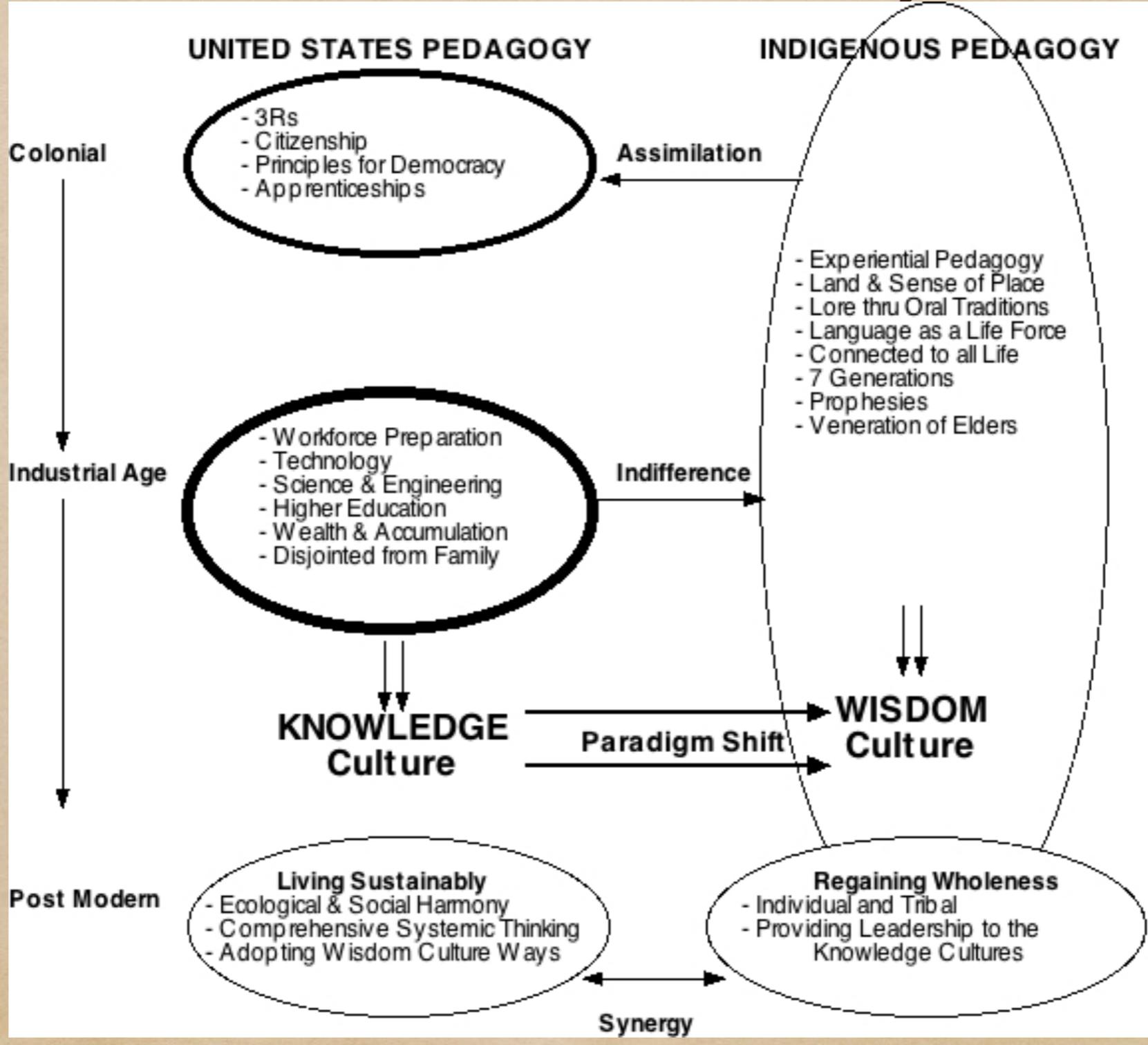
# CULTURAL SHORTFALLS

## 'THE CURVE OF HOPE'

Milt Markewitz -- April 2011



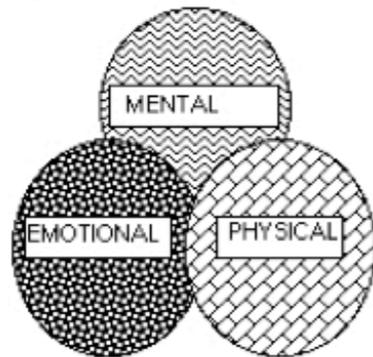
# Pedagogical Comparison



# Human Dynamics

## HUMAN DYNAMICS

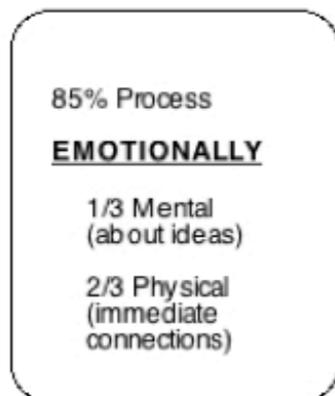
### THREE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES:



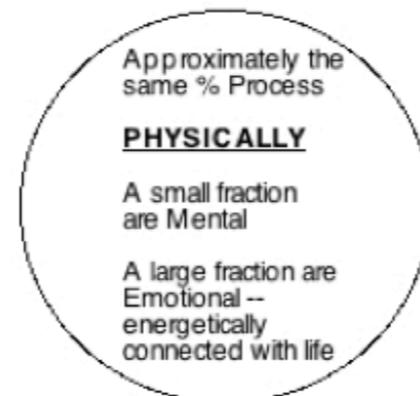
EACH OF US HAS ONE OF THREE PREFERRED WAYS OF BRINGING IN INFORMATION (FILTER) AND ONE OF THREE PREFERRED WAYS TO PROCESS.

IT IS THE COMBINATION OF PROCESS-FILTER THAT DEFINES EACH PERSON'S DYNAMIC.  
Example -- A person whose process is PHYSICAL with a n EMOTIONAL filter is referred to as PHYSICAL-EMOTIONAL

### WESTERN DYNAMICS



### INDIGENOUS DYNAMICS



### CULTURAL TRAITS -- ('Human Dynamics, Seagal & Horne, (p305))

Orientation: Individual (I, me, mine)	Group (we, us, our)
Time: Present & Immediate Future	Continuity of past, present into the long term future
Learning: Linked to individual experiences and interpretations. Requires experiment & self expression.	Through detailed texts; hands-on experiences; in organic time; through repetition
Movement: Spontaneous	Deliberate
Communication: Expressive of individual personality, ideas, feelings, and subjective awareness.	Factual; detailed; expressive of group decision-making.

- Everyone has a preferred dynamic
- Cultures are defined by predominance
- Western Cultures are strongly Emotional
- Eastern & Indigenous are Physical
- Cultural traits are starkly different
- 'Learning Begins' differently by dynamic
- An educator comments regarding assessment:
  - 'Accuracy requires knowing the student's' &
  - 'Fairness requires knowing her own dynamic'
- Individuals integrate dynamics within
- Generative groups leverage individual dynamics

# Cultural Changes

## Generally accepted Sustainability Definition

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

## Suggested Sustainability Definition

Ecological Harmony -- Living within Nature's limits to Renew, Cleanse and Heal

Social Harmony -- Communities, Local to Global, who are governed by Ethics of Peace, Sufficiency, Sharing, and Supporting the Common Good

==>> Feel the Priority shift from Economic - Social - Ecology to Ecology - Social - Economic

---

## Ethical Underpinnings

Western based on Ten Commandments

Communal

Hierarchical

Indigenous based on Sacred Ecology

Communal Earth Based Future Generations

Relational

# CULTURAL CHANGES (CONT)

## The 'Games of Life'

(Taken from James Carse's, 'Finite & Infinite Games')

- ◆ Both Indigenous & Western cultures play a myriad of Rules based Finite Games often within the domain of a Principled based Infinite Game
  - e.g. Athletic Events within Sportsmanship; Litigation with a sense of Justice; Training within the purview of Learning, etc.
- ◆ Indigenous Peoples primarily play the Infinite Game based on Guiding Principles associated with Ecology and Community
  - When a Guiding Principle is violated by a Rule based decision, then the Rule must be changed
- ◆ Western cultures primarily play Rules based games with winners and losers, and in an Individually based society, winning can become paramount
  - Win/Lose becomes Lose/Lose when Guiding Principles are violated — another perspective for understanding Global Climate Change

# Action Items

- ♦ Create a 'Pull Dynamic' so that Institutions everywhere are committed to do this work.
- ♦ Develop relationship embodiment exercises so that we might:
  - ♦ Listen and Learn from Peoples who live the wisdom of their cultures;
  - ♦ Recognize a new, emergent form of leadership; and
  - ♦ Develop a much deeper appreciation for all life.
- ♦ Develop Curricula & Instruction that:
  - ♦ Clarifies the transformational paradigm shifts we must make;
  - ♦ Helps students understand how Nature serves as a mentor and a model;
  - ♦ Articulates Living (Autopoietic) Systems
- ♦ Clarify Ecological and Social Guiding Principles and where they've been compromised so that we might change the rules that govern our win/lose 'games' that are destroying our planet.
- ♦ Teach the children in such a way that they will influence adults, as well as make smart life-choices.