

Peter Merry Interview Notes

Peter is well known for his work in The Netherlands with the Center for Human Emergence. Has corporate and government clients, with a strong background in Spiral Dynamics, and has a wonderful book out, Evolutionary Leadership. What are you currently excited about?

- *Two elements: Seeing things getting far more intense in the world around us. There'll be a load more turbulence than any of us are expecting. We're past a point of no return in terms of Gaia's response to the imbalance in the planet right now. Will show up in extreme weather patterns, breakdowns in supply chains, the financial system, etc. Seeing a major breakdown of systems.*
- *As well, we're promoting "Whole Systems Change" approaches - Theory U, Integrating, Chaordic, Art of Hosting - all these essentially work on the "social architecture," trying to get coherent alignment between people and organizations, who need to work together in diverse collaborations to be able to match the complexity of the challenges we're facing.*
- *Developed a fairly successful "meshworking" approach, inspired by Dr. Don Beck. Yet eventually we came to a*

deep sense that trying to match the complexity in that way, through complexity, was not going to work.

- *It was too complex; taking too much energy, and a longing emerged in the community for "simplicity on the other side of complexity."*
- *Spiral Dynamics describes the transition from Yellow to Turquoise, Integral to Holistic. That was what was happening in our community. We'd been working from Yellow-Green (Integral and "People-process centered") thinking, and running up against its limits. We really needed to "upshift" more into Turquoise. This would release us from the "first-tier," where there's still an element of fear-driven, often unconscious behavior.*
- *For all the best of the systems thinking and so-called systemic whole systems change approaches out there, they're still essentially coming from the same mindset, which is still primarily cognitive-driven.*
- *That starts from seeing all the different pieces that need to be pulled together, then try to work out how to align them all into some coherent whole that will then do what it needs to do.*

- *That's an enormous piece of work. For example, we're working with twenty organizations on Maternal and Newborn Health, one of the Millennium Development Goals. Pharmaceuticals, government, ministries, research institutes, and all that.*
- *To attempt to work with those different parties, to create an alignment that's really going to enable them to collaborate quickly enough to make an impact on these challenges... we're still working on that project and learning a huge amount.*
- *The consciousness that's needed to match the challenge we're facing is indeed a nonlinear leap. More and more, I'm really beginning to understand what that means. We're needing to start to use the other senses that we have, way beyond our cognitive intelligence.*
- *Wisdom University, under the leadership of Jim Garrison, is integrating the ancient wisdoms with new science and the modern wisdom culture, what Paul Ray called the "cultural creatives."*
- *There's something in that relationship of the pre-cognitive consciousness and the post-cognitive consciousness that will enable us to transition far*

more gracefully than if we attempt to do this through even the very best of our cognitive mind.

- *Think about the pre-cognitive, Purple-Red transition, from that pre-cognitive unity/tribal way of organizing and thinking... not even thinking; more sensing, where you feel yourself part of the whole. Like children before they realize they're separate from their mother. That emergence of separate identity, which Ken describes beautifully in "Up From Eden."*
- *What happened in our evolutionary development was that instead of "transcending and including" that early unity consciousness, we "transcended and repressed." Which means there's a fundamental separation, in our individual and collective consciousness, which has led us to believe and see ourselves as separate from the Earth.*
- *That fundamental break in the line of evolution of consciousness has meant we've been able to do what we've done to the planet, which has brought us to the edge of a very serious crisis for humanity and a lot of life on earth.*
- *It's like the mind forgot that it needed the body to live. Humans are the "mind" of the planet, and we forgot that we're part of the planet, and it's thanks to the planet,*

the life, and the physical body that human civilization is able to be there. That's allowed us to do everything that we've done. So our whole development, ever since that blip, has been skewed.

Can you connect this to what you're thinking about the challenges of integral leadership, or integrally-informed leadership?

- As integral leaders, we need to "park" the transcend-and-include idea, and we need to "descend-and-include" into the dark feminine... that pre-conscious place where that split happened, so we can heal the split that's there.*
- When we do that, that will release the post-cognitive unity consciousness that we might see emerging at Turquoise. It's only when we start to work at that energetic level, where we work with the energy that connects everything up, that we're going to be able to match the challenges that we're facing on the planet.*
- Ken writes: "When the Great Mother is repressed, the Great Goddess is concealed." Meaning, when the Great Mother - the Purple, pre-cognitive consciousness - is repressed, then we don't get access to that Turquoise*

post-cognitive energetic dimension of reality that quantum physics points to.

- *But also what the "pre-" - the ancient wisdom traditions - point to. It's when we learn to act from those senses, 1) we'll be reconnecting to the planet in a far more fundamental way than we can ever do through our mind; and 2) we'll be accessing abilities to work energetically that will enable us to work with the great turbulence that's coming.*
- *I don't think we'll be able to do it through Yellow/Integral consciousness. It's still too limited to the mental realms. We're going to have to go into the body, into the energetic realm to do that. It's what I'm calling "the pain, and the promise."*

What are some of the practices you associate with, when doing that?

- *There's two dimensions to it. One of the areas is the work of John Seed and Joanna Macy, called Deep Ecology (what they now call the Work that Reconnects). This basically gets you into this space of remembering that you are the Earth. That's the pre-cognitive work.*

- *The post-cognitive dimensions I'm exploring are related to clairvoyancy training, eco-therapy or "systemic energy tuning," which is the ability to work with the energetic architecture of organizations and natural systems in a way that they are able to be more resilient and adaptive to the challenges they're encountering.*
- *In the same way you'd have a one-on-one Reiki-style healing, which people are quite familiar with now, there are people taking the concepts that Lynn McTaggart describes in "The Field," or the morphogenetic fields of Rupert Sheldrake, and turn it into a practice you can learn, to work with whole systems at an energetic level.*
- *Research on the impact this has on natural systems and organizational systems, shows that when you work at that level, it massively accelerates the coherence of the social architecture and the coherence of results you can manifest at the material level.*

Are you optimistic that systems and individuals can go through the kinds of change you're talking about?

- *The kinds of change I'm talking about involve death. And rebirth. I think there will be a lot of death; a lot of old systems collapsing and falling away. There's going to be*

a lot of human pain and suffering in the coming period as we are awoken rudely by the power of the wrath of the Mother, at what's happening. All sorts of things are going to collapse around us.

- How can we hospice the death of old systems, of old belief systems, of old ways of relating to each other, so that they fertilize the soil for the new to emerge?*
- And how do we create the conditions for the emergence of the radically new, in such a way that it becomes a coherent field as quickly as possible, so it can take over the helm from the current forms of leadership?*
- It will happen. That's the nature of how life works. The question is: how much pain and suffering happens in the process? That will be directly related to how much we hold on to our old ways of thinking, acting, relating and organizing.*

That leads to a tendency to pessimism, though I heard the positive potential there. If you look optimistically into the future, is there any kind of outcome you'd hope this online conference could help our integral community, and the people interested in integral leadership, to achieve?

I'd hope that this integral community does three main things:

- 1. We learn to look reality in the face. We need to track the data, and really watch the news. Because what's coming at us is far greater than anything we could possibly imagine. We need to get out of our comfort zone and face what's happening, because it's only when we really face life conditions that the systems in our brains and bodies are activated to respond.*
- 2. We need to inquire deeply into what are the capacities and qualities we need to learn, as a community of leaders today, in the integration of pre- and post-cognitive, that will enable us as gracefully as possible to navigate this transition.*
- 3. What are the ways we can build resilient communities that are going to hold us through the turbulence that's going to come, to create the conditions for the emergence of the new?*

That's what I'd love to see the integral community put its attention on. In a way, what we need to do is just get out of the model, and get into life, because that's where it's happening.

Peter Merry

Britisher Peter Merry calls himself a synnervator (from “Syn-“ to interconnect, and “-nervate” to vitalise) who spent much of his life moving around, living in Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, Ghana, and currently he is in the Hague, the Netherlands, with his Dutch wife. From 1999 Peter “felt in love” with Spiral Dynamics Integral (indeed he was trained on that by Don Beck) and started studying the integral approach. According to Peter, “The Integral approach blends personal development, social change, and creativity in one seamless whole, providing a framework of reference from which to do his work and live his life in the world.”



He is working with evolutionary transformation in organisations, designing strategy for the emergence of societal and global resilience, and teaching and training in integral thinking and practice. In 2005 he founded the Center for Human Emergence (CHE) which is a vehicle for exploring how to apply an integral perspective to societal and cultural transformation in a country ripe for the next step. Consequently, a network of integral practitioners has emerged, called Synnervate, and with it the School of Synnervation was established. In 2008 Peter founded The Hague Center for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence to support, learn about and promote innovative integral approaches to the global challenges that humanity faces today. In this capacity he is playing a key role in the State of the World Forum’s 2020 Climate Leadership Campaign, and he is a co-founder and on the faculty of Wisdom University in Europe.

His book, *Evolutionary Leadership* provides a picture of how all the bits and pieces Merry worked with during his professional life fit together in order to make it systematically accessible to the reader.

Russ Volckmann

Russ Volckmann, Ph.D., has worked for over thirty years as an organization development consultant and executive coach. He is the publisher and editor of *The Integral Leadership Review* and *LeadingDigest* and the founder of *Integral Publishers* (having published nine books by integral authors). As an educator he has taught at U.C., Berkeley; the University of Arizona; the United States Army Intelligence School at Ft. Juachuca, Arizona; Sonoma State University; Golden Gate University; John F. Kennedy University; Leadership University; and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology. He has served on dissertation committees for the Fielding Graduate Institute and the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology and mentor for Antioch University. As a writer and editor, he was the founding editor of a professional journal, *Vision/Action*, for five years. He is currently on the Editorial Board of *Integral Review* which is published by ARINA, Inc. He has authored two books and is currently working on his third with co-author Brett Thomas on the topic of Integral Leadership.

