CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Roadmap

Abstract This chapter is the introduction which offers a roadmap to the structure and the content outline of the book. It lays out to the reader how the different chapters of the book succeed each other and build onto each other.

Keywords Paradigm · Vision · Interdisciplinarity · Complementarity · Continuum

A good starting point for understanding the model presented in this book is that it views the role of individual aspirations as the core of personal empowerment, which in turn lies at the center of prosperity for communities, nations, and, by consequence, Society. If individual empowerment and collective welfare are pursued with a holistic understanding of the shared value of connectedness for all involved parties, and a corresponding shared responsibility, these two concepts nurture and complement each other. Individuals who consciously seek the best interest of others end up benefitting from better quality of life—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Societies that systematically invest in the well-being of their members thrive.¹

To make the link between individual aspirations and social welfare, the bases of individual behavior need to be unpacked. This is achieved through the understanding that aspirations, emotions, thoughts, and sensations—or soul,² heart, mind, and body—are not merely connected

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but part of one and the same micro-universe. Their constant interplay
influences who we are and what we do; what happens inside finds
its manifestation in our behavior, hereby influencing the outside. Our
internal reality shapes our experience of external circumstances, and
conversely, what happens outside influences our inner realm. While
acknowledging the impact of meta-, macro-, and meso-level dynam-
ics, the following pages offer arguments about the central role of the
micro-level in the pursuit of sustainable and equitable social change at
the macro- and meta-levels.

As a result of this understanding of human behavior, the conceptual-
ization of individuals as passive onlookers to their situation, in particular
those living in fragile states which are traditionally portrayed as basket-
cases in need of charity, can be challenged. This book offers a path to
shift mindsets, from victimization to the promotion of harnessed personal
power. Noting the significant potential of nonprofit organizations (e.g.,
non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, foundations, bi-
and multilateral funds) dedicated to social causes, this book then looks
at the factors that hinder organizations from living up to the inspiring
mission statements that are often enshrined in their mandate, and at tools
that may serve to improve their institutional culture, which is one of these
factors. Finally, we will look at certain aspects that influence public opin-
ion, such as the problematic forces that condone a globalized bystander
syndrome in the face of inequality. The logic of this book may serve to
reshape decision-making architectures to be conducive to more inclusive
decision-making.

Current scientific evidence and research show that the actions of an
individual, pursued in the interest of others, are beneficial to all parties
involved—for the individual who acts, the one who has been acted for,
and broader Society. In other words, pursuing the prosperity of others
is a win-win-win situation. Firstly, it serves the one who acts, secondly
the one who benefits, and finally the Society they both live in. Humans
have not only evolved to cooperate in the pursuit of survival and common
interest; it also is in their personal interest to nurture this innate urge to
help others.

As we will see, acting for the sake of others is the best guarantee for
a healthy and fulfilled life, or ‘the pursuit of happiness’. This logic pro-
vides novel insights about the nexus of development and humanitarian
aid, peace building, and social transformation. Thus, a case for an alternative path to sustainable change, and therefore an inclusive global Society, is proposed.

Putting into practice the present logic requires several interlinked shifts in perspective. Linkages include the relationship between individual aspirations and acting on behalf of the collective good, as well as the ever-ongoing connection of soul, heart, mind, and body. These elements help to explain how individuals behave. They also shed light on how a person can be transformed from a passive onlooker in life to a genuinely empowered agent of change. Thus, a model that places individual resilience at the center of the nexus of humanitarian, development, and social transformation as well as the nurturing of social peace can be developed. Such a model seizes the multiple opportunities for positive synergies (win-win scenarios) which exist. Consequently, the aim of the present pages is to support a maximization of the positive outcomes that come with a systematic outlook, and specifically with the systematic use of ongoing interplays between the internal and external ‘realities’.

In the context of this book, this multidimensional paradigm is termed POZE. It offers a different approach to life, a philosophy or lifestyle focused on individual happiness as a route to collective well-being, and vice versa. Derived from the Haitian Creole word for ‘inner peace’, POZE has been further expanded here as an acronym for Passion, Om, Zoom, and Expression, bringing together the core human motivation of purpose (Passion), the universally recognized word for emotional unity (Om), a focus on the essential (Zoom), and the experience of now, which underpins an individual’s authentic Expression. POZE is based on the understanding that human beings are a composite of four dimensions—soul, heart, mind, and body. It offers a framework for individuals to identify their aspirations, work with their emotions, train their thoughts, and learn from their sensations, to unfold their best self and share it with the World.

The main features of POZE deal with channeling Purpose for Power, guiding Compassion for Change, maximizing Influence for Impact and harnessing Honesty for Humility. These elements, on top of a communication and dissemination strategy congruent with the proposed model, are tools to achieve prosperous societies, sustainable development, and effective humanitarian aid—by inducing in people the genuine desire to take part in social change.
In the pursuit of this ambition, it employs four activity components of the same name—Purpose for Power, Compassion for Change, Influence for Impact and Honesty for Humility.

**Purpose for Power**—looks at the challenges that prevent many empowerment programs from having a lasting impact. This component makes the case for social change that begins with the aspirations of the individual (inside out) and which is nurtured by the behavior of that person toward others (outside in).

**Compassion for Change**—addresses the need for development and humanitarian organizations to walk the talk of change by living up to the values they proclaim. This component investigates the status quo of the nonprofit sector’s growing disillusionment and dwindling impact, offering a practical way forward to transform organizational cultures with a return to passion and meaning.

**Influence for Impact**—analyzes the aspects that directly and indirectly shape how individuals affect each other, consciously and subconsciously, actively and passively. Introducing the concept of action along the ‘Scale of influence’ (a concept which applies the POZE methodology to interpersonal and institutional communication strategies), this component proposes an approach to systematically use and shape how decisions are made, in the aim of nurturing among audiences the genuine desire to be part of social change efforts.

**Honesty for Humility**—is a cross-cutting feature which underpins the other three. It is anchored in the four fundamental questions that form the framework of individual and collective transformation: Why am I here? Who am I? How do I want to be? What must change to align my current setting and behavior with my long term aspirations?

In summary, this book offers a broad multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary view, and a practical way forward for change makers at local, national, and global levels based on the spiral dynamics that underpin life. It links the four dimensions that form micro-, meso-, macro- and meta-systems. These spiral movements play in both directions, from the core to the periphery and from the periphery to the core. Each dimension is the cause and consequence of a constant interplay between each and every dimension. Nothing occurs in a vacuum. Everything is connected. This continuous interplay results in seamless and ceaseless influence of one dimension onto the next (Figs. 1 and 2). As this book goes into print the
Corona virus pandemic (COVID-19) is underway at full speed. It illustrates how fragile and interconnected humans in Society are. Whatever happens in one dimension has ramifications on the others.

The book is structured in two parts. Part I sets the stage, giving a very brief overview of the paradoxical dynamic that shapes the current World. It contrasts the ever-wider inequality gap that separates haves and have-nots, the over-exploitation of the Planet’s natural resources, and the ever-accelerating climate change, with an opposing dynamic, whereby the
growing understanding of, and desire for, connection opens a yet unexplored realm of possibilities. Faced with disillusionment in response to these established challenges and the institutions that are supposed to combat them (including many NGOs and UN agencies), the innate desire for meaning pushes ever more people to turn toward new and creative solutions. The twenty-first century is being propelled forward by a powerful combination of science, wealth, and technology. Human beings have the choice to decide whether resources are put toward pursuits that engender prosperity or peril for people worldwide. COVID-19 is a reminder that this choice must be taken rapidly and rightly, in order to secure our individual and collective survival.

Transitioning from this backstage scenario, in Part II we will investigate a radically new paradigm to analyze and address reality. Starting with the core ideas of complementarity and continuity, as well as connection and change, that underpin the conceptual framework, we will investigate some
central definitions to build the multidimensional paradigm. Using a case study from Port-au-Prince (Haiti) as illustration, this book also examines the interplay of individuals with the culture, socioeconomic, and political context of their environment, and the causes and consequences that these factors precipitate along the path of personal and collective evolution.

NOTES

1. On March 11th, 2020 the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was declared a Pandemic by the World Health Organization. The unfolding crises illustrates the dramatic consequences that ensue when societies do not invest systematically in the basic social services required by all their members. When the interests of a few dominate over the needs of many. The outcome of COVID-19 depends on the ability of individuals, and of countries, to widen their perspective from me to us. Hopefully the paradigm shift that is presented in this book contributes to this change in dynamics.

2. It should be noted here that ‘Soul’ in the context of the present methodology refers to the luminous core of every living being, which can serve as an anchor of our everyday existence. The term is used in its wider spiritual definition, without attachment to religion. It pertains to that which is intangible and yet indispensable, the essence that distinguishes objects from living beings. While the aim is to establish a common language, do bear in mind that terminology is only useful insofar as it serves as a vehicle to share an idea. Once you got the idea, you are free to forget whichever formulation has been used, and simply make it your own.

3. Meta-systems will be used in this book to refer to systems that, due to their size, complexity, and extent, are not grasped by the traditional scope of macro-systems. In other words, ‘macro’ refers to country-wide systems. ‘Meta’ refers to the global interplay that connects individuals, communities, countries, culture and cosmos across the all dimensions.

4. The syllable Om is first mentioned in the Upanishads, the mystical texts associated with the Vedanta philosophy. It has variously been associated with concepts of ‘cosmic sound’, ‘mystical syllable’, and ‘affirmation to something divine’ and acts as symbolism for abstract spiritual concepts. Over the past two millennia, it has been used in Eastern spirituality. The Brahmic script om-ligature has become widely recognized in Western culture since the 1960s. Refer to Wilke and Moebus’s (2011). Sound and communication: a cultural history of Sanskrit Hinduism.
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