# Genuine Growth – how post-materialism can mean more for all of us.

## 01.Introduction

Welcome to Genuine Growth! Ideally print this document for reading and open the accompanying presentation on your laptop or get the audio book if already available and follow the presentations on your device. The numbering of the chapters corresponds with the slides. Understand the slides as a visual support to this document. Have a look on each slide before you start to read a chapter and again after you have finished the chapter, in particular if there is a TED talk to be watched.

Make sure you are connected to the internet and watch the corresponding TED talks by clicking on the respective picture in the slides or the links in this document. Select the subtitles in your language of choice if your English listening comprehension is limited or the speaker is difficult to understand. There are also transcripts from which you can read the talk simultaneously while listening, or download the audio file and listen while you take notes.

Read the questions in the overview and try to write down your answers after watching each of the corresponding talks. Your preparation will be the basis of a fruitful and engaging dialogue throughout the weekly meetings. The better each one of us is prepared, the more we can go into the depth of each chapter's subject. I suggest that you get a nice note book before you start and collect all your thoughts therein.

A note in regard to the contents. Genuine Growth does not contain any new insights which not others have made long before me. I merely connect existing ideas in the believe that by doing so they find a better resonance with our Zeitgeist. TED chief curator Chris Anderson once said that every idea in a TED talk is like a diamond, which slowly grew in a person's mind, now shines there and is through a talk implanted in other minds. I tried to weld a little crown out of these single gems, and my hope is that this crown of ideas and practices will not fade in brilliance like those single gems after we have watched a talk or read a book, but stays with us like a crown of enlightenment.

In order to pay credit to the minds who crafted these single gems on which I build this book, I refer to the original source wherever I can with either a link or a footnote. *Italics* indicate a direct quote. I feel in particular indebted to Prof. Helmut Renöckl who planted the osmotic model into my mind; Robert Sedlak who gave me a crash course in academic and applied systems theory; and Matthias Uhl who enriched this project with many ideas, above all his recommendation to delve into the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin.

Heartfelt gratefulness is extended to my friends Gemme van Hasselt, Shaylan Barlow, John Villar, Matthew Hall and John Melbardis, for their emotional and substantial contributions on the manuscript, which helped this document to come into being. Be prepared to spend a total of three to five hours to complete this introduction to Genuine Growth - breaks not included - and kindly send me any thoughts on improvement you are willing to share.

### 02. Search Inside Yourself

This document originally aimed at distilling the 2012 book Search Inside Yourself – The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace), written by former Google engineer Chade-Meng Tan, into a corporate training. In the course of working on the project, I realized that SIY is a central, but nevertheless just one of many pillars, which I combine here into a new format under the title Genuine Growth: Defining Individual and Organizational Purpose.

### 03. SIY Organizational 3-Step Strategy

SIY is essentially about success and well-being within the work context and thus continues the pioneering work of molecular biologist and professor of medicine Jon Kabat-Zinn who took meditation 'from the spiritual into the real world' and revolutionized the medical industry with mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR). Meng's far goal is though to plant seeds of compassion within individuals and thus within organizations to achieve world peace – a goal not so different from Kabat-Zinn's considering the title of one of his books Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness.

Meng puts forward a 3-step strategy for organizations:

1. Create a culture of passionate concern for the greater good
2. Increase employee autonomy
3. Focus on inner development and personal growth, i.e. self-awareness, self-mastery, empathy and compassion.

Considering how differently companies organize themselves, we leave the question whether this strategy works also at Microsoft, Apple, Tencent or Huawei to a later discussion. I certainly do hope so.

### 04. Everyday Compassion at Google

I feel though that Meng is too positive, if not even naive about Google itself. Maybe he has left Google in 2015, because he got sober. Moreover, his concept of pairing compassion with profit seems to be in the traditional economic growth understanding, but it seems to be already sort of common sense that our understanding of growth clearly has to balance an excessive materialistic with a spiritual focus; a focus which seems to get blurred in large organizations, if we believe the work of economists like Ernst F. Schumacher or his teacher Leopold Kohr, who both preached that small is beautiful in both economic and political terms. Maybe, Meng has left Google, because he realized that, too. And finally, it would have been about time to make SIY freely available as he said back in 2010 on a TED talk, but profitable compassion seems to work

differently as we will see later. Probably, all good ideas, whether they are conceived by Jesus or Meng, get perverted by institutions like the Church or Google, i.e. by rather power than purpose driven men who run those organizations.

Now, having brought forward my criticism, I would like to point at the great value of SIY and pay kudos to Meng's work. Making it more than 20 years ago as a young software engineer from Singapore to the Silicon Valley deserves admiration for itself, and I am sure many in his trade would like to follow en route. But what really inspired me, was his determination to bring his own search for a happier life into the work place and how he managed to get transferred from the engineering to the HR department. You will see that I have a lot in common with Meng, my setting is just not so glamorous ;).

It is said that Meng started to practice Buddhism and meditation at age 15, probably because he felt utterly miserable. He writes somewhere in SIY: *When I was young, I was naturally very unhappy. If nothing good happened, then by default, I was unhappy. Right now, it is the reverse: if nothing bad happens, then by default, I am happy.* Meng is in that sense a Grandmaster of changing a mindset from unhappiness to happiness, you know like a chess Grandmaster, who practiced from childhood on playing his mind instead of the chess board. I guess, we can learn a lot from an authentic mind Grandmaster; and Meng is surely worthy of that title.

He built his own life long striving around his Buddhist experience and his engineering background into a 20-hours-7-week course for employee development, which he started to teach with a small team at Google in 2007. Several hundred Google employees have taken this course and the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI) claims that more than 20.000 individuals have taken a SIY training since then. SIYLI's largest European corporate customer, the business software engineering giant SAP, is a testimony to the commercial success of Meng's initial idea, which is centered around three pillars:

1. Attention Training
2. Self-Knowledge and Self-Mastery
3. Creating Useful Mental Habits

I believe it's important to meet Meng once, so let's watch him for 13' talking about Everyday Compassion at Google before we continue.

### 05.Some Sobering Cynicism

Now, Google deserves credits for supporting such an employee initiative, but I don't want to follow Meng's naivety and point at the consistent criticism, which identifies Google as an exploitative employer, using perks like internal trainings or luxury recreation facilities to basically make employees work more and more productively. Such HR management should be made into a best practice for running a sect,

considering that Google employees reportedly stop to interact with the outside world, if not required so for business purposes.

Author Dave Eggers painted a gloomy 1984 picture in his book The Circle and certainly takes Google and Facebook as his real life blueprint. Douglas Rushkoff doesn't bother to make up a fictional story, but provides in Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus – How Growth Became an Enemy of Prosperity a piece of sensible investigative journalism: *Google workers are less the beneficiaries of an expanding company than they are its rapidly consumed resources. The average employee leaves within a year—some to accept better positions at other companies but most of them simply to break free of the constant pressure to perform.*

One also wonders how compassion can be lived in a company which bases its hiring and firing policy on data-analytics and evaluates leadership competence and engineering innovativeness with algorithms. And how do Google's extremely generous employee benefits compare to America's bottom 30% work force, not to speak of much less fortunate individuals outside of the US? I still need to read, Lazlo Bock's book Work Rules! Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead, but my feeling tells me that Google's Head of People Operations puts forward rules which are only good for Metropolis' upper 10.000. Welcome to the era of tech-aristocracy. Its not anymore your blood, but your coding which defines your social class.

The documentary San Francisco 2.0 by Alexandra Pelosi shows how US tech companies have changed the social landscape in her home town during the last decade: Silicon Valley is the 21st century Wall Street, dominated by greed and an ever increasing rich-poor gap. Not all is bad; there are lots of great things done out there, but let me finish this analysis with some cynicism: It's easy to be compassionate amongst your ivory league pals, with whom you mingle in entertainment park like company grounds for almost all your wake hours.

Yes, maybe you are right, if you think now, that I am just frustrated to not be part of the party. But remember that Meng's far goal is achieving world peace and as with everything, so can also information management go too far. Thus we are well advised to not buy the all-is-great-at-google-story, but listen e.g. to data-analyst Susan Etlinger, who concludes that we need to rebalance our education systems and focus again on humanities, because its them teaching us critical thinking skills, which we need to direct data generation and application into the right direction.

*Technology has brought us so much: the moon landing, the Internet, the ability to sequence the human genome. But it also taps into a lot of our deepest fears, and about 30 years ago, the culture critic Neil Postman wrote a book called "Amusing Ourselves to Death," which lays this out really brilliantly. And here's what he said, comparing the dystopian visions of George Orwell and Aldous Huxley. He said, Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture. Orwell feared the truth would be*

*concealed from us, and Huxley feared we would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. In a nutshell, it's a choice between Big Brother watching you and you watching Big Brother.*

## 06. Dreams, Reward & Wealth

Having said this, we must concede that Meng compiled both, documents supporting the training and the book, during his time at Google and was obliged to put success, profitability, innovativeness, productivity, outstanding leadership and his employer's moral impeccability at SIY's bow. *Truth to be told,* he writes, *of the three good things enabled by emotional intelligence, happiness is the only one I really care about. (Hush hush, but just between you and the million other people reading this book the other points about stellar work performance and outstanding leadership, while useful and true and supported by scientific evidence, are used by me to get a stamp of approval from upper management.)*

If you want more ranting about Google and Meng, then read this popular goodreads review, which speaks in all sobriety, but fails to see the big picture: all that counts in the end is Meng's dream, and by the dimension of his dream, he shall be rewarded. Social entrepreneur Dan Palotta explains our generally flawed concept of charity poignantly. He wants people to be paid according to their ideas – the bigger the idea and the bigger the benefit for society, the more they should be entitled to receive. There is much truth in this concept, but there is also this capitalist tendency to perceive reward only in financial terms. We will see later that this concept is flawed, too.

## 07. Search Inside Meng

One note on Meng's personality. He writes in SIY, *if this training works for a highly introverted and cerebral engineer like me, it will probably work for you*. I have my doubts it works for everybody. If we combine this statement with his above confession of ultimate mental misery in his youth and his rather stiff TED talk, we can dare to draw a psychogram, a simplified analysis of Meng's personality structure. He seems to be a traumatized person that developed early excess activity in the left brain hemisphere, causing feelings of utter misery and disconnection. I don't judge here whether such a personality structure is right or wrong, no quite on the contrary I only observe compassionately and I am happy for him to have resolved his condition.

But I want to make a point that not all people start out like Meng did. Many are endowed with a balanced energy distribution between left and right hemisphere or might even be a Little Buddha (remember the 1993 movie with Keanu Reeves directed by Bernardo Bertolucci?) with excess energy in the right hemisphere. For such individuals, I believe, SIY will be a rather futile undertaking. If they feel miserable in their job, its probably just a question of the executive management changing the organizational structure or a government focusing on things that really matter. I guess though that such people won't be miserable in the first place, but have already found meaning and satisfaction in their lives.

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My favorite essayist, Siri Hustvedt, has long been interested in how the environments in which we grow up, affect our mental sanity and general outlook. She quotes in her essay collection Living, Thinking, Looking neurologist Allan Schore,[1] *who has written extensively on right hemisphere interactions between child and caretaker and their importance for psychopathology*. According to him, *there is growing evidence that attachment and failures in attachment between mother and child affect autonomic, neurochemical, and hormonal functions in a growing brain. In a 2006 paper in Nature Neuroscience, Mirella Dapretto et al.[2] articulate the mutual reflections this way: Typically developing children can rely on a right hemisphere mirroring neural mechanism – interfacing with the limbic system via the insula – whereby the meaning of the imitated (or observed) emotion is directly felt and hence understood.* Hustvedt concludes her essay by agreeing with the German philosopher Martin Buber: *psychological illnesses do grow up between people.*

We therefore may conclude that excess left brain hemisphere activity and resulting diseases like autism are the consequence of emotional deprivation during early childhood. The developmental psychopathologist Simon Baron Cohen formulated a related theory already back in 1985 and confirmed it with a key study in 2015: the ability to imagine other people's emotions and thoughts (read: interpersonal emotional intelligence, i.e. half of what SIY wants to teach us) is a skill that is typically delayed developmentally in children with autism.[3] He interestingly did also write that men generally suffer from mild autism.[4]

In 1997, Baron-Cohen developed the empathising–systemising theory; his theory is that a cognitive profile with a systemising drive that is stronger than empathising is associated with maths, science and technology skills, and exists in families with autism spectrum disorders. He suspects that if individuals with a "systemising" focus are selecting each other as mates, they are more likely to have children with autism.[5] He postulates that more individuals with autistic traits are marrying each other and having children.

My assumption is that Meng was such a child, being born 1971 into the double rigidity of a technocratic government and a society based on Confucian values in the city state of Singapore under long term ruler Lee Kuan Yew. I do not say that Meng suffers from clinical autism, no, but I want to explain that modern innovation societies and in particular our industrial education systems produce people who suffer from culturally

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[1] Allan Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self: The Neurobiology of Emotional Development* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994)
[2] Mirella Depretto et al., *Understanding Emotions in Others: Mirror Neuron Dysfunction in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (Nature Neuroscience, 2006: 28-30)
[3] On the Theory of Mind 1985 Paper
[4] Simon Baron Cohen: The Essential Difference: Men, Women And The Extreme Male Brain
[5] Are Geeky Couples More Likely to Have Kids with Autism?

conditioned autism, i.e. a disorder of our brain chemistry, which reduces empathy and compassion and increases rationalizing and alienation.

Singapore seems to have realized that its educations system produces unhappy people and since a few years there is a serious discussion to adopt the Finnish model for the city state. A comment to a discussion between two education experts describes the differences between the two models spot on: We can't be Finland (yet) because of different national ideologies that translated to the expected outcomes of the education system. Finland adopts a more egalitarian ("let's do things together") approach, whereas Singapore adopts a meritocratic ("you snooze you lose") approach.

The conditions of his originating society are a very likely explanation why Meng appears to be a truly weird dude to many readers, a mixture between autistic savant Rain Man and the naïve heart of gold Ralph Waldo Emerson; maybe also, why his book is hugely popular, but his TED talk rather not, if you compare his 850k view to e.g. Dan Pink who we will meet later and who's talk was viewed by more than 20 million. Either that or because people don't feel the authenticity of everyday compassion at Google.

Now, Meng has obviously found a method to alleviate his own suffering. Eckhart Tolle writes in A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose that people with extremely heavy pain bodies can sometimes turn that negative energy into enlightenment. I guess that's what happened to Meng and I am truly happy for him. But we have to acknowledge two things:

      1. Not all people start into their lives like Meng did.
      2. We have to transform our societies at large into spaces which grow children with a balanced brain chemistry, who don't have to search for purpose, meaning and happiness when they are grown ups; at least not painfully.

## 08. School of Life

A friend of mine recently took this picture for me in front of the London based School of Life, which was initiated by philosopher and atheist Alain de Botton and is devoted to developing emotional intelligence through the help of culture. It's just another indicator that an increasing number of people are suffering and desperately search for meaning. It confirms the timeliness of Meng's book. But ever since I finished reading it, I have a feeling that it misses a part of the big picture.

## 09. Two Paths to Define Purpose?

I have come to the conclusion that there are two grand paths to find individual purpose: one goes through trauma, the other through joy. A perception which vaguely relates to what William James describes in The Varieties of Religious Experience as *the healthy-minded, who need to be born only once, and of the sick souls, who must be twice-born in order to be happy.* Traumatic odysseys like Meng's shouldn't be the rule, but the

exception. There should be more people who, like the Swiss psychoanalyst C.G. Jung once said, are creative through their *play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the object it loves.* We shall see later that joy and love in human development terms is difficult to be learned by an adult attending a SIY course; but it's easy to learn for children through play and being loved. There is this saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, which the fathers of our industrial societies have clearly understood, because we deprive our children of genuine play to make sure they don't find what they love.

I do not want to establish a preference for either joy or trauma, but point out our modern societies make it almost impossible to find purpose through joy and simultaneously we are conditioned to push suffering away; thus creating even more suffering. Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl realized this already decades ago, when he wrote in [Man's Search for Meaning](#): *In the concentration camp every circumstance conspires to make the prisoner lose his hold. All the familiar goals in life are snatched away. What alone remains is the "last of human freedoms" – the ability to "choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances." To live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering.* One can not deny that there are obvious similarities between a concentration camp setting and the fake freedom of capitalist consumer societies.

Let's listen to author [Andrew Salomon](#) who speaks emotionally about how the worst moments in our lives make us who we are and how we can embrace these moments as defining our life's purpose.

### 10. Search Within or Without?

The starting point of my own endeavor into this subject was my struggle to implement a purposeful strategy in the China subsidiary of Fronius International, a leading European manufacturing enterprise active in the robotics welding, battery charging and photovoltaic industry, which I headed as Managing Director from its foundation in 2011 to my dismissal in 2016.

With no genuine resources in my HQ, which could have enabled me to resolve serious conflicts in the Chinese market, but only financial investment to build a second sales organization next to the existing one of our distributor, I turned to external support, which I found in the person of an experienced systemic coach. Our joint analysis revealed 2014 an internal conflict in the HQ between the new CEO and the seasoned head of the welding division, which put our China distributor in a winning spectator position: when two people quarrel, a third rejoices. That conflict was ultimately resolved with the dismissal of the head of division only a few weeks before my own dismissal, but realizing it's existence showed me two years earlier that I had only very limited means for action as long as that power struggle did go on in the HQ.

Now, I don't want to create the impression that I was not to blame for anything. I never considered myself a good choice for an executive management position in manufacturing, but realized as the first two or three years passed that there was no better choice available for the founding years of the subsidiary. Engineering companies naturally prefer their management to have a technical background and speak the language of the target market. Chinese, electrical engineering and metallurgical knowledge are a rare find in one person; a Chinese speaking technology lawyer a close match.

My own trade off for these plighted years were close up insights into the Chinese and international manufacturing world, not only in one industry, but almost all of them. Working in a horizontal industry like automated welding forced me to learn about automotive, railway, yellow goods, pipeline, bicycle and many other customer and government interests. Our PV and battery charging products added further to this wide spectrum of different vertical markets. I am grateful for these insights. Nevertheless, I felt already in 2015 that a change was about to happen. Companies, like people or products, have a life cycle; and its employees can only temporarily fulfill the required job descriptions. The subsidiary had completed its start-up phase and entered a phase of enlargement and consolidation with more than 70 employees and CNY 200 million annual turnover. My time had come to hand over and move on.

It was then that I read Henry Kissinger's [World Order.](#) He writes in his concluding chapter that *the internet focuses on the realm of information, whose spread it facilitates exponentially. Ever more complex functions are devised, particularly capable of responding to questions of fact, which are not themselves altered by the passage of time. Search engines are able to handle increasing speed. Yet a surfeit of information may paradoxically inhibit the acquisition of knowledge and push wisdom even further away than it was before.* Kissinger made me doubt my choice. In times when we are increasingly hooked to our screens, we get actually lost in the world wide web, and even though we can retrieve much information from google, yahoo, baidu & co. we can't get wisdom from there.

### 11. Increased Complexity

I relate these events somewhat detailed, because they taught me first hand that in a world in which we deal with increased complexity, we are asked to think on different systemic levels and in addition understand their regional variations. If you want so, we are supposed to think in a matrix structure for organizational change management, which includes technological, political, social, organizational and individual agents on one level and their regional variants on another.

### 12. Accelerated Change

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Globalization and increased complexity itself is a phenomenon with which some organizations can deal quite well, but what we witness in addition is accelerated change caused by disruptive technologies. Our analytical sigma-6-black-belt-check-mate management methods are seemingly exhausted, because it is almost impossible for executives and their advisors to think in so many dimensions and provide secure forecasts about future industry developments.

If we draw a graph with time on the x-axis and change on the y-axis, technology would be the most potent change agent in the 21st century. It was not so at least until the 16th century if not much longer, when political and entrepreneurial agents were the catalysts of change. Technology has narrowed the gap between single regions, and cultural difference does not continue to have as much impact as it had earlier. Countries like China though, where political power is almost absolute and social conformism still a means for individual survival, require us to pay special attention to the dynamics of individual and regime behavior.

### 13. Osmotic Modelling

Think for a minute of a society as a geological model of planet Earth, which is made up like an onion by the individual, family, organization, society, regime and a niche layer for all disruptive agents like some technologies. Let's add to this geological model our planet's hydro pneumatic characteristics, which cause phenomena like volcanic eruptions. We assume that in a perfectly balanced state a pressure of 10 bar can be measured in each sphere.  But what happens, if one sphere builds up additional pressure? It certainly affects its neighboring spheres, which have to react accordingly, by passing on part of that additional pressure.

A typical Western model would see increased pressure in the individual and in the niche sphere, manifested in inflated or seriously suffering egos and advanced cybernation, but generally reduced pressure in the family, organizational and regime spheres, visible in the dissolution of traditional family structures, flat hierarchy companies and weak democracies. The osmotic modelling of typical Far East Easian societies would certainly reveal considerably increased pressure in the regime and family sphere, asking individuals to deal with completely different conditions.

The osmotic model, to which I was introduced by ethics professor [Helmut Renoeckl](#) and systemic coach [Robert Sedlak](#), draws on cell biology and visualizes the employee as part of an organization, the organization as part of society at large mostly hold together by a regime sphere, the individual as part of a family, and the family as part of society. We have to confirm that companies small and large are like biological cells both separated from their environment, but also permeable. The same is true for societies, families and individuals. Considering that organizations are living organisms, which develop and grow, it is only natural to conclude that its employees develop and grow into the same direction.

We are also aware that not all employees grow in the direction organizations want them to grow, with a dismissal or a resignation as the likely consequence. Such a result is though not negative per se. If we assume e.g. that the growth of an organization did not support the growth of the individual in question, then a split between the two is the best solution. One might as well draw on a biological metaphor: A generally healthy organism must get rid of a severely infected part of its body for the sake of its allover sanity. Think e.g. of a malign tumor surgery.

We can also imagine such a necessary split between organization and employee the other way round: A company which is void of genuine values and bereft of purpose beyond making profit, will assimilate its employees over time and they internalize the destructive dynamics of their work environment. Leaving such a company despite its financial success saves the individual from getting stuck in a swamp of negative materialism and can help to find meaning and fulfillment. The story of [Amos Kennedy](#), who left at age 40 his well paid data analyst corporate 9-5 job for letter press artisanship is a brilliant real life example. In other words, sometimes an organization, but more often an employee has an expiry date. What needs to be changed in this regard is how we deal with such expiry dates in an environment of accelerated change.

Recognizing both an organization's and an individual's loss of purpose at an early stage seems to be a viable strategy. Ignoring family, regime and niche spheres for our observation, one could argue in favor of a top down or of a bottom up approach to define purpose.

### 14. Hierarchy, Control & Supervision

The top down approach entails strict hierarchies, tight control and meticulous supervision of employees in accordance with an organization's business plan. An extreme phenomenon of such work environments paired with employee sacrifice triggered by social conformism is [karoshi](#): *Karōshi* (過労死), which can be translated literally as "overwork death" in Japanese, is occupational sudden mortality. The major medical causes of *karōshi* deaths are heart attack and stroke due to stress and a starvation diet. This phenomenon is also widespread in South Korea, where it is referred as 'gwarosa' (과로사). In China, overwork-induced suicide is called 'guolaosi' (过劳死).

In such a top down hierarchy the definition of purpose is entirely in the hands of the executive management. The individual is asked to align himself with the far and mostly unknown goals of the organization or nation, quite often paired with the pressure of social exclusion. On a second thought, we realize that our Western societies have been corrupted by similar dynamics. Members of a consumer society define their adherence by what they are able to consume and thus comply with existing hierarchical structures. From such a POV there seems to be no difference between collectivist East Asian and

individualist Western societies: they both thrive on the very basic human need of belonging to something larger than oneself.

### 15. Heterarchy & Self-Guidance

The bottom up approach allocates to employees a maximum of personal freedom, in particular in regard to working hours and location, but even in regard to contents. Probably the most famous example is Google, which provides 20% of its employees work time to their private projects, which are (at least initially) not connected to the organization's business plan.

### 16. Industrial Democracy

Brazilian entrepreneur [Ricardo Semler](#) shows that even more freedom is possible. Think for a second how industrial democracy relates to [Stephen Covey's](#) idea that people whose passion intersects with their job don't need any supervision and watch Semler's talk on [how to run a company with almost no rules](#).

### 17. Paradox Management

Economist and systemic theorist [Ulrich Grimm](#) thinks that neither the top down management nor bottom up initiatives alone produce lasting results in a business environment of accelerated change. He proposes that organizations have to apply both strategies simultaneously; that's what he calls paradox management. I concede upfront that we are about to learn about the most rationalized approach to get order in the house.

His concept builds on osmotic modelling and perceives a company as a biological organism which needs to shield itself off from the outside world, but also needs to stay permeable to enable a so-called co-evolution of enterprise and market. The executive management has to increase efficiency (and routine) by reducing complexity (installing hierarchy, centralizing knowledge and control of its employees), but at same time needs to increase efficacy (innovation) by increasing complexity (avoiding hierarchy, decentralizing knowledge and promoting self guidance of its employees).

Prof. Grimm interestingly writes that social systems can't be controlled against the will of its members. Traditional top down management in the form of command and order is therefore to be rejected by systemic theory and systemic leadership is thus rather moderation than coercion.

### 18. Why do we need a Universal Myth?

On a practical level we have to ask how we find in a globalized world a common ground between either self guided individuals or hierarchy based organizations and nations,

when the unifying myths of the past, religion, money and nation, falter. Wizardry business executives might be able to convince their employees of a mid term strategy, but accelerated change shakes such a fragile house of cards like tectonic tremors if it isn't in a trustworthy and increasingly universal storyline.

Post modern societies and as such the business organizations within have lost their unifying myths and not only a few frustrated Westerners admire how China's totalitarian capitalism is able to streamline the world's largest population. But China is clearly not capable of solving challenges of global dimension on its own and its sakoku policy which is built on the myth of the CCP has yet failed to tune into a plan which is rather about convergence than divergence.

The historian Harari writes in [Sapiens – A Brief History of Humankind](#) lucidly about the unifying purpose of myths. *Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in people's collective imagination.[6] Myths and fictions accustomed people, nearly from the moment of birth, to think in certain ways, to behave in accordance with certain standards, to want certain things, and to observe certain rules. They thereby created artificial instincts that enabled millions of strangers to cooperate effectively. This network of artificial instincts is called 'culture'.*

My friend, architect John Villar, explained during a project on which we collaborated last year that globalization effectively leads from an anthropological perspective to a dissolution of a society's hitherto secluded environment. Behavior, communication and biology might remain widely unchanged, but a globalized world merges the environments of man into one single realm. Looking at the world like this, is becomes apparent that regional myths no longer fulfill a unifying purpose; quite on the contrary, they almost certainly lead into conflict. What we need at this point of evolution is a universal yet unique myth.

### 19. Globalism vs. Nationalism

Harari brilliantly explains in a [discussion](#) with TED curator Chris Anderson like an old school systems theorist why nationalist governance models fail in a globalized environment; why e.g. national policies can't find answers to ecological or ethical questions of global dimension. I am intrigued, because this short dialogue, essentially operates as a rejection of the political system put forward in Henry Kissinger's brilliant, but somehow outdated oeuvre [World Order](#). Kissinger perceives the national state as the smallest unit of a global order, whereas Harari argues for a global order without these units. Kissinger speaks to us in the 21st century – with all due respect - as a fossil from a different era, whereas Harari's post-national POV meets the Zeitgeist of an increasingly global audience.

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[6] R. I. M. Dunbar, 'Social Network Size in Humans', Human Nature 14:1 (2003), 65.

I feel though that both Kissinger and Harari propose world orders which are same in essence. Why? Because both talk about governance from without. Harari seemingly hasn't realized this flaw in his argumentation, but his lack of vision for how a global government should look like is telling. Any governance from without will be sooner or later corrupted by mankind. The only governance which can lastingly change such dynamics comes from within.

## 20. Search Within

Improving the performance of an organization requires to look at change from many different perspectives as we have seen. One is concerned with the intelligence of the organization as system; the other with the intelligence of its employees as individuals. The former is in my opinion best approached with systemic theory, the latter with professional key person coaching. Challenges which organizations have to face can rarely be resolved by resorting to only one of these techniques. As the complexities of our business environments increase, they require both: systemic analysis for the organizational development and professional coaching for the individual development; but even then they might fail because of niche and regime dynamics which were not considered.

After trying to understand my organization from without by engaging an experienced systemic coach and realizing that considerable dynamics in the organizational and regime spheres were out of my reach, I resorted to the second technique: professional key person coaching to develop so called soft skills, which I consider more and more as the true hard core of our human software. Genuine change can only begin within each one of us, that is in the individual sphere of our osmotic model.

I am still convinced that systemic theory can support executive management to lead an organization towards healthy growth (read growth here not necessarily in economic terms). But living in an era which proposes concepts like the sharing economy, it seems that my obvious first choice of searching without was, well, worth a try, but indeed, wrong. If only a few try to manage change in an environment of increasing complexity, they require superhuman understanding of regional dynamics in a global world. If we trust though, that every human being is equipped with sound self guidance, capable of finding its path towards growth (again not necessarily meant in economic terms), then we share this burden amongst many not only a few. We redistribute the responsibility for the challenges of our era amongst all who want to bear their fair share or even more.

## 21. The Mindfulness Revolution

Back in fall 2015 I attended a meditation workshop in Shanghai and read [The Mindfulness Revolution](#) right afterwards. Quite a few essays in that indispensable book stroke a cord, but it was the editor Barry Boyce's summary at the very end, which

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confirmed my belief that positive initiatives are needed in every corner of our societies, organizations and families. His reference to Chade Meng-Tan's approach at Google came closest to what I myself was looking for: helping people to find their purpose in work. After all it is work, where we spend roughly half of our waking hours. So it must be a good starting point to extend the lessons learned into other realms of our lives.

I followed up with reading [SIY](#) early 2016 and was baffled by quite a few things Meng and me have in common: there was the desire to boil down all the new age teachings of the last decades, the religious doctrines of the last two millennia, latest brain research and empirical data from the field of positive psychology into a rather scientific package of a training course, which can't be easily dismissed by atheists or secular thinkers. It felt as if I had found in Meng a brother in arms, who had done a lot of work on which I could build on.

A few days and a couple of emails later I had a phone conference with a lady at the San Francisco based [Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute](#). San Francisco calling Shanghai. Wow! I thought and learned that no SIY course had been taught in China and that my subsidiary would be the first company to engage a SIY trainer. I was totally enthusiastic until I asked for the costs involved, because I was told that a 2-day course would set us back by USD 30k plus travel expenses. Not really a bargain. At this point I realized how naïve I had been, believing that good things - remember Meng preaching world peace - can actually be affordable. I expressed my disappointment and told the lady on the other end of the line that I would have a maximum budget of USD 10k. She remained outspokenly nice and referred me to a list of regional SIYLI [certified instructors](#), where I found the only Chinese speaking trainer being based in Penang, Malaysia.

In yet another long distance call, Oxford trained chemist and Penang University lecturer, Dr. KarKheng Yeoh, agreed after an initial offer of USD 15k on a course fee of USD 10k plus travel expenses. He told me that he was willing to reduce his standard rate, because he had never been to mainland China, from where his grand parents moved to Malaysia and was eager to visit his ancestor's homeland. I was content to finally have a deal and be able to move forward with my plan, but had all along the feeling that I was victim of a grand American marketing campaign, selling an average product for an outrageous amount. Considering that high end consultants charge around USD 5k a day, it felt like a rip off to pay USD 10k for a 2-day seminar to a part time trainer. And although I completely understand that copyright and other IP considerations are a serious issue for companies being active in the consulting & training industry, I was irritated to learn that no training documents would be provided.

Dr. Yeoh and me agreed to implement the training during the subsidiary's mid-year sales meeting in early July 2016. It should though never take place, because my own dismissal as the subsidiary's managing director would make it impossible.  In a lucky turn of events, I was assigned by my HQ to fill in for Dr. Yeoh and work out this

document. It thus serves both as deliverable for my assignment as well as a stepping stone to realize my own dream: contributing to a world in which our children can find meaning and satisfaction more through joy and less through trauma.

Meng's and my own dream are not to different after all. His book is though not a FOC self-help course like Kabat-Zinn writes in the foreword; it takes a lot of guidance to go through the material and reading the book alone won't be a transformative experience as we shall see later. Probably knowing this, SIYLI turned into a for profit enterprise which makes guided courses available; although absolutely unaffordable for the average person. Again, I have to point out that SIY seems to be for those who are already good (and wealthy), but want to become great. What about those 80% who are not even good (and wealthy) yet?

## 22. Intangible Assets

Truth to be told I was very much tempted to turn this program in a for profit enterprise myself. And I can't tell you how much I regret having spent all that time setting up next to the non profit platform mingong, a for profit, Hong Kong incorporated enterprise, called [Telos Pi.](#) It truly was an enlightening moment, when I realized that I am about to follow Meng's footsteps. If we have the same dream, less suffering and more happiness for mankind at large, the insights of these programs, whether they are called Search Inside Yourself or Genuine Growth must be made available to everyone who is genuinely interested at no cost at all, and considering the pressing urgency of our global challenges asap.

The turning point for this revelation was a short stay in Hong Kong in March 2017, where I had to deal with setting up a corporate bank account. The sheer size of the HSBC main building and such a bank's detachment from its customer needs – don't let me go into details here - made me recall what Leopold Kohr and Ernst F. Schumacher wrote about the ugliness of everything big, about the necessity to think about economics as if people mattered. It also made me think again of Dan Palotta's TED talk on how we think wrong about charity. There was always something irritating in that brilliant talk which I was not able to pinpoint. In the moment I left the HSBC HQ walking towards the ferry piers in concrete gorges of financial might and between high rising steel mountains of inequality, their summits only accessible by access restricted elevator or elitist helicopter, I understood, that there is no need to compare the incomes of charity executives with the payroll of fortune 500 management. Those who work in charity do it for a purpose, not for money, they work because they feel deep compassion for those who suffer; whether "they" are men, beasts or plants. Palotta seems to have confused his priorities; he put payment over purpose and that's why his business was taken from him.

Let's watch psychologist [Barry Schwartz](#) on how we must change how we think about work. Its surely not about corrupting charity with greed, but about making non-charity

work purposeful and enriched with non-material satisfaction. Work must have the primary objective of increasing personal well-being and the secondary objective of increasing an organization's performance. The latter can only be a by-product of the former, in particular if we take intangible assets consciously into account.

## 23. Growth

Now, it is my duty to answer a final question. What is growth? And what do I mean by genuine growth? We have as a species certainly come to a point where we need to redefine growth. Economic and material growth, it seems, have been viable concepts in the past, which pulled many out of poverty and into the plenty and abundance of modern consumer societies, but more and more people feel a void opening up deep inside, while simultaneously the number of the disenfranchised grows.

While most economists and industrialist like [Olivier Scalabre](#) mainly discuss economic growth as yet again the sole solution to a well known problem, and forecast increased productivity which mankind will harvest from the forth manufacturing revolution, others like historian [Yuval N. Harari](#) or entrepreneur [Martin Ford](#) warn us of a material growth trajectory which will terminate our species and make way for the next step of evolution: pleasure maximized immortal man-machines.

Considering the finite material resources, we are endowed with on planet Earth, growth in purely economic terms is a dead end. I would even go as far as perceiving both the linear as well as the circular economy as a dead end. It won't be enough to make a choice between the two, because some parts of our behavior will not stop to be linear and a circular economy only will hamper growth. The resulting stagnation doesn't seem to be a viable outlook for the centuries to come. Imagine 14 billion people by 2100[7] most of them living in a blend of conditions like present day Tokyo and the [Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region](#), craving for more [Pachinko](#) and [Wiesn](#) Beer. More of sensory pleasure seeking for even more people can't be the answer after thousands of years of doing exactly that.

## 24. Consciousness Growth

Genuine growth then must be something different, something which cannot be solely found in the exogenous sensory sphere of being, but some resource in our endogenous existence. It must be vaster than the vastest oil fields, mightier than the mightiest streams, wider than the widest oceans. It must be an infinite source of energy and bliss which is sufficient to satisfy the cravings of up to 36 billion people by 2300.[8] A larger Oktoberfest or more Pachinko saloons won't do.

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[7] [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/longrange2/WorldPop2300final.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/longrange2/WorldPop2300final.pdf)
[8] ibid

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The physician [Alexander Lowen](#) once said that *happiness is the consciousness of growth. One can only grow in the present, if the past is made alive. If the past is cut off from the present, there can't be any future.* He did not refer to growth on a spiritual level only, but he did acknowledge that growth is quintessential to our well-being. Growth according to him is not only a psychological reality, but the ontological essence of being. Man is compelled to grow and growth it seems, is man's inevitable destiny. But what is a destiny without destination? To those who have overcome the plights of famine, disease and war the search within should be an obvious choice after millennia of suffering caused by an excessive search without.

The French Jesuit paleontologist [Teilhard de Chardin](#) wrote that the *purpose and objective of the evolution is the growth of consciousness.* Reading Lowen and Chardin together, we must come to the trivial conclusion that life is essentially about being happy, no? If happiness is the consciousness of growth and the purpose and objective of the evolution the growth of consciousness, well-being must come from growing one's consciousness. So how do we grow our consciousness?

The developmental psychologist [Jane Loevinger](#) differentiated nine levels of human consciousness and was instrumental in describing its structure. Her [ego development model](#) is based on Erik Erickson's [psychosocial model](#), and can be traced back to her work with Erickson as his assistant at Berkeley. Erickson trained on his behalf as psychoanalytic therapist with Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna Freud before emigrating to the US and establishing himself as human development psychologist at Yale, Berkeley and Harvard. With some certainty we can thus argue that Loevinger's concept of ego development is in direct thought lineage derived from Sigmund Freud who can be considered the first psychologist to formulate a human development concept, albeit purely focused on the instinctivist drive of sexuality.

Loevinger's model of ego development goes far beyond Freud's limited concept because it clearly conceives man as being more than just an instinct driven mechanistic organism. On the ninth stage, *the ego shows wisdom, broad empathy towards oneself and others, and a capacity to not just be aware of inner conflicts like the individualistic ego or tolerate inner conflicts like the autonomous ego, but reconcile and make peace with those issues. This 'Reconciling inner conflicts...cherishing of individuality' are key elements of its [Self-Actualizing](#) nature, along with a fully worked-out identity which includes 'reconciliation to one's destiny'.*

Loevinger differentiates between impulsive > self-protective > rule-orientated > conformist > self-aware > conscientious > individualistic > autonomous > ego-aware and > unitive consciousness. She perceives the development of consciousness as a process of constructing a permanent self by differentiating oneself from the monistic creative ground to deconstructing the established permanent self in order to merge back into a non dualistic creative ground.

She uses the term *creative ground* as a synonym for an all encompassing creative life force, which religious people call God or Dao. The differentiation from the creative ground entails a conscious or unconscious dualistic mindset, i.e. the belief that God and oneself are separate entities. The integration of the self into the creative ground requires a gradual shift to a monistic mindset, i.e. the belief that God and oneself are connected and partially overlapping entities. One could argue that all human beings go through this process on their journey from cradle to grave, but currently for the majority of Earth dwellers the merge into a non dualistic creative ground happens in the moment of their death and not during their conscious life time.

## 25. Consciousness and Spirituality

[Stefan Huber](#), professor for empirical religion research at the university of Bern, Switzerland, has developed about a decade ago a [religiosity structure test](#), short RST, which is meanwhile being widely used in psychosomatic hospitals to screen patients for their spirituality and has been applied in an adapted version for a [global research project funded by a German think tank](#). The test differentiates between non-religious, religious and highly religious persons and clarifies the anchoring of spiritual beliefs in the psychological personality structure. Research has confirmed that a patient whose religious beliefs take up a central position in his personality structure, responds positively to religious cognitive-emotional stimulation whereas patients without religious beliefs don't. Such information is important for psychotherapeutic intervention, where spirituality can be both a resource to facilitate healing and reduce suffering or must be considered as part of the problem at hand.

The RST differentiates between two main types of spirituality: theistic and pantheistic. Transcendence is constructed in the *theistic semantic* in form of a you-experience, which can be approached in a dialogue, usually a prayer, and which is in the person's daily life present as an interactive instance. Transcendence appears on the contrary in the *pantheistic semantic* as an all permeating principle, to which individual connection can only be established through contemplative practices like meditation and which is experienced in daily life as an inner force.[9]

Franz Fischer, psychotherapist and managing director of [Psymeta GmbH](#), was so friendly to provide a brief FOC version of the RST to participants of Genuine Growth. Please open [this link](#) and take 10 minutes of your time to evaluate your spirituality dimensions. You can forward the test to your partner to compare and discuss the role of spirituality in your relationship. Save the pdf version of your results and compare with the results after we have completed this training. Remember that there is no wrong answer. We are here to learn and grow.

It is essential to comprehend in connection with the RST that the *theistic semantic*

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[9] [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286922540_Der_Religiositats-Struktur-Test_R-S-T_Kernkonzepte_und_Anwendungsperspektiven](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286922540_Der_Religiositats-Struktur-Test_R-S-T_Kernkonzepte_und_Anwendungsperspektiven)

usually constructs a dualistic world, where God and the self are separated, whereas the *pantheistic semantic* generally constructs a monistic world, where the self can be part of God. We see here an important parallel to Jane Loevinger's concept of ego development and must conclude that a dualistic-theistic semantic, which differentiates between the creative ground and the self, and includes most adherents of monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, corresponds with lower consciousness levels; whereas a monistic-pantheistic semantic, which merges the self into the creative ground and includes belief systems like Taoism, Zen Buddhism or classic Greek Stoicism, correspond with Loevinger's higher consciousness levels. We will see later that this is a necessary generalization and that there are of course exceptions to the established rule.

I also want to point out that the color code in slide 25 was not chosen deliberately. There is a direct correlation between an individual's religious semantic and it's political mindset. Republican voters usually tend to favor a theistic semantic which is confirmed with a wide overlap of mainly Republican states and the American [Bible Belt](). Vice versa do we see an overlap of mainly Democratic states and the distribution of non-religious or pantheistic systems of faith.

## 26. Distribution of Ego Development Levels

Since the 1990s large scale psychometric assessments in Western nations have shown that 5-10% of the population holds at pre-conventional, 70-80% at conventional and 7-15% at post-conventional consciousness levels. It can be assumed that this range of consciousness varies only slightly throughout different cultures, but I lack relevant data to confirm this assumption. There is though reason to assume that the distribution within these three categories varies greatly in correlation - not only but mainly - to the economic development of a certain nation. A detailed intercultural study on consciousness distribution would give answers to such questions and will hopefully be conducted in the close future.

If we take the available psychometric data as the basis from where we start from, our objective from both an individual as well as from a collective perspective is to gradually lift people into a higher level of consciousness to establish more unity and simultaneously reduced the perception of separateness. We immediately comprehend that we have just found a solid psychological argument why the resurgence of nationalism is a counterproductive development to increase general well-being, why the China Dream | 中国梦想 or Make America Great Again! are outdated concepts of a conformist collective mindset; but we also understand that individualistic tendencies which are rampant in Western societies have a similar counterproductive effect.

So, again, how do we grow consciousness and simultaneously increase well-being? What can we do, if we are not Xi Jinping, Donald Trump or Shinzo Abe who could bring a post-conformist and unitarian collective mindset at least into the political arena?

### 27. Integral Metatheory

In addition to understand how human consciousness develops on an individual level according to Jane Loevinger, we will look now into the human consciousness on a collective level. The philosopher Ken Wilber who has written since the 1970s on consciousness, has made himself a name as transcendental psychologist and has developed his own integral metatheory, which can be understood as a theory of everything, but tries to specifically explain how man evolves and into which direction. We will explore his theory's fundamental pillars in this chapter.

Wilber describes the development of the human collective consciousness in correlation with the development of human individual consciousness as a series of consciousness phases which have organically developed from the very beginning of man's capability to self-reflect and hence distinguish himself from other animals, to man's complete integration with the mind at large. Please note that although Wilber describes these phases in historical terms, it is very much his intention to highlight that all these stages of consciousness do also appear in today's world, both in individuals and society at large.

Wilber writes that *in today's world the child is born at various very early magic or "archaic" and egocentric stages, which dominate ages 1-3, transforming with magic-mythic around ages 4-8, and then ethnocentric mythic proper emerging roughly from ages 6-11 – with several substages. Adults can remain stuck of fixated at any of those earlier stages or substages. Indeed, research by Robert Kegan, of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, shows that 3 out of 5 Americans remain at ethnocentric or lower stages.*

I think it is also important to point out that we do not know when man acquired the capability to self-reflect. Modern primatologist like [Frans de Waal](#) – if I understand him correctly – believe that other primates than humans, like chimps or gorillas, do have self-reflection. In that case, we would have to assume that earliest hominid species which lived several thousands of years before homo sapiens were partially conscious. Some anthropologists might argue though that man acquired the skill of self-reflection only about 70k years ago, when it is generally believed that our prefrontal cortex grew substantially.

Wilber definitely takes a more inclusive stance and includes in his theory at least our hominid ancestors. He therefore starts his theory of consciousness development with the *magic or the archaic epoch* about 500k years ago until the Neolithic revolution. The earliest human societies were then tribally egocentric with an ecological carrying capacity of around 40 people. Their consciousness was preconventional, selfserving, selfpromoting and narcissistic.

The *mythic epoch* lasted according to Wilber from the begin of the Neolitihic revolution to the Renaissance, that is roughly 10k years BT up till the 14th century AD. Magic power shifted from the self to god figures and the formation of nations and religions, i.e.

megatribes, started. The identity shifted from egocentric to ethnocentric and man developed a strong us vs them mentality. Racist, sexist, xenophobic, anti-immigrant, hyper-terrorist sensitive, homophobic, hyperbolic patriotic, are attributes which can be attached to that development epoch.

The *orange epoch* is described by Wilber as starting with the Renaissance and lasting into the 1960s; it entails a shift from an ethnocentric to a worldcentric outlook. Wilber believes that 60% of the present day American population is part of this consciousness stage which is variously known as reason, rational, formal operational, achievement, accomplishment, merit, progress, conscientious and showed itself in our societies with the development of science, market economy, abandonment of slavery, the pursuit of excellence and profit.

Wilber explains that *this rational-modern mode was the leading edge of evolution until, as we noted at the beginning of this piece, the sixties, when the next higher stage beyond the modern – namely, the "postmodern" – began to emerge on a significant scale. Indeed, the leading edge of orange rational/business/scientific materialism was beginning to fail as an adequate leading edge. It had reduced all knowledge to "it-knowledge," or objectivistic-materialistic-industrialized methodology, and of the profound trinity of "the Good, the True, and the Beautiful," it had thoroughly ditched the Good and the Beautiful as it reduced almost everything to nothing but realities acknowledged by the sciences of sensorimotor physics.*

The *green epoch* is also called postmodernism, because *it came after, and reflected on, the products of modernism and decided that this rational-modern mentality had, in too many ways, veered of course in destructive and counterproductive ways.* Wilber defines the start of the green epoch with the 1960s, when as we all know, the frustrations about patriarchal power systems culminated in the social upheavals of the [flower power movement](#), anti-Vietnam demonstrations and the emergence of a green political force in Western Europe. It was also the era when Eastern European nations like the Czech Republic in the [Prague Spring](#) showed for the first time since WWII a clear intention to go off communist USSR course.

We have seen before in chapter 18 that our physical environment plays a crucial role in the anthropological understanding of globalization. It plays the same crucial role in the emergence of the green epoch, because discontent with mainstream culture and behavior did only gain momentum when the degradation of the common environment of a populace forced till then orange parts of the population into an alliance with already green trendsetter.

[The Economist](#) wrote in a 2013 article that *all industrial nations one day hit an environmental turning-point, an event that dramatises to the population the ecological consequences of growth. In America that event occurred in 1969 when the Cuyahoga river in Ohio, thick with pollutants and bereft of fish, caught fire. America's Environmental*

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*Protection Agency was founded the next year. Strict environmental laws passed by Japan in the 1970s followed the realization that poisonous mercury spilled from a plastics factory was claiming thousands of lives around the bay of Minamata.*

In other words, the ecological consequences of material growth are the common denominator for man to realize that he himself and society at large has gone off course. But it is only a minority which realizes that behind this physical degradation lies a profound spiritual degradation, that our physical environment is always a mirror of our spiritual inner realities. Thus, argues Wilber, the leading edge of evolution, represented by the governments and boards of the most advanced and most powerful nations and businesses, noticed that it had to change direction and had to try something new.

Wilber continues to explain that since the 1960s it was *green's accomplishment, by introducing a 4th person perspective that could reflect on - and hence criticize – the 3rd person system of orange, to differentiate those orange, monolithic, static, non-permeable systems, producing, not a single given world system, but a rich multicultural display of an almost limitless variety of differentiated systems. That was the "true" part. The "partial" part was green's failure in a performative contradiction of directly expressing a hierarchical view while simultaneously denying all hierarchical views.*

*If there was one line that summarized the gist of virtually all green postmodern writers (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Bourdieu, Lacan, de Man, Fish, etc.) is that "there is no truth." Truth, rather, was a cultural construction, and what anybody actually called "truth" was simply what some culture somewhere had managed to convince its members was truth … Postmodernists most definitely and strongly believe that it is universally true that there is no universal truth.*

*The originally healthy postmodernism increasingly became an extreme, overblown, self-contradictory, utterly dysfunctional relativism, which soon collapsed almost entirely into nihilism and narcissism*, i.e. a collective regression into the magic red epoch. Wilber concludes that *nihilism and narcissism bring evolution to a traffic-jam halt*, which explains why Donald Trump won the 2016 US presidential elections and why Britain voted for the Brexit. The electorate did in both cases not support the contents of whatever subject was at line, but it did show its preference for a truth, in both cases the ethnocentric amber truth of two ailing empires, over no truth, that is the arrogant and derogative attitude of the democratic party under its helmswoman Clinton and the indifferent and snobbish air of the the British Labor party under its helmsman Cameron.

### 28. The Beauty of the Beast

Robert Bly's [Iron John](#), which I recently devoured, is about unearthing the hairy man in our postmodern douchebag identities; a part of ourselves which we have lost during and because of the industrial revolution, the separation of labor and the subsequent destruction of sacred social entities like the extended family. [Ken Wilber's Trump and](#)

the Posttruth World is about exactly the same issue, but from a collective perspective. Wilber explains that it is the aperspecival madness of the postmodernist elite, which neglects its prior states of amber and orange consciousness that put Trump into power.

Its mostly the same people who attend the mythopoetic workshops which Bly initiated in the 1990s who have voted for Trump: disenfranchised white Americans; the squeezed middle class, which has lost in the course of globalization not only jobs but also identity and self-worth. Bly argues for embracing the hairy being, i.e. our animal nature, within; Wilber argues for the embracing of our own evolutionary truths, the amber and orange truths of a collective past which dates back to stories like Iron John, which was most likely written in a pre-Semitic era, i.e. probably more than three millennia ago. We might have partially evolved into postmodernist intellectuals, but we remain animals and as such Iron John stays our all reality as much as the amber and orange epochs stay a reality not only as our evolutionary past and partial truth, but as a slippery slope each one of us can go down every moment of mindlessness.

Wilber packs his vast and broad thinking into the new and sometimes alien terminology (aspectival madness is only one of many neologisms) and novel orthography (like posttruth, leadingedge or metatheory) of his integral metatheory's framework. Bly uses the poetry and prose of myths, sagas and fairy tales to show us, what we have lost, to become what we are and why we suffer as we do. Both authors share a common message: let kindness and inclusion heal individual and collective scars. Let us heal in community, instead of suffering in lofty isolation.

He explains Trump's rise to power essentially by describing two dynamics: the increasing aperspectival madness of green, which is stuck in nihilism and narcissism; and the ethnocentric force of amber which feels itself ignored by green. There is though a third dynamic, which I am surprised that Wilber does not even mention with one word: the rise of China, which explains to a large extent both 1. the disenfranchisement of the American middle class being ditched more and more into a growing lower and lower middle class by the merciless breakers of the liberal US labor market and the indifference of America's elite; 2. the resurgence of ethnocentric amber as an answer to the threats of globalization most clearly identified in the loss of America's leading hegemonic role.

Henry Kissinger did a marvelous job to describe in World Order exactly the latter dynamic using the sleek terminology of a seasoned diplomat. He draws striking parallels between the rise of Germany before WWI and the resulting change in the balance of powers and the rise of China as a new player in the competition for global hegemony. I genuinely believe that one can not fully comprehend the course of evolution without understanding China's history, present conditions and envisioned scenarios for its own future; and although it amounts to heresy to criticize Wilber's broad thinking, I blame him of a US-centric POV.

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The leading edge of evolution has in my opinion left the US and will not return, neither through a healing green - a completely irrational thought, because green can not heal on its own terms in a political multi-party system which is poised to create a we vs. them attitude, a fight for resources and voters with the consequence that an integral view can never be attained for reasons of political system failure - nor by evolving into turquoise for the same reasons, in particular though, because the US would have to leapfrog evolution from having regressed to amber-orange to a far away turquoise. A recent talk titled [Calexit](Calexit) showed another scenario for the US: California's pull out from the United States of America; an ethnocentric split of progressive and wealthy Californians from the mainly conservative rest of America (ok, apart from the Northern East Coast). California in the foot steps of Cataluña, which wants to split from the less progressive and less wealthy rest of Spain since eons ago.

Quite on the contrary there is a genuine chance that the political one party system of the PRC must evolve from its current amber-orange state of ethnocentric excellence and profit seeking into an orange world-centric outlook, which would - lucky China - at the present moment - coincide with the Chinese elite's self understanding of China being - again as most of the last two and a half millennia - the gravitational center of humanity; and from there in could continue its fast track evolution (serious China watchers won't be surprised) to a non ideological integral turquoise, which truly embraces more than only it's own truth, simply because the Chinese mind never believed in absolute truths and could therefore not fall victim to postmodernity's nihilism; and most importantly because the Chinese one party system provides a political arena, which is trained since 1949 to accommodate different fractions within one decisive power aggregate, and thus is because of its system's structure poised to move towards the next stage, the leading edge of evolution.

But even if China will not manage to take over the leading edge I would bet my money rather on Germany than the US. Germany per se, and Europe in general has already a larger fraction of its population on the integral consciousness level than the US and would therefore and because it did yet not suffer from a collective regression to amber-orange, find it easier to reach the magical threshold of 10%, which is according to Wilber required to tip the consciousness of a society at large.

It is also in the case of Germany important to note the systemic frame conditions. Contrary to China and the US, Germany is not a superpower with no real rival in its vicinity. Germany is surrounded by similar sized nations, itself threatened by the rise of a powerful Turkey and a KGB led Russia, and recalls from two bitterly lost WWs that it can not take the route of ethnocentric amber once again. Germany is therefore on track to take over a responsible leadership role not only for Europe, but probably for the world at large.

The Brits have unconsciously felt that the center of gravity has shifted from Western Europe to Central Eastern Europe, from Brussels-London-Paris (let's be frank here:

Bonn was never a serious contender) to Brussels-Berlin-Warsaw and have therefore, hurt in their imperialistic self understanding, decided to leave a holarchical, to date only commercial empire, which is now steered from the geographical continental center of Europe, not from the periphery of a group of islands. With triggering Art 50 of the EU constitution Great Britain has vaulted itself off evolution's leading edge. It showed preference for exclusion over inclusion and this behavior violated the basic rule of growth holarchies (another of Wilber's ingenious neologisms): accept and integrate earlier stages of evolution; don't cling on to ethnocentric amber-orange if the general tendency points already towards integrative turquoise.

Again, it is Kissinger who brilliantly explains in World Order that it was the primary interest of French foreign policy, the main political power on continental Europe, for over 300 years to keep the German speaking territories between Denmark and the North of Italy apart; because since Cardinal Richelieu the French knew all too well that a unification of the strongly split Germanic kingdoms would create a political entity which would surpass all others in economic might and could multiply that might with its geostrategic position.  Germany has failed twice to achieve this goal by force; the EU has bestowed upon the German speaking lands though for the first time in history a peaceful unification within the larger unification of up to date 28 European nations, and the EU member states have therefore – unconsciously – put Germany into leadership. It is this time though not a leadership which it takes by force, but by assignment. And this is, what I think, the true self-correction of evolution.

### 29. Evolution and Education - AQAL

In any case, if humanity intends to support evolution's natural growth, rather than continue to obstruct the creative ground individually or collectively, it must reform its education systems, and Wilber has recognized this fundamental system flaw like nobody else. He writes that as the _boomers_ [generation born between 1946 and 1964] _themselves began taking over education in this country, and significantly shifting it so that it emphasized, first and foremost, a movement not of "teaching the truth" - because there is no truth" - but instead promoted "selfesteem". And what they discovered - as a Time Magazine cover story reported - is that promoting selfesteem, without anchoring it on actual accomplishments, simply ends up in increasing narcissism. Deeply egocentric and ethnocentric interior worldviews must be fully understood and addressed - through, among many other things, a deliberately developmental education._

Wilber explains that _the role of the leading edge of evolution is to define an effective education and provide, indeed, actual leadership. In particular, in a world of aperspectival madness it can be leadership alone that provides a way forward - real leadership stares into the face of a notruth, nodirection, novalues world and says: it is simply not true that there is no truth; there is most definitely truth, and it lies in this direction; and it is so radiantly genuine and attractive as it provides a believable path into an uncertain future, that it galvanizes vast numbers to follow it forward._

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A leadership of genuine growth must then take up this responsibility and start its value based work with education combining in its first action towards growth the two most important tasks of evolution's leading edge: firstly, reform education based on the integral metatheory with a full shift from a focus on teaching the notruths of the material world to teaching the truth of mankind's spiritual community, a shift from the AQAL right side quadrants to the left side quadrants, a shift from forcing information into a child's brain (that is the orange education model of the industrial revolution which wants all children to become diligent engineers and scientist to help build a strong nation) to teach children first and foremost the left quadrant's wisdom through increased interpersonal social interaction and integration; and then, secondly, based on that help them discover their unique talents and gifts in order to tap into their fullest potential whether this is as a scientist or engineer to build our Earth into our common home beyond imagination or as an artisan, gardener, craftsman, artist, nurse, teacher or caretaker to increase the Good, the True and the Beautiful -  of which we have yet not enough.

Ken Wilber thus answers probably the world's foremost teacher's question about the future of education. Ken Robinson recently said that there is a climate crisis, a crisis of natural resources, but there is also a human resources crisis, a crisis in education. *I meet all kinds of people who don't enjoy what they do. They simply go through their lives getting on with it. They get no great pleasure from what they do. They endure it rather than enjoy it, and wait for the weekend. But I also meet people who love what they do and couldn't imagine doing anything else. If you said, "Don't do this anymore," they'd wonder what you're talking about. It isn't what they do, it's who they are. They say, "But this is me, you know. It would be foolish to abandon this, because it speaks to my most authentic self." And it's not true of enough people. In fact, on the contrary, I think it's still true of a minority of people. And I think there are many possible explanations for it. And high among them is education, because education, in a way, dislocates very many people from their natural talents. And human resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves. And you might imagine education would be the way that happens, but too often, it's not. Every education system in the world is being reformed at the moment and it's not enough. Reform is no use anymore, because that's simply improving a broken model. What we need -- and the word's been used many times in the past few days -- is not evolution, but a revolution in education. This has to be transformed into something else.*

I paraphrase what I have said many times before: the degradation of our physical world reflects the state of our spiritual world. We first have to clean our minds and bodies in order to build an environment which nurtures not only humans but all living things. This cathartic process is reflected by shifting our educational focus from the right side quadrants to the left side quadrants.  In teaching kindness and compassion as the first and foremost social skill, in letting children experience that they usually find their

calling and joy only by serving the larger good, not by giving in to narcissistic desires, in shifting our education focus in line with developmental psychology at least during primary years from the top left quadrant to the bottom left quadrant and only during secondary years, once a child has developed a  personality permeated with kindness, back to the right and the top quadrants, we can build the future which we all hope for.

### 30. Genuine Growth

Genuine growth is - in a nutshell - growing kindness and compassion; everything else follows thereof. [Roald Dahl](), the great 20th century children's book author, whom we know through stories like The BFG or Charlie and the Chocolate Factory once said: *I think probably kindness is my number one attribute in a human being. I'll put it before any of the things like courage or bravery or generosity or anything else. If you are kind, that's it.* He was so right. We usually first have to learn to be kind to ourselves in order to be kind to others, though. And if this answer sounds all too simple, think about it for a second: the most complex problems often hold a simple truth which we fail to recognize, because our minds are busy with other things.

If we are gentle and kind to ourselves, we can be forgiving and compassionate to others. It is this competence of engaging with "the other," this dialogue with one's neighbor, that opens the doors to the depths of the self, which helps us to realize where we can find joy and what our purpose might be. That's why the Jewish philosopher [Martin Buber]() said – in an era when we yet did not slip into virtual worlds which deprive us from interaction with our fellow human beings - that psychological illnesses do grow up between people, not within them; and why [Viktor Frankl](), the great psychiatrist who survived the horrors of Nazi concentration camps wrote in Man's Search for Meaning: *For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, as personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself. Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it.*

In an increasingly globalized world this cause, which is greater than oneself, can most likely not anymore be found with an ethnocentric perspective. We have to go beyond our families, tribes and nations, engage with people as much as possible, in particular in an era which is defined by spending more hours in front of screens than in human company, to understand genuine needs in order to genuinely grow. We shall nevertheless not forget that the divine and the lessons life wants us to learn are generally found in our own front yard, in our daily routines and most frequent acquaintances. So even though our cause might be of a global dimension our primary purpose is to mindfully interact with our immediate environment, to literally let the flowers in our front yard bloom. I admit that this is one of the biggest challenges for myself, and I have to ask not only once a day "Is this really important now?" when e.g. I haven't finished writing a chapter, but our son asks me to wipe his butt; as long as he can't do it himself, I guess kindness requires me to do the latter.

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The concept of separation and unity or sin and atonement has always been the central theme of major religions, albeit embedded in vastly divergent terminology and cultural frame conditions. Buddha e.g. said in the [Digha Nikaya](#) that to *build a friendship is to build wealth, to maintain a friendship is to maintain wealth and to end a friendship is to end wealth.* Jesus is quoted in the New Testament reciting the [2nd Great Commandment](#), which is considered the very essence of Christianity *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* As such we are reminded that we can only grow through the unity with our fellow human beings, and those who are closest to us are the link to all others. In the era of globalization, we can't stop at the doors of our physical neighbors. Quite on the contrary have modern modes of physical transportation and digital communication virtually converted all human beings into neighbors and potential friends. With reference to the anthropological model which we discussed earlier we have to comprehend that our neighborhood has gained quite a bit in size during the last few decades and we ought to change our mindset accordingly.

Integral metatheory's AQAL model visualizes what those sages meant more than two millennia ago. They recognized that the only track to genuine growth leads from our heart to the hearts of others. But to be able to listen to our hearts we need to calm our minds. Whether we do this through sitting or walking meditation doesn't matter. What matters is, that we establish a daily routine of saving ourselves – initially for a quarter of an hour - onto a dry piece of land from the digital deluge to train our competence to listen within; because by being able to listen within, we will also improve our competence to listen without.

The AQAL model shows us that we need to develop in the UL quadrant from an ego to a self experience, a process which involves the detachment from one's cultural traditions, family conditioning and norms of one's originating society, which was called by C.G. Jung [individuation](#). In the LL quadrant we recognize a countermovement from an alienated single to compassionately shared experience with the objective of increasing our sense of community. In both these LeftSide quadrants meditation is a proven vehicle to success, to gradually recognize our true self and melt into unity with everything that is.

We can conclude now that only through meditation and by transforming our interior values and perspectives we can change our individual and collective actions reflected in how we handle information and how we design and behave in our social systems. The UR quadrant shows that we will change our reaction upon information intake of any kind from compulsive to causal. The LR quadrant explains that we will change our POV of inclusion from ethnocentric-tribal to global action.

The American culture critic Neil Postman described our contemporary societies' failure to grow in each of the AQAL quadrants already back in 1985 in [Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business.](#) He said that the *contemporary world was better reflected by [Aldous Huxley](#)'s [Brave New World](#), whose public was*

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*oppressed by their addiction to amusement, than by [Orwell](#)'s [1984](#), where they were oppressed by state control.* A pleasure society dominated by the entertainment industry promotes narcissistic ego personalities (UL), it goads us into compulsive response to information (UR), it favors systems which are regulated by peer pressure, and it creates experiences which can be generally described as masturbation.

We read in chapter 24 that from a paleontological POV the *purpose and objective of the evolution is the growth of consciousness*; and we learned that from a psychotherapeutic POV *happiness is the consciousness of growth.* The antipode of growth is stagnation, but the antipode of happiness is not unhappiness, its boredom; because it is conscious or unconscious boredom which we experience in a state of stagnation. If a close friend asks me, I might answer I am unhappy, but what I experience is actually boredom; and that's what Huxley described as a collective psychological phenomenon in Brave New World.

Our focus on material growth, on the RightSide quadrants, brings consciousness growth to a full stop; and it is boredom or a neurotic compensation behavior as its visible symptom which is the first and safest sign that we are off growth track. Genuine growth is not always pleasant, but certainly never boring. There seems to be though a direct correlation between the increase of boredom and the growth of GDP, if we read between the lines of much mental health data collected during the last few decades. We will look into this correlation in the following parts.

As a closing note to part one I would like to highlight that the we will focus on 1. how meditation can bring us lastingly out of boredom and into what I have started to call the enlightened playground, and 2. what organizational structures are required to make a collective transformation a tangible reality. We will explore these two main questions from three perspectives reflected in the AQAL UL quadrant (body, mind, spirit).

In regard to your body, I recommend that you download either [YAYOG](#) or [Keep](#) to your mobile phone and start as of today with a multiple week work out which will set you back 45 minutes a day, but will secure that you stay fit in the long run. I am far from being an expert in physical exercise and the body is surely my personal weakness in the trinity of body, mind and spirit, but I assure you that these apps will save you time (exercise wherever you are and whenever you want) and money (quit your gym).

In regard to the mind we will jointly explore what positive psychology has to offer and how we can implement even as laymen cognitive behavioral therapy as a vehicle to overcome even unconscious negativity. What concerns the spirit, we will focus on meditation as the key to open our doors of perception over the next few weeks and I hope that you will understand like myself what essayist [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) meant when he said: *What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters to what lies within us.*