

## **9 Distinctions of Sustainable Cultural Context**

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*You can't change an old pair of shoes into a new pair of shoes. Either you wear the old shoes or you take them off and put on the new shoes. In between you have cold feet. So what? The same with culture.*

- Clinton Callahan, from the book *Next Culture*

### **PURPOSE:**

The intention of this document is to deepen a conversation that compares the global transformation strategy of trying to change a culture's stories versus changing a culture's context, recognizing that stories emerge out of context and not the other way around.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation, which would require the shift to a 4-body map and includes engaging adulthood and archetypal initiatory processes. This is only intended to be a doorway into interesting territories.

A context is changed by changing the distinctions people use to perceive, think and decide with, in other words, a context is changed by *upgrading thoughtware*.

### **PREFACE:**

9 core distinctions establish the basic context for any culture that strives to be sustainable. Forget any of them and you end up re-creating modern culture's capitalist patriarchal empire. Beware that distinctions do not land in your mind; they land experientially in your energetic body and they change who you are. This is a brief introduction to a lifetime conversation.

This document can be emailed around beforehand, or printed and passed out at meetings for discussion, or can be transferred to flip-chart sized presentation papers used during initiatory processes. These contents are *not* suitable for Power-Point style presentations because, frankly, Power-Point is directed at only one of the four bodies (the intellect) and the onslaught of information here completely overwhelms that medium. These contents could also be used for the chapters of a book or the story-board for a non-fiction film.

### **WARNING**

These pages contain the basis of radical culture shift. Most of this information originates beyond modern culture's thought limits. Please do not assume that you can digest all of this information in a simple read-through. Trying to incorporate too many of these distinctions too quickly into your energetic body can result in significant uncomfortable

liquid states. Please take it slowly and gently, bits at a time. This is a suggestion and a warning.

## **SYNOPSIS**

The basic idea is that a gameworld (such as culture) emerges from a specific context. More than one gameworld can emerge from the same context. Each context is woven together out of a specific set of distinctions. But if you change one distinction in a context you have created a totally new context. The same way that changing one rule in football (such as playing with two different kinds of balls at the same time, or using a third team, or including bicycles in the game) creates an entirely different game.

## **UNSUSTAINABLE VS. SUSTAINABLE**

Most of the distinctions that create the context of capitalist patriarchal empire out of which modern culture emerges operate beyond modern citizens' awareness. Some are codified as laws. Most are unexamined assumptions. All are made up arbitrarily to serve various purposes, and are therefore story. It is nearly blasphemous in modern culture to say these things.

A completely different and often contrary set of distinctions creates the context out of which sustainable cultures can emerge. This means that you either function in an unsustainable context – or – a sustainable context, because the distinctions of the contexts are contradictory. It also means that modern culture cannot be fixed.

Modern culture is not broken. Modern culture is doing exactly what its context forces it to do: conquer and consume the Earth for the elite. Modern culture cannot be made sustainable.

However, one single person at a time, and then pairs, teams, and bigger groups, are building bridges to cross over the gap between contexts. Then people from either the modern consumer world, or the indigenous world, can cross to a sustainable world.

However, this 4 step journey across the bridge changes who you are. Perceptions irrevocably evolve about how things work, and why they work that way. Your thoughts, words and actions originate from a different place in you. Your stories about the world and your place in it transform into a something not even imaginable before because you now stand in a new context.

## **CHANGING STORIES VS. CHANGING CONTEXT**

Trying to shift the stories of a culture without changing the context of the individuals is doomed to failure because the new stories have no place to stick in the old context. New stories plastered over an old context quickly fall away as hubristic pretensions, naïve artifices. Decreeing new stories for a culture is like laying down rolls of Astroturf over a dump. Soon the place explodes in flames from the rotting methane underneath.

New stories automatically and authentically emerge by shifting to a new context. A workable shift strategy was developed by R. Buckminster Fuller decades ago when he said: "*You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*" Through committing with all 4 bodies to the new model, new stories begin speaking for themselves.

The practical question for cultural evolutionaries becomes: “How does one build a new context?” One answer is: “Out of a new set of distinctions.”

In other words, context can be shifted through the Box-expanding liquid-state inner-personal experience of upgrading your thoughtware one distinction at a time.

Which leads to the next practical question: “How does one gain new distinctions?” One answer is: “New distinctions land in your energetic body during committed reality-hacking using the Bright Principles of clarity and possibility.” These are nonordinary instructions, but then again, shifting context is typically a nonordinary experience. The interesting offer is that through practicing your reality-hacking skills you can open new possibilities even if circumstances do not change.

## **HACKING REALITY**

Reality hacking involves refining your examination of what is really going on to the point where the gaps between the distinctions in your current context become big enough to walk through with your friends into the next context. For example, ruthlessly inspecting the modern world context reveals many gaps:

- The gap between men being priests in the Catholic Church and the same men sexually abusing children.
- The gap between the stated purpose of the Food and Drug Administration and that this organization permits pesticides and herbicides to be genetically incorporated into the food chain.
- The gap between USA, Israel, and NATO using depleted-uranium tipped Bunker Buster Bombs and tank-killing Gatling guns in the A10 Warthog warplane in Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Palestine, and the fact that the radioactive nanoparticle dust from depleted-uranium weapons is causing birth defects and multiple cancers in soldiers and civilians of every land remaining toxic for 30,000 years.
- The gap of placing your votes in the hands of political representatives who are already bought by psychopathic corporate interests.
- The gap between subsidizing supply-chain infrastructure for food being transported tens of thousands of miles by fossil-fuel powered trucks, planes and ships, and the fact that peak oil production occurred in 2005.
- The gap of paying taxes to a government that has no intention at all of ever creating a bright future for humanity.
- The gap between forcing children through schooling designed to prepare them for a college education and the failure of a college education helping to create sustainable culture.

At some point the contradictions become so visibly insane that it hurts too much to keep doing it the old way and you shift to new behavior. Ruthlessly honest introspection catalyzes meme shift.

## **THE CENTRAL ROLE OF FEELINGS INITIATIONS IN SHIFTING CONTEXT**

Your context establishes your stories about yourself, others, and the world, and therefore your experience of reality. If you change even one distinction in your current context, the whole context reorders. When the distinction is added, the old order of things dies, and the new order is not stable yet.

During this shift you will feel feelings. You might feel angry that the bottom has dropped out of what you thought was a solid reality. You might feel afraid of not getting it, of being confused, of stability never returning, of looking bad. You might feel sad about how long you did it the old way. You might even feel ecstatic joy about the new playground that just opened up for you.

The point is that if you are not yet initiated into archaic adulthood feelings, you could easily be afraid of your anger, angry about your fear, and resolutely opposed to feeling sad or truly glad. If it is not okay to consciously feel, you will block yourself from accepting any new distinction in the first place. Then your context will not shift.

Feelings liquid states are a natural and necessary ingredient to authentic change. No liquid state, no change. This is why feelings initiations are crucial and central to any real attempt to shift context. If you can't navigate feelings you will figure out some way to avoid the possibility of shifting your context.

## **THOUGHTWARE AND NEW RESULTS**

These pages of notes are from a committed band of cultural edgeworkers who have been researching sustainable-culture thoughtware since 1975. Thoughtware is what we use to think with. *Thoughtware* depicted in *thoughtmaps*, which are themselves the new models that Bucky Fuller referred to.

As clearly as the distinctions of modern culture's context consign it to unsustainability, the distinctions of next culture consign it to be sustainable. What are the central distinctions that establish a context for sustainable cultures? This document is an attempt to begin to answer that question.

New results come from new actions (Did you ever assume you could get new results without changing your behavior? This is how completely the mind can befuddle us.) New actions come from new decisions (conscious or unconscious decisions), which come from having new options to choose from, which come from new thoughtmaps that are made of the distinctions from a new context.

## **RADICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The context for sustainable culture originates in one simple distinction: Radical responsibility.

Radical responsibility means:

- You are inescapably responsible for everything. (Which "you"?)
- Irresponsibility is an illusion.
- A non-decision is a decision.
- You built your own belief system.
- There is no such thing as a problem. (A problem is a story-world created with Is-Glue when a human being declares, "There is a problem.")
- It is impossible to be a victim. (There is no one to blame but yourself.)
- What you have is what you want. (Your conscious and unconscious commitments manifest.)

- If someone else has your attention, your center, or your authority, it is not because they have taken it, but only because you have given it to them.
- You are stuck in no gameworld. (Something completely different from this is possible right now.)

## 9 DISTINCTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE CULTURE CONTEXT – SHORT FORM

There are 9 distinction-clouds that establish a foundation context out of which sustainable cultures can emerge. It should become immediately clear that omitting even one of these 9 distinctions establishes a context that promotes nonsustainable gameworlds to emerge.

1. Responsibility is applied consciousness; you are radically responsible.
2. You play 3 games.
3. You have 4 bodies.
4. You have a Box and a Being; guarded by your Gremlin.
5. There are 4 feelings and 3 kinds of emotions.
6. Stories are made with Is-Glue.
7. Low drama is not life; Low Drama is Gremlin food.
8. There are 3 worlds; the context of the space determines what is possible.
9. You are Gaia shifting to archearchy.

The illusion of presenting these 9 distinctions in a simplified fashion like this is that these distinctions cannot be understood by mere intellect – they require all 4 bodies. Plus, the 9 distinctions generate more clarity than is permitted by the memes of modern culture. It is useful to know that in any conflict of contexts, the context that has more consciousness prevails. The universe is like that, moving towards greater consciousness.

## 9 DISTINCTIONS WITH BRIEF EXPLANATIONS (a circular list)

1. Responsibility is applied consciousness. Radical Responsibility is the only option. Irresponsibility is an illusion.
  - a. (Every action and inaction generates unavoidable consequences. You choose Radical Responsibility or not – this is what is meant by *free will*. Whichever orientation you choose, the consequences will not be avoided. The context of this universe is responsibility. Responsibility is consciousness in action. The purpose of archearchal cultures is to facilitate ongoing adulthood and archetypal initiations to build the matrix in each person to hold the consciousness to choose Radical Responsibility.)
  - b. [Without the Radical Responsibility Distinction uninitiated men and women give their center and therefore their authority away, and remain children seeking security and comfort, whose greatest power is to protest and blame.]
2. You play 3 games.
  - a. (Game 1. I win, you lose. Game 2. Win-win, which degrades to Lose-lose through compromises. Game 3. Winning Happening – a Bright Principle that lacks the “I” and the “You.” Rapid Learning in a Feedback and Coaching culture, for example, is a Winning Happening game.)
  - b. [Without the 3 Games Distinction uninitiated women and men resort to the “I win, you lose” game of survival-motivated competition because it seems like the only realistic option. This blocks them from applying the true powers of nonlinear possibility and creative collaboration in Winning Happening games.]

3. Human beings have 4 bodies.
  - a. (Next culture education empowers all 4 bodies: physical, intellectual, feeling and energetic, and also all 4 brains (green, red, blue and yellow) so that people mature into delivering the services of their Archetypal Lineage.)
  - b. [Without the 4 Bodies Distinction uninitiated men and women use their over-empowered intellect to assume that choices must be connected to reasons, and through reasoning believe that their own stories are true. They are completely manipulated by cultural, political and economic stories.]
4. You have a Box and a Being, guarded by your Gremlin.
  - a. (You have a Box. You are not your Box. Neither are they their Box. You are a Being, a space of possibility through which your Bright Principles can do their work in the world. War is Box conflict that generates unconscious Gremlin food. (*There is no enemy. We are all sacrifices to evolution.* –David Gerrold) Your Gremlin is the defensive part of your Box, but through initiations Gremlin becomes the source of nonlinear possibility.)
  - b. [The Box is constructed out of opinions, beliefs, assumptions, concepts, conclusions, etc. Uninitiated women and men do not have the Box / Being Distinction. The Box remains the basis of self-experience and can only use its Gremlin for ongoing war, each Box assuming it is right, and in order to survive makes the other Boxes wrong, therefore the enemy.]
5. There are 4 feelings and 3 kinds of emotions.
  - a. (Feelings are neutral energy and information, natural resources needed for delivering the services of your Archetypal Lineage. In the free and natural adult ego state as yourself in the present there are no voices in your head. Adulthood is the gateway to the archetypal.)
  - b. [Without the 4 Feelings / Emotions Distinctions human beings remain childish, sleeping, opinionated sheep, dependent on external authority, unable to live as powerfully present change agents.]
6. Stories are made with Is-Glue.
  - a. (There are only two things in life: bullshit or nothing. Culture is in the category of bullshit – it is story. If you think your culture is real, then someone selling sunglasses, digital cameras and blue jeans will convince you their bullshit has more “cool” so you abandon your culture and adopt theirs. Beliefs are band-aids over holes in the walls of your Box behind which there is *nothing*. Initiated men and women need the nothingness that is available through those holes in order to create what is wanted and needed even if it never existed before. (*The nature of reality is groundlessness.* –Pema Chodron) This is a good thing.)
  - b. [Without the Is-Glue Distinction we humans remain manipulatable victims of political and economic rhetoric, unable to reinvent ourselves or the culture we live in.]
7. Low Drama is not life; it is Gremlin food.
  - a. (You are either unconsciously serving Shadow Principles or consciously serving Bright Principles. Sourcing High Drama is being your destiny in action now.)
  - b. [Without the Low Drama / High Drama Distinction uninitiated women and men are distracted by loud sounds and bright flashes and lose control over their attention. If a company can get your attention, they get your wallet. Whatever part of your underworld you don’t own, owns you. When your underworld and upperworld do not temper each other through being held in the same place at

the same time, you remain easy prey for the psychopaths and parasitic entities who have climbed to the top of global hierarchies.]

8. There are 3 worlds and the context of the space determines what is possible.
  - a. (Adults can take responsibility for creating, holding, and navigating energetic spaces. Every space is connected to every other space, which means you can get anywhere from here. The spaceholders may or may not be the context holders in a space. Navigating space is a core adulthood skill. Human beings are designed to fly.)
  - b. [Without the Space Navigation Distinction uninitiated men and women lose the ability to notice what space they are in, and also lose the capacity to shift – in nearly no-time – to a space with infinitely more interesting possibilities than what seems available in the present space. Without engaging the highly entertaining multi-dimensional opportunities available in moment-to-moment life the uninitiated need to be entertained by media, or need to use drugs, alcohol and shopping to deaden the sensations of boredom.]
9. You are Gaia shifting to archarchy.
  - a. (This is the *Second Copernican Revolution*: not only does the universe not orbit around the Earth, the Earth does not orbit around human needs. Humans cannot own the Earth; the Earth owns you. Concepts of owning land, mineral, or water rights, or intellectual property is like a child thinking he can own the sandbox. Gaia is copyleft and open code.)
  - b. [Without the Gaia Distinction uninitiated women and men do not realize that *capitalist, patriarchal, and empire* are three suicidal paradigms. Modern culture is at child-level responsibility because subscribers to the modern culture context are making eco-cidal messes with no intention at all of ever cleaning them up. Next cultures start at adult-level responsibility and are centered around facilitating the very-personal initiatory life-shifts from matriarchy and patriarchy to archarchy.]

## LIST OF THOUGHTMAPS FROM THE 9 CONTEXT CLOUDS

(NOTE: These thoughtmaps are from Possibility Management. There are many more where these came from...)

(NOTE: To receive free matrix-building experiments to try every three weeks by email you can register for SPARKs (Specific Practical Applications of Radical Knowledge) at this link: <http://www.ncrtc.eu/Newsletter.198.0.html> or by writing to [sonia@nextculture.org](mailto:sonia@nextculture.org). Thanks for building the matrix to hold more consciousness in yourself and others. No one can do it for you. No one can stop you from doing it. Becoming the new story yourself is the most effective revolution.)

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# MAP OF RESPONSIBILITY

## OLD

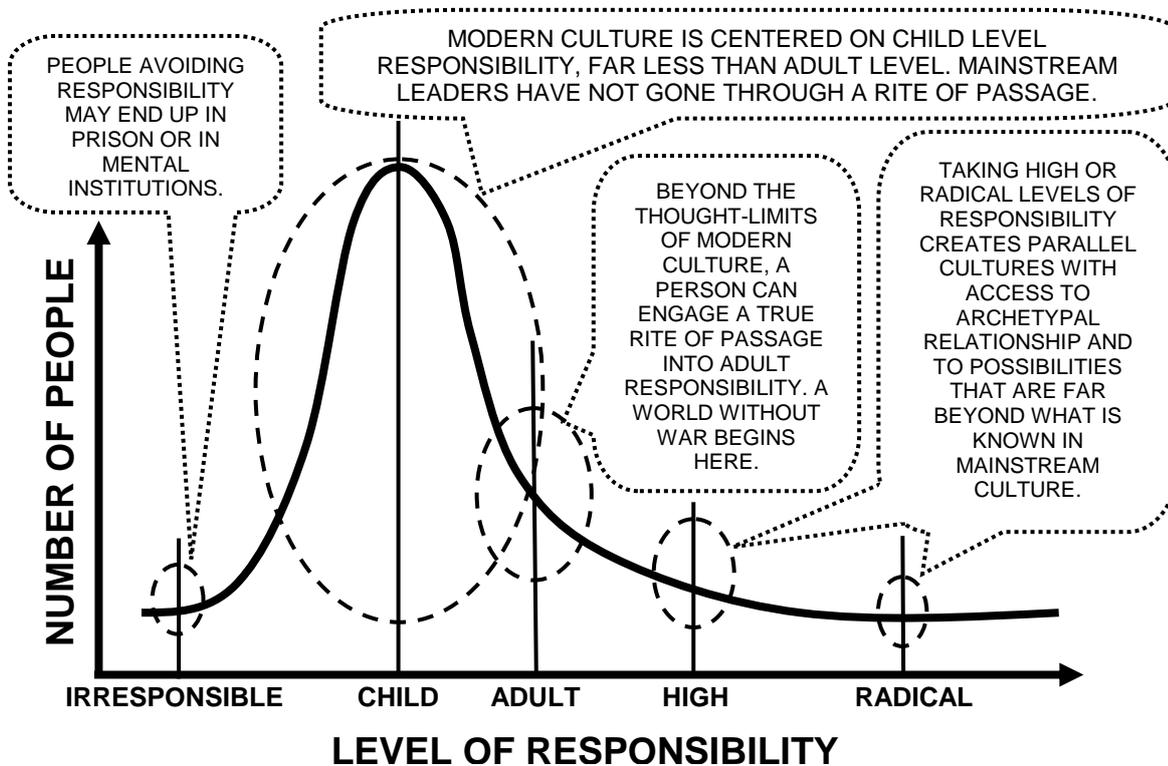
ALONE  
BURDEN  
DANKER  
SERIOUS  
MUST KNOW  
MAKE EFFORTS  
GUILTY - FEAR  
BLAMED - REACTIVE  
PUNISHED  
CONSEQUENCES  
MUST PAY - EXPENSIVE  
STUPID - VICTIM  
AVOID IT

## NEW

BEING AT CAUSE  
TO CREATE  
MISTAKES ARE  
ALLOWED TO LEARN  
POWER - AT SOURCE  
CHOICE  
TEAM - RECEIVE  
& GIVE HELP  
FUN - FREEDOM  
INDEPENDENCE  
SERVE - SOMETHING  
GREATER  
MAKE THINGS BETTER  
OPPORTUNITY  
NOT VICTIM  
COURAGE  
LEADERSHIP

## MAP OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CULTURE

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When a child makes a mess, who cleans it up? The adults clean it up. Modern culture is classified at *child level responsibility* because modern culture makes horrific messes with no intention of ever cleaning them up (e.g., nuclear wastes, children on brain drugs, deforestation, greenhouse gases, peak oil, over fishing, unsustainable lifestyles, etc.). Experiments with creating new sustainable cultures are becoming more plentiful and more powerful. For example, the number of known international NGOs has grown from 6,000 in 1990 to 26,000 in 2000, to over 40,000 in 2008. (Sources: *High Noon: Twenty Global Problems, Twenty Years to Solve Them*, by J. F. Rischard, p.48, <[www.rischard.net](http://www.rischard.net)>, and <[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)>). You can connect with others of similar interest and exchange with them in a committed community of practice. Then if you establish critical connections to other communities of practice, you build a system of influence that facilitates the emergence of next culture. If you do your part by handling the jobs that land on your bench, *the emergence of next culture is self-organizing*. (For more on this, see <[www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/using-emergence.pdf](http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/using-emergence.pdf)>).