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## ***The Psychology of Denial – and Suggested Co-operative Routes to Sustainable Well-ness***

At the end of the 2009 Yearly Meeting of Quakers in Canada, our Friend, Bill Curry, asked me what I knew about ‘the psychology of denial’.

Readers of my writing will know that the Fair World Project touches on all matters (it is a form of ‘Wholosophy’ - as described below) and that, by training, education and choice I am a research and teaching chemist.

In this divided world – at the end of the ‘first phase of the enlightenment’ – it might be considered that a chemist should stick to chemistry and a psychologist to psychology.

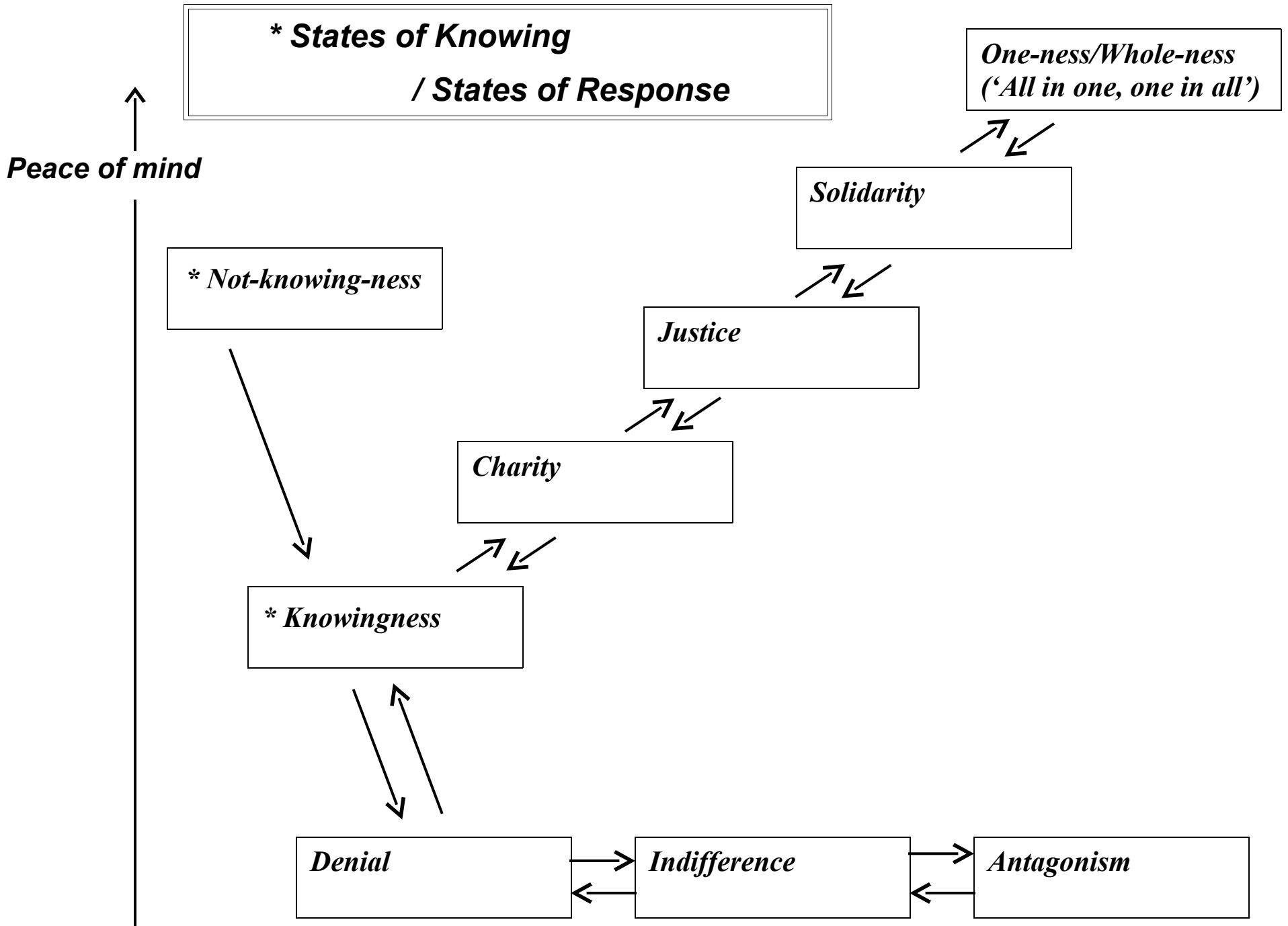
But, in this new world – at the start of the ‘second phase of the enlightenment’ – we are (all!) in the process of understanding (‘standing under’ – in awe) the relationships that hold ‘the all as one’: moreover, since chemistry is the science of relationships, then perhaps an immersion in the findings of chemistry is no bad place to start looking at the whole.

Denial seems to be one response to ‘knowing’ (since it seems unrealistic to deny that which one has not known (however brief that knowledge might be).

### ***From not-knowing-ness . . . to knowing-ness . . . to wholeness***

In the following diagram, I’ve tried to sketch some steps from a state of ‘not-knowing-ness’, through a state of ‘knowing-ness’ and on to some responses to that state of knowledge (and later in this essay, I try to map particular variants on ways to knowing).





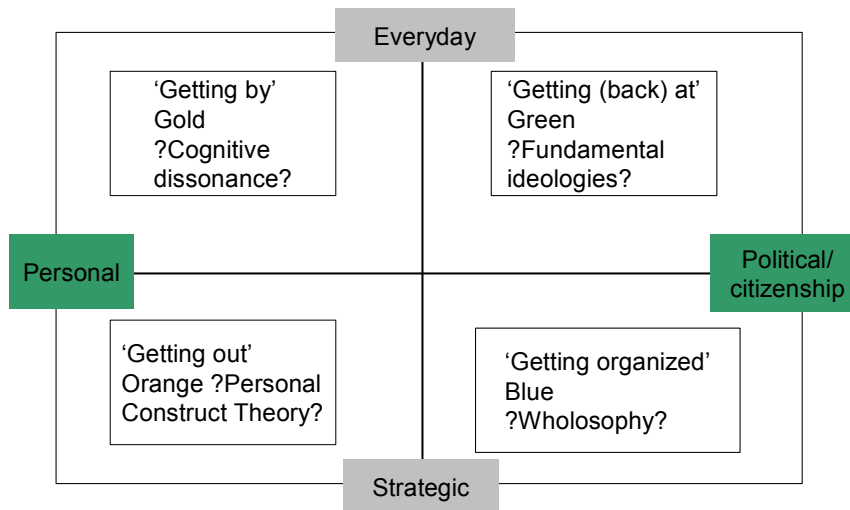


This diagram has developed, in large part, from my experience of working with community and faith groups in order to sustainably eradicate poverty and create economic (and ecological) equality.

That work (particularly as a member of ‘Shoelace Collective’ – [www.shoelace.ca](http://www.shoelace.ca) – an east-end Toronto activity centred at the Woodbine Heights’ Baptist Church in East York) consistently aims to ‘move the flag out’ along the charity—justice—solidarity continuum to a state of wholeness as part of the commonwealth/creation.

In the course of this (through the books of York University professor, Dennis Raphael), I encountered (and have extended) the following diagram:

**Forms of Agency Exercised by People in Poverty with Added True Color labels and Suggested Psychological States**  
 Based on Ruth Lister ‘Poverty’ Figure 6.1 with both ‘True Colors’ and speculative psychological state labels added



### **From denial to wholeness**

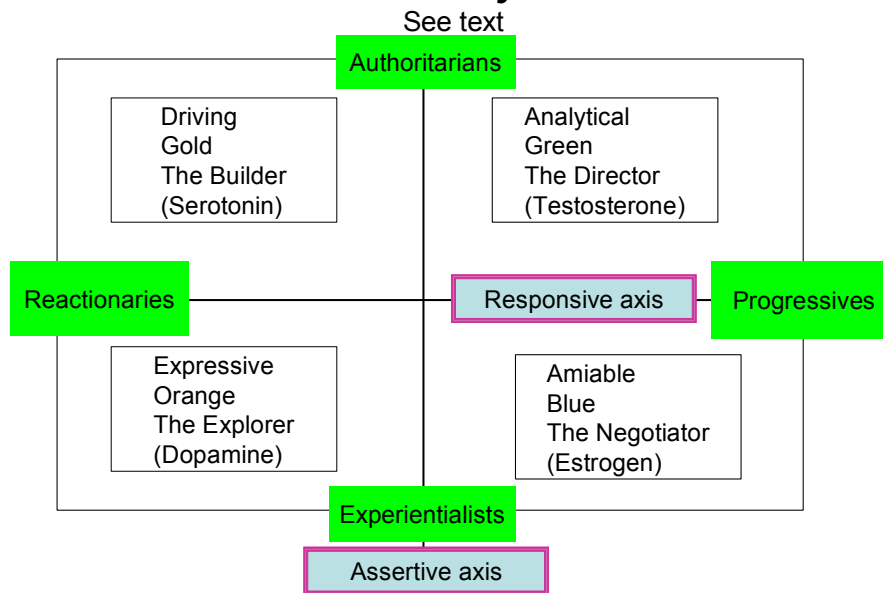
The ‘Quadrant of Denial’ or ‘Quadrant of Acceptance’ is the north-western quadrant in this diagram: people who live in poverty (that is – always have ‘more month than money’) can never be in conscious denial as to their condition (however well they live within that condition of scarcity). However, by accepting the presence of poverty - and ‘doing the best they can’ - they are effectively living in a state of unconscious (or at least not-conscious) denial: behaving, in that denial, to deny that such existence can – and must - get better.

So, I suggest, for people dominated by the authoritarian, reactionary tendency (a tendency which, although within all of us, is relentlessly in-forced by the propaganda machinery of each generations dominant/dominating ‘elites’), a state of ‘cognitive

dissonance' is created – whereby 'that which is believed' is at variance with 'that which is known'.

Likewise, a dominant authoritarian progressivist (rationalist, 'green') or reactionary experientialist (hedonist/artisanal 'orange') will be indifferent levels of denial – that a non-authoritarian, progressive alternative – in the south-eastern 'blue' quadrant is achievable. (The personality 'True Color' descriptors – gold, green, orange and blue – have a relationship, it seems, to the mix of neurotransmitters found in our brains – see below:

### **Neurotransmitters, Personality Types and Social Styles**

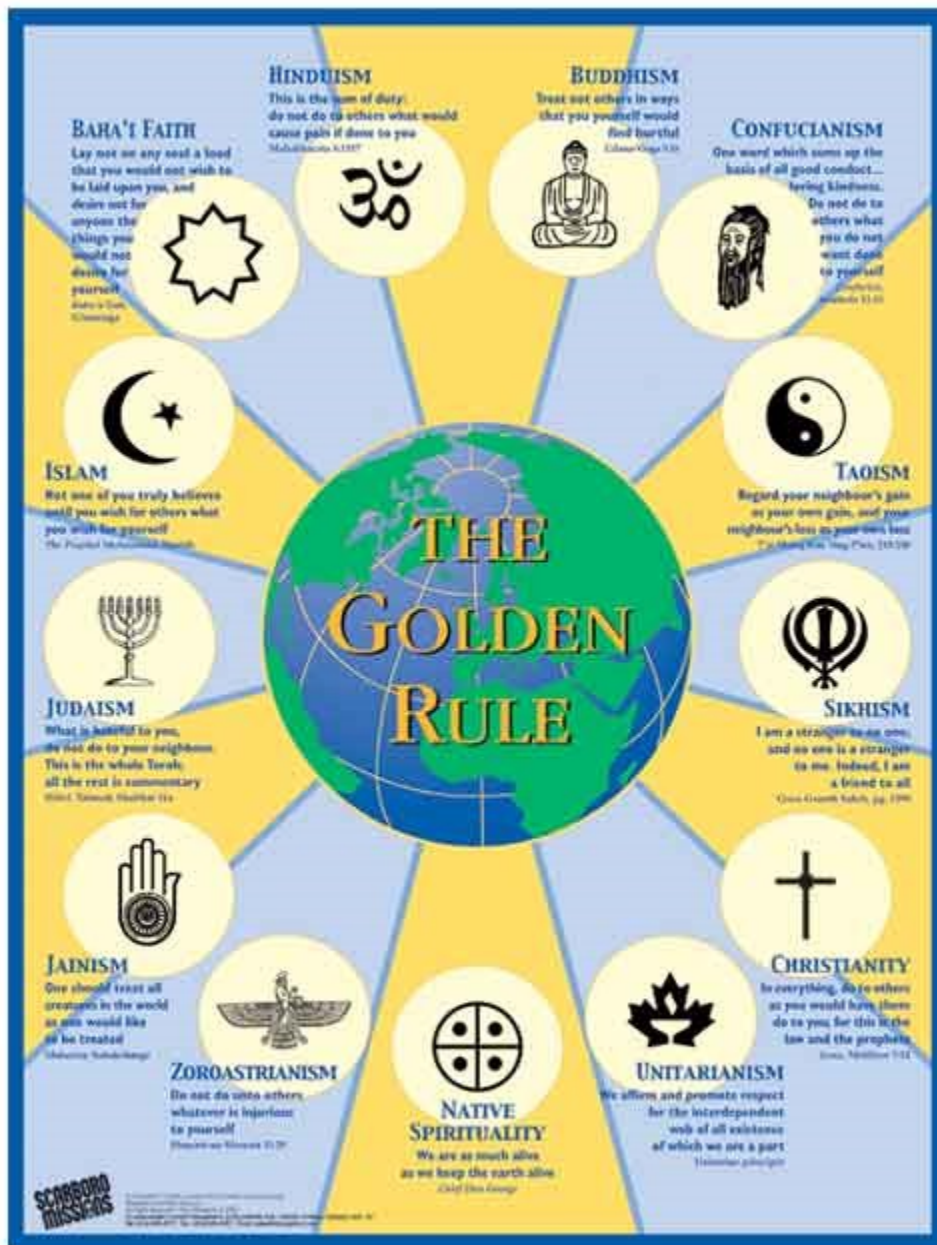


Indeed, these differing personality theories seem to have some relationship to four neurotransmitters in brain bio-chemistry. Thus, at [www.chemistry.com/datingadvice/DestinedToDate](http://www.chemistry.com/datingadvice/DestinedToDate), Kimberly Dawn Neumann explains how anthropologist Helen Fisher points towards some current research which maps the four personality types to four neurotransmitters and personality labels (eg Driving, Gold, The Builder, (Serotonin)).

Moreover, there are practical political and social implications in this knowledge – since, while each of us has a mix of the four named neurochemicals in our brains, the mix varies by country and demographic (it would seem since the 'centre of gravity' of related/consequential values is country specific – see the related work of Michael Adams and the group at Environics) and we seem to be capable of change in respect of the neurochemicals' mix. This is a clear example of the relational nature of chemistry! (And, if any reader has more on these inter-related topics, I'm keen to connect!)

(Ordinately – of central importance – poverty\* is no state into which future generations should be brought. Poverty is not only a violence experienced by ‘the poor’, but is felt by all – God and future generations included: it is something that we are all called to eradicate: see the poster for ‘The Golden Rule, below’: and see the materials gathered at the Scarboro Missions web-site [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/index.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/index.php)

\*And for a deeper analysis – which accurately places poverty as one part of a continuum of economic and ecological dis-harmony – see the evidence collected by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their recent book, ‘The Spirit Level’, and explained at [www.equalitytrust.org.uk](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk))



## ***Wholosophy and Co-operative Socialism***

In a recent series of CCPA Monitor articles (and now available from the CCPA as a 'Reader on Co-operative Socialism'), the/a sustainable, not-hierarchical and nonviolent alternative has been outlined, using the term 'Co-operative Socialism'.

At base, the call for co-operative socialism is based on two propositions:

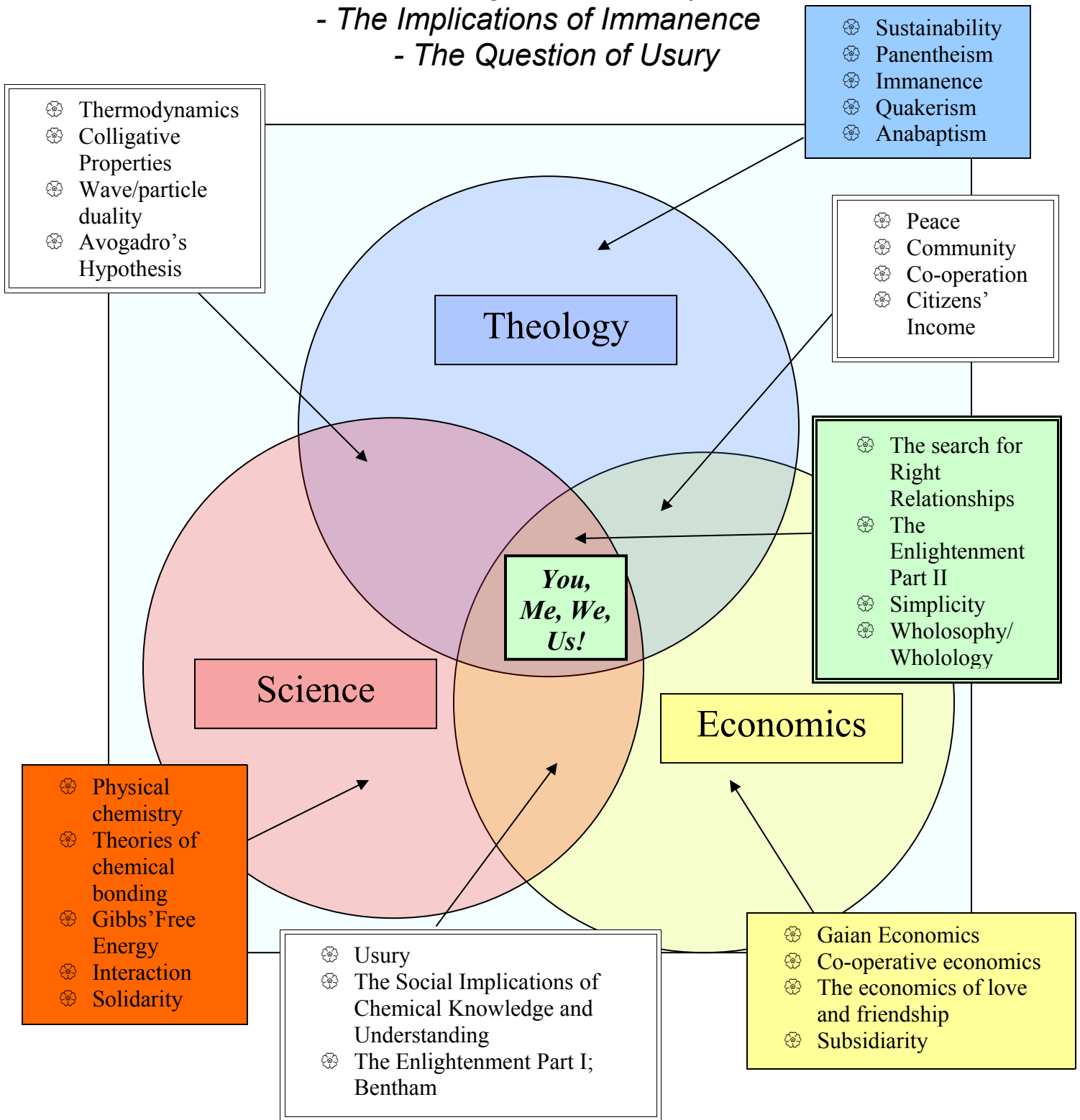
- 1) That if it is possible to live well, why should we choose to live badly?
- 2) That none of us are individuals, all of us are neighbours.

To take the second, first: I find that a helpful overview of where we are at the end of the 'first phase of the enlightenment' is the interlocking circles ('Venn') diagram shown below.



# Wholosophy: All in One – One in All

*The Search for Right Relationships:  
- The Implications of Immanence  
- The Question of Usury*



[The terms ‘wholosophy’ and ‘wholology’ are presently emergent – much of which (in London, England at least – see Janos Abel’s article in an old copy of ‘Rainbow Ark’) is nowhere near the web: yet. Janos is a proponent of ‘System Theories’ of Stafford Beer and others – a ‘proto-wholosophy’ perhaps.

Through web-searching, the site <http://wholologist.wordpress.com/about/> has the following suggestion: “The concept of “Wholology” is aiming to understanding something in its entirety, realizing the inter-connectedness and complexity of systems. The thing that you least expect to affect something/someone is probably the thing that affects it the most.”

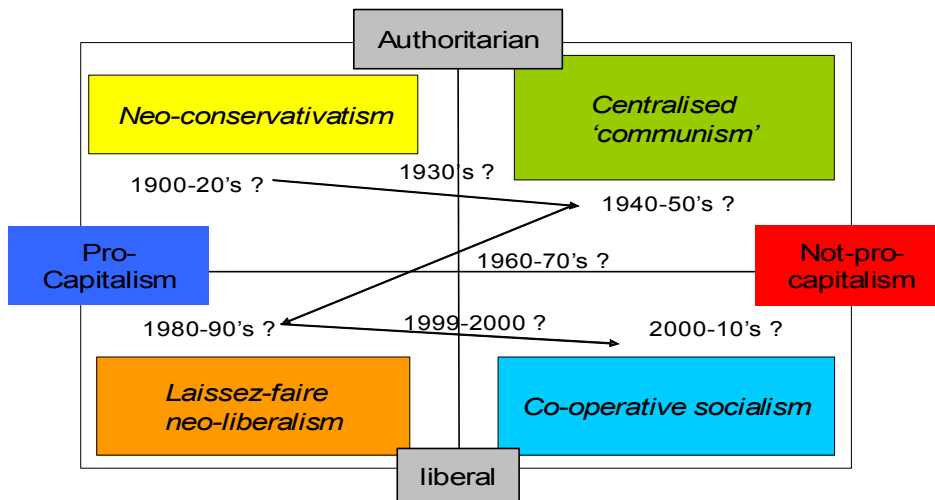
Which, I like.]

As this Venn diagram suggests, simplicity is the sweet-spot at the centre – a sweet-spot described by the actions of ‘sustainability, solidarity and subsidiarity’ (the latter being the notion that democratic decision-making be best-made at the most local level appropriate) – and, hence, the co-operative socialist notion of global commonweal being the result of a global commonwealth of national and sub-national, local commonwealths – all explicitly showing fidelity to the ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity (for which Statement, see, [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop) ).

Now, the system-fault called ‘capitalism’ is money-driven, but, deeper-rooted in our fears.

Those fears are the result of our needs – the fear that we will be hungry, cold, and alone, bored, rejected (see the ‘Needs’ essay at [www.interestfreemoney.org](http://www.interestfreemoney.org) in the papers’ section).

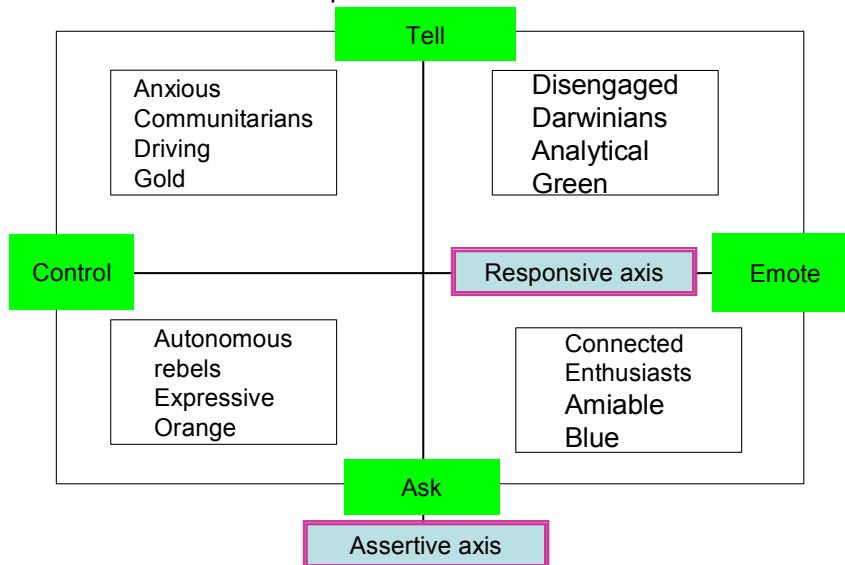
And that, points to our way ‘back home to the garden’, a sequence of steps suggested in the diagram, below.



[These correlations have proved both rewarding and difficult – the mapping used by David Keirsey seems to twist the two progressive quadrants – just like twisting a Rubric cube - so that the Blue quadrant is next to the Gold quadrant and the Green next to the Orange. This has important political organizing consequences, since, using Keirsey’s terminology, both the Gold personality and the Blue personality are both ‘cooperators’ – using the US not-hyphenated form – the ‘Golds’ being ‘concrete cooperators’ and the blues, ‘abstract cooperators’ – this perhaps explains why the reactionary authoritarians – the ‘Golds’ – might be termed, as the Environics analysis does, ‘Anxious Communitarians’. The work of Ken Wilbur also finds relevance here – see, for example, his book, ‘The Integral Vision’. A further set of proposed correlations follows:

## Social Styles

Axis and quadrant names from 'Social Style' – see the Wikipedia page'  
For quadrant labels – see text



*Jack Falt has a number of collected resources on the web – including a self-test version of the 'True Colors' test – and the [politicalcompass.org](http://politicalcompass.org) we-site is also worth a visit and self-test.*

These diagrams suggest that we are on a collective journey – and that our experiences, when accepted rather than denied, can help us see forward.

We humans cannot un-have experiences. My knees, for example, will always remember that skiing accident - and my right-hand fingers flare up when I'm stressed, due to their experience of being burnt, with high-strength hydrogen peroxide, when I was a research chemist. But we can learn from those experiences. As has been suggested, as I recall it in a back issue 'The Friend', "When knowledge is touched by the divine, it become wisdom."

### ***Sustainable and Permanent Wellness as a result of Economic/Income Equality***

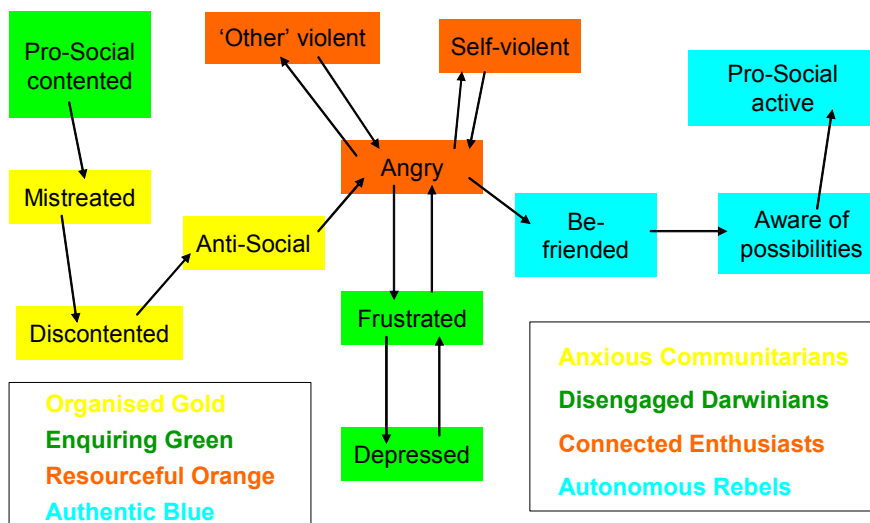
So, from the work of Richard Wilkinson and many colleagues involved in the 'Social Determinants of Health', it is now apparent that the majority of human-created illnesses – personal, family, social, environmental, and so on – flow from economic inequality.

And, in particular – they flow from the causative illness of income inequality

In a number of presentations over the past decade (including the 2004 CAOS conference at the University of Leicester’s Business School, through to the UK Society for Co-operative studies 2008 conference, *‘New Views of Society: Robert Owen for the 21st Century’*, at New Lanark Scotland) I have tried to outline policies that can sustainably and permanently abolish economic inequality.

In that New Lanark presentation, I included the following diagram: one that has been developed from a diagram in David Donnison’s book, *‘Policies for a Just Society’* – that he developed from Kay Carmichael’s *‘Ceremonies of Innocence* (a progression of development which is, itself, an example of an evolving paradigm – a process that I discuss in an ‘entry-level essay’ entitled, *‘How Rigid Is Your Paradigm’* at [www.interestfreemoney.org](http://www.interestfreemoney.org) – also in the papers’ section).

### **Mapping routes to violence - or to peace**



This diagram is intended to help us move from the present state of violence, fear and uncertainty to a sustainable and permanent global co-operative commonweal of evolving well-ness and is colour-coded to relate to the emotional/personality/neurotransmitter states discussed above.

Thus the key step, in this progression from violence to peace, is that in which the angry individual (and the angry societies) is that of being ‘Befriended’. In other words, transformation occurs when angry individuals and angry societies are engaged - by friends through actions of care and love - onto the route of awareness (not-denial) and (nonviolent) positive action.

And, this key step – and the value of ‘Being Befriended’ - brings us to the nub of sustainable and permanent well-ness – to the ‘Ordinate Importance of Equality’ (as I have entitled a relevant essay).

Now, ‘a state of friendship’ only exists between individuals when there is equality between those individuals (and, likewise, when there is equality between and within societies).

Such equality is profoundly signified, for example, in the act of hand-shaking between individuals (and societies!). That is why I’m such a proponent of the hyphen in the words ‘co-operation’ and ‘co-operative’ – the hand-shake between equal individuals is represented for me by the hyphen (and is why I have written an essay ‘Save the hyphen!’ – it’s out there on the web at ‘co-opnet’).

Now, as with so many good things, such matters are always available for (temporary) co-option by inequality.

So, for example, it is protocol (at present!) for the Queen of England to only shake hands when she offers a hand forward. Of such things are fear, insecurity and inequality made!

Among friends, by contrast, offers are equally made, considered, accepted and/or alternatives proposed.

While, among un-equals/not-equals, such actions are the stuff of power (the three forms of power, condign, compensatory and conditioned – ‘the stick, the carrot and your telly’, as I wrote about in an editorial in ‘Nonviolent Action’ some years’ ago, based on John Kenneth Galbraith’s discussion, in his book, ‘The Anatomy of Power’, of these three forms of ‘social power’ – that, strictly speaking are anti-social power!).

So, the essence of peace is equality – especially economic/income equality.

To paraphrase and develop Martin Luther King, Junior’s comment: ‘The presence of inequality any-where, is the presence of violence every-where’.

### ***In summary and conclusion***

It is clear that happy people have their needs met (see that entry level essay ‘Our Four Needs: An explanation of everything’, at [www.interestfreemoney.org](http://www.interestfreemoney.org) in the papers’ section) – and, so, live permanently and sustainably, in peace.

By reverse, unmet needs make people unhappy, unhappy people are susceptible of being violent - due to the violence that unmet needs are – and that poverty is: remember Ghandi’s reminder that ‘poverty is the worst form of violence’.

Thus, in a state of economic/income equality, all needs are met (through maximized sharing of the abundance of what is), all wants are considered, all dreams weighed in the

balance, and all possibilities subjected to discernment (discernment being the practice of collective ‘waiting upon God’s guidance’).

(Note, again, the inventiveness of the devil – fear – that, nowadays, wants are described as needs – ‘I Need It!’ – and Beveridge’s use of the word ‘want’ in ‘Freedom from Want’, of only sixty years’ ago, has been corrupted (pejorated) into ‘Incarcerated in Need’.)

Now, happily, we are, at root, emerging into a time when our (humanity’s) mis-step fifteen thousand years’ ago is at an end.

Then, we at the invention of settled, Neolithic agriculture – we as humanity in its/our state of fearfulness/sinfulness and selfishness - created the dividing (and divisive!) concepts of ‘property’, ‘ownership’, ‘accumulation’ and ‘use for personal, retained, and accumulated, profit’ were formed. And, as the commonwealth (the ‘Garden of Eden’) was (so) divided, scarcity was invented and, with that (human!) invention, fear, insecurity, threat and violence were maximized.

But, by distinct contrast, in this new, aware era (however and hurrah!), where denial is transformed through love (cherishment and friendship!) into wholeness (via the steps outlined above) we have available to us a sustainable era of wellness.

In other words, we at the start of an era of all of the good ‘co-’ prefixed words - upon which this millennium, un-deniably! is set clear course.

Emergent to us, then – now\* - is a sustainable era where growth is not the growth of pollution, short-termism - and other forms of violence- but is an emergent, evolving growth of wellness, companionship, collegiality, compassion and coherence.

{\* *“Thy will be done on earth, as it is – emphasised ‘as it is!’ – in heaven.”*

*Elsewhere – and please ask for it if you wish - I have described this as ‘The Kingdom of Heaven – by Tuesday!’ – I am/we are in urgent need of this!]*

## *Appendix:*

### **Ways of Knowing – Some routes**

Finally, the map of routes from not-knowing-ness to wholeness suggests that there are a number of routes from a state of not-know to known. Below, I sketch some possibilities and add an account of both my preferred learning/teaching style and an organizational map (the ‘Sunflower Co-operative model’) that might be used in achieving such wholosophic (horrible word?) learning.

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**Heuristic/auto-didactic route?**

Latent = Not-yet-known → recognized → learnt ⇌ practiced → known → understood

**Heuristic/didactic route?**

Latent = Not-yet-known ⇌ (re-)introduced ⇌ learnt ⇌ practiced → known → understood

**Didactic route?**

Latent = Not-yet-known ⇌ (re-)taught ⇌ learnt ⇌ practiced → known → understood

**Relearning?**

Forgotten = Was-known ⇌ recognized again/reintroduced/retaught/remembered ⇌ re-learned ⇌ practiced → remembered → understood

**Assisted-Experiential-‘Nuffield’-Heuristic/Assisted-auto-didactic route?**

Latent = Not-yet-known → introductory experience → experienced ⇌ discussed ⇌ recognized → learnt ⇌ practiced → known → understood

Which, unpacked, becomes:

Latent = Not-yet-known

→ introductory experience

→ experienced ⇌ discussed ⇌ recognized

→ learnt ⇌ practiced

→ known → understood



## *John Courtneidge, Statement of Teaching Philosophy*

### **1) Wherever possible, I stress experience before explanation:**

As a school teacher, I was an enthusiastic proponent of the Nuffield approach.

### **2) Wherever possible, I encourage co-operative activity as a necessary complement to individual enlightenment:**

Even when performing class demonstrations, my aim was the development of a shared paradigm: 'co-operative co-learning, through practical experience'.

The concept of paradigm - rather than creed, dogma or belief - underlies the experiential foundation of the Enlightenment.

For chemists to be full participants in this subject (and in the wider world) I am deeply conscious of the need for teaching and experience (of chemistry and other academic disciplines) to evolve into 'the second phase' of the Enlightenment - the 'Age of Relationship'.

Indicative of this evolving co-operative learning approach, I attach two pages from 'Science Teaching Reconsidered; A Handbook' (National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1997), which illustrate two approaches to integrating co-operative learning methods: one in a laboratory context; the other lecture hall based.

While these methods might be unfamiliar to many teachers at the tertiary level, they have become far more familiar at Elementary and High School levels – and, indeed in the management and training programs of many businesses.

As an active peace-worker, co-operator, and Quaker, I have extensive experience of practical application of the co-operative principles and values, and expect that these attributes will be of considerable value in this work

### **3) Chemistry occupies an intriguing intellectual space and, thus, an intriguing intellectual responsibility:**

Since chemistry straddles both the concrete/abstract domains and the qualitative/quantitative domains, I consider that chemistry has a key role in helping develop humanity's capacities for whole-system thinking. Indeed, I consider that one cannot be 'fully human' without an appreciation of the present state of chemical knowledge and understanding.

Accordingly, if humanity is to successfully negotiate the transition from an ecocidal present to one that is ecologically and socially responsible, then it can be reasonably suggested that enhancing reasoning skills (among others) is key.

I consider this, evolving, phase of (chemical) education being an enhanced development of 'The Fourth R' - reasoning.

*And, moreover, I expect that this teaching philosophy will be fully transferable to the Business and Society course-content.*

**4) Finally, I point out that, as both a trained teacher and social advocate, I have extensive experience in co-designing, and co-creating, successful new policy and process outcomes:**

*Accordingly, I enclose details of one of my recent activities: helping create a 'Sunflower Co-operative Model' (which was originally created for an NGO in England, 'Les Amis du Monde Diplomatique').*

*Such a co-operative model could well be applicable, say, to enhanced global collegiality.*

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Extract: Page 18      SCIENCE TEACHING RECONSIDERED: A HANDBOOK

#### Cooperative Learning in the Laboratory

Students in two laboratory sections of a chemistry course for non-science majors worked in groups of three on two experiments about acids, bases, and buffers. The experiments were devised using a modified "jigsaw" technique, in which each student in a group is assigned a particular part of a lesson or unit and is responsible for helping the other members of the group learn that material. The week prior to the laboratory, students were given lists of objectives and preparatory work that were divided into three parts. Students decided how to divide the responsibility for the preparatory and laboratory tasks, but were informed that the scores from their post-laboratory exams would be averaged, and that all members of a group would receive the same grade. Two control sections of the same laboratory were conducted in a traditional manner, with students working independently.

All four groups of students were part of the same lecture class, and there were no significant differences in age, gender balance, or previous number of chemistry classes. Although the control sections had an overall GPA higher than the cooperative learning sections (2.77 versus 2.30), the students in the cooperative sections had higher overall scores on the post-lab tests. The authors conclude that use of cooperative learning in the laboratory has a positive effect on student achievement.

Smith et al, 1991.

### Introduction to Physics at Harvard University

Professor: Eric Mazur

Enrolment: Approximately 250 students

In 1989, I read an article in the American Journal of Physics that contained a test to assess understanding of Newtonian mechanics. I gave the test to my students at Harvard and was shocked by the results—the students had merely memorized equations and problem-solving procedures and were unable to answer basic questions, indicating a substantial lack of understanding of the material. I began to rethink how I was teaching and realized that students were deriving little benefit from my lectures, even though they generally gave me high marks as a lecturer. So I decided to stop preaching and instead of teaching by telling, I switched to teaching by questioning using a teaching technique I have named peer instruction.”

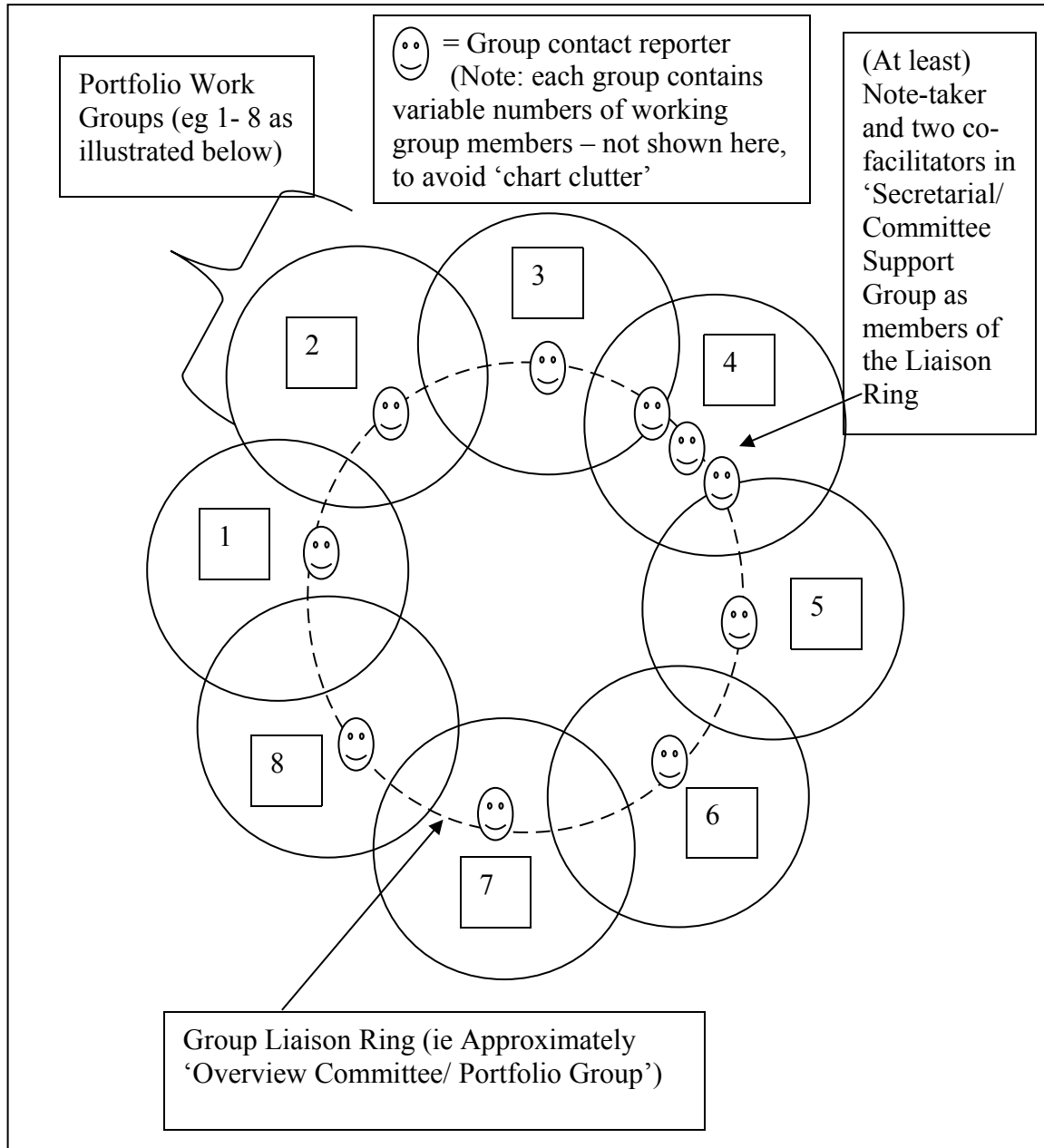
My students now read the material before class. To get them to do the reading, I begin each class with a short reading quiz. The lecture periods are then broken down into a series of digestible snippets of 10 to 15 minutes. Rather than regurgitating the text, I concentrate on the basic concepts and every 10 or 15 minutes I project a “ConcepTest” on the screen. Those short conceptual questions generally require qualitative rather than quantitative answers. The students get one minute to think and choose an answer. They are also expected to record their confidence in their answer. After they record their answers, I ask the students to turn to their neighbors and to convince them of their logic. Chaos erupts as students engage in lively and usually uninhibited discussions of the question. I run up and down the aisles to participate in some of the discussions - to find out how students explain the correct answer in their own words and to find out what mistakes they make.

After one or two minutes, I call time and ask students to record a revised answer and a revised confidence level. A show of hands then quickly reveals the percentage of correct answers. After the discussion, the number of correct answers and the confidence level typically rise dramatically. If I am not satisfied, I repeat the cycle with another question on the same subject. When the results indicate mastery of the concept, I move onto the next subject.

I have been lecturing like this now for more than four years. During this time the students have taught me how best to teach them. As for the students, nothing clarifies their ideas as much as explaining them to others. As one student said in a recent interview, “There is this ah-hah! kind of feeling. It’s not that someone just told me; I actually figured it out. And because I can figure it out now, that means I can figure it out on the exam. And I can figure it out for the rest of my life.”

## 'Sunflower Co-operative' Group Working Structure

*This is a suggested non-hierarchical corporate working structure: incorporating co-operative values and principles, and aimed at preventing both 'within-corporate' and 'outwith-corporate' anti-social and anti-ecologic violence, and achieving the group's self-identified aims and objectives.*



For suggested group portfolio identities (1-8 in schematic above), task lists, corporate working values and principles, see following pages.

### ***Example of Suggested Group Portfolio Identities***

*- (as, in this case, created for 'Les Amis du Le Monde Diplomatique' in the UK)*

The work-group list below is a suggested, illustrative allocation, organised into work-group portfolios.

1: Membership Support Group

2: Café Group

3: Outreach Group (Web, Kiosk, etc)

4: Secretarial / Committee Facilitation / Group Ring Liaison Support / Treasury Group

5: Paris and International FLMD Networking Group

6-8: Ad-hoc Project Work Groups, as needed/identified

Other organizations will be able to design their own Work Group portfolios as their work needs emerge.