Chapter 21

DIALOGUE IN SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION
Past, Present, Future

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this closing chapter, first, we briefly review the purpose of this work and highlight the learning experience offered in the chapters of this compendium. Then, we follow the path of the unfolding evolution and explore the function of dialogue conversation in the history of human and societal evolution. This path leads up to the present. Today, we face a critical evolutionary predicament, as well as, the first opportunity in the life journey of Homo Sapiens Sapiens, to enter into the evolutionary design space, create evolutionary design communities, and use the power of dialogue in engaging in the deign of our future.

2. A REVIEW OF THE LEARNING JORNEY

Developing this Compendium, we have aimed to serve a two-pronged purpose. Our first purpose was to introduce the learner to dialogue conversation as the means of collective communication. The second purpose was to demonstrate–and develop an appreciation for–the empowering and liberating power of dialogue as a means of communication for cultural creativity, social change, and future creation.

In the course of the learning journey, we started out by exploring the historical perspectives of dialogue as means of collective conversation. This exploration created a foundational base for a grounded examination of the emergent and developing characteristics of disciplined conversation. In the main body of the text, we explored the philosophical and theoretical perspectives that are sources of methodological ideas and practices of dialogue. We examined different modalities of applications in a variety of settings, and provided examples of dialogue events. We also
provided ideas and programs that serve capacity building that enable individuals, groups, and communities to initiate, engage in, and guide the disciplined inquiry of dialogue.

3. THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE IN CULTURAL EVOLUTION: THE PAST

The evolutionary journey of our species is marked by three crucial events (Banathy, 2000). The first was the appearance of the first humanoid on the evolutionary scene some seven million years ago. The journey of the biological evolution of our humanoid and Homo ancestors lasted well over six million years, when–some 50 to 40 thousand years ago --the second crucial event, the human revolution brought forth Homo Sapiens Sapiens, modern man, who started our socio-cultural evolution that has led us up today. We are now entering the third crucial event, the revolution of conscious evolution, when, it becomes our opportunity to enter into the evolutionary design space and take responsibility for the design of our future.

We cannot account for the use of conversation during the first six million year of the evolutionary journey of our species. During their journey, their communication practice was limited to sign and body language. It is only when speech became possible by the development of the complexity of our brain and our vocal organs and the emergence of when self-reflective consciousness suddenly emerged that cultural evolution transcended biological evolution and collective communication became a key marker of the “human revolution.”

In the evolution of Homo Sapiens Sapiens we can identify three Evolutionary Generations. The First Generation we label the Cro-Magnon, the second the first Farmers of the Agricultural Revolution, and the third the generation of the scientific/industrial revolution.

3.1 The Cro-Magnon

The Cro-Magnon emerged from the systemic interaction of self-reflective, sensory magical consciousness, coupled with symbolic speech, with the ability to learn, their aesthetic expression of art, their advanced technology of tool making and habitat building, and their social organization of creating a tribal society. Language ability and self-reflective consciousness were the dominant means that enabled the Cro-Magnon to engage in two kinds of communication activities. The first kind created a shared set of beliefs, values, and a collective world-view. Cro-Magnon tribes sitting around the campfires talked over the events of the day, as well as they passed on stories of the past. As time went on, the richer and longer these stories became. Telling these stories placed more