

# A WORKBOOK AND ONLINE COMMUNITY for Co-CREATING OUR SUSTAINABILITY ETHIC

## Section IV - Mapping the Territory Chapter 1 - The Mysterious Territory

*The map is not the territory.*

Alfred Korzybski,  
General Semantics

### What might we be learning and doing to discern our world more accurately?

A couple years ago, my friend Yvonne Chang and I designed and facilitated a set of seven conversations focused on ‘Spirituality through Living Systems.’ Yvonne is a student of sacred geometry, educated as a dancer and an artist; she professionally consults with individuals and businesses. Much of our design work together began with me presenting information or a construct I’d developed, and Yvonne would respond out of her deep intuition in terms of what resonated for her as well as what felt dissonant. The impact on what I had designed was profound. Sometimes we made radical changes, but more often than not we would introduce artistic or embodiment exercises that gave participants a way to internalize their learning. One day I think it hit both of us almost simultaneously that my constructs were ‘maps’ of a ‘territory,’ and it was the ‘territory’ we really wished to convey. It was the mysterious territory of life, and while maps can lend insight into mystery, they don’t provide answers – only approximations. In some cases, instead of clarifying, the maps mask our deep learning, and sometimes we end up believing that the map is the territory. This section of the book is about developing an improved map and attempting to bring life to it so the map is in greater resonance with the territory.

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As I continue with my life work of articulating the structural and cultural systemic changes for achieving balanced sustainability, I perceive a thirst for some most fundamental understandings:

- What is meant by balanced sustainability?
- How might we gain perspective on the magnitude of our problems?
- Is there a straightforward, integral construct from which to move forth?
- How might we better discern our individual and group work as meaningful?

The constructs in the next chapter, ‘Archetypes for Sustainability,’ are intended to be a first step in addressing the above questions. We hope that you will contribute to the enrichment of the constructs and the sustainability movement generally by joining us as we continue the inquiry.

My experiences in presenting and facilitating conversations that are focused on the

constructs lead me to believe that:

- archetypes of sustainability are easily articulated and understood;
- understanding the archetypes facilitates cooperation; and
- the archetypes provide the grounding for answering the above questions.

## **Reflection**

Please think about a learning experience you've had through which you knew that something you'd always assumed to be real wasn't real. You may have viscerally rejected the new learning at first, but at some time you essentially suspended your disbelief and accepted the new reality.

What was the experience and how difficult was the acceptance process?

Who or what was the teacher?

How has this new reality shaped your other beliefs and actions?