



4-1-2015

A Golden Ratio-My Life & Systems Thinking, A Soliloquy

Amrita V. Subramanian
University of Pennsylvania, amritavs@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.upenn.edu/od_working_papers

Subramanian, Amrita V., "A Golden Ratio-My Life & Systems Thinking, A Soliloquy" (2015). *Organizational Dynamics Working Papers*. 25.
https://repository.upenn.edu/od_working_papers/25

Working Paper #17-03

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. https://repository.upenn.edu/od_working_papers/25
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

A Golden Ratio-My Life & Systems Thinking, A Soliloquy

Keywords

Coaching, Systems Thinking

Comments

Working Paper #17-03

A GOLDEN RATIO

20 April 2017

Until you make
the unconscious
conscious, it will
direct your life
and you will call
it fate.

Carl Jung



My life & Systems Thinking A Soliloquy

By Amrita V Subramanian

I learn the “thinking about thinking” in the modern day context and I keep circling back to my earliest memories, and travel with my thoughts and feelings to this moment. Here, I view my life as an Observer and offer a brief glimpse to my ordinary yarn of sensing extraordinary.

Observer:

On the edge of a mighty river, I stood askance. Not for a sign, nor an omen; for a truth that I knew. The lip of the bank on the other side had blurred, into the darkness of a moonless night, and you did not quite know where the horizon ended and night sky began. I stood still. In reverence of the presence of universe in a single breath.

You knew there was a boundary that irrevocably existed, and yet the stars had descended on earth...for us humans to look up and see how close, and yet how far. That was the last night in my native village where my grandfather once lived. The wisest man I ever met. I never went back after his death. The sky and the river must have met every night since then, as it had always done, before my birth, as it will, after I am gone.

A sense of infinity has always existed within me. An inarticulate space where everything connected me to a greater whole. I am but a part of an endless spiral, a golden ratio in the way I am created; my life is a means, a cause, a path and an end to something that I have not figured out, yet. My end will be a beginning elsewhere...It does not matter that "I" don't know and cannot predict my life's story. I know I serve a purpose..I am on a quest to learn and someday perhaps when I too am 94 years old, like my grandfather was, with a billion wrinkles and a merry twinkle in my old eyes, I may know what my life served.

All I know now is that I am a whole unto myself, a part unto the whole, and within this truth, for now, I find peace. It is not religion that guides my thoughts or reflections, it is the sense of the *unknown*. I have never been scared of what lay beyond what I know, and yet a shiver travels down my spine when I come across a formed thought that confirms its existence, or lends a veiled hint!

Systems Thinking explains my childhood notions of being a part of a whole. Earliest memories tell me that I always knew that it was about to rain few days before it did, or that I knew something about someone I had just met that I was never told about, or how a loved member was covering up something even though the screensaver she carried lied wonderfully to the outside world. My parents made it a rule for me not to speak what I felt. So, I drew, because I did not know words, to express them in human language. All I had was the *sense of knowing* of what was supposed to be "unknown" though connected.

A child with dyslexia who could draw visual links to her nascent map of world. I still am that. My very need was to learn in a different way. My teachers loved me but were at their wits end to get me to learn-by-rote or memorize a text or do math in the format they wanted. I didn't know how to assure them that they need not worry about me, I knew how to understand the world, even if I did not adhere to their prescribed way of etching that understanding. As I grew, I stopped using language, most of it was because of trauma and my withdrawal into my inner world. I found language superfluous and ineffective. I foraged dictionaries, often without success. It was in a foreign language. At the time, *expression* preceded *existence*. This uneven equilibrium sustained itself through the first 16 years of my life.

Then, English Literature found me. Poems and Philosophers. Rhetoric and Prosody. And then, I met Linguistics, history of languages! What a voyage! All through my undergraduate years, I barely had time to eat or be a young coquettish woman. I was a part of a forgotten old library where I was configuring what an antihero Macbeth was or how Oedipus complex worked through a literary character or why Sanskrit as a mother language gave birth to Germanic stream that lives through Europe, America and rest of the Anglo-Saxon world. Or, how similar Mandarin inflection was to its written symbols, just as it was in Sanskrit. It all, then, connected for me, and I began to learn English phonetically (theatre helped greatly!); I'd identify Latin, Roman, German, French roots of words; words had history; and that history finally affixed me to the first expression of humankind! It was only then, that I began to sense how *expression* coexists with *existence* and *essence*. I wish I knew of Noam Chomsky and Jean Paul Sartre then!

From then till now, I use multiple levels of comprehension to sense a reality. I always unearth more. The exploration of the theory of Systems Thinking (from the first spark to today) has been full of marvel! As I went about learning through the existing literature on Systems Thinking (just very little in comparison to the vast expanse of knowledge that remains unknown to me), I felt grateful for a grandfather who had already taught me to sense the world this way!

Exploring Systems Thinking, assimilating all that I am learning, my mind has never felt more equipped to make meaning of that which unveils in front of us, in this time-space continuum. Past-Present-Future merges into an evolving construct, and we as humans see myriad hues of Actuality and interpret them as Truths.

We transcend into hyperreality, and the simulated world of video-games make-meaning for the younger humans in this time, one often wonders, is the boundary blurring? Will we know where *reality* ends and *simulacra* begins? Will we know how we were born connected to the Whole? Will this existent *present* of the coming decades give way to a fictionalized sense of the *past*? Will children know how humans emerged from the primordial soup? That milk does not come from hypermarket shelves. That our DNA coding links us all genetically to one phylum in the kingdom.

I will dedicate my life to a purpose that leaves the world more balanced. Nature perhaps had hoped that in gifting humans consciousness, we will play a nurturing role to all her gifts, in all forms of life - instead we donned the mask of a narcissistic species. Yet, there are many more of us who care and sense the interrelation, interconnection, coexistence of a shared reality. Its not just that *we share life, its life that shares us*. My inner compass tells me that I know my North, and I will do right by Life.

Stopped Time, 1860s
From the archives of
the University of
Pennsylvania

