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CHAPTER 1.1

CHANGING PARADIGMS: PAST AND PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

Seeing is not believing; believing is seeing! You see things, not as they are, but as you are.

Eric Butterworth

Extract (p14-15)

A great number of people—historians, anthropologists, philosophers, mystics, psychologists, and neuroscientists—have delved into this most fascinating question: *how has humanity evolved from the earliest forms of human consciousness to the complex consciousness of modern times?* (Some inquired into a related question: *how do we human beings evolve today from the comparatively simple form of consciousness we have at birth to the full extent of adult maturity?*)

People have looked at these questions from every possible angle. Abraham Maslow famously looked at how human *needs* evolve along the human journey, from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. Others looked at development through the lenses of *worldviews* (Gebser, among others), *cognitive capacities* (Piaget), *values* (Graves), *moral development* (Kohlberg, Gilligan), *self-identity* (Loevinger), *spirituality* (Fowler), *leadership* (Cook-Greuter, Kegan, Torbert), and so on.

In their exploration, they found consistently that humanity evolves in stages. We are not like trees that grow continuously. We evolve by sudden transformations, like a caterpillar that becomes a butterfly, or a tadpole a frog. Our knowledge about the stages of human development is now extremely robust. Two thinkers in particular—Ken Wilber and Jenny Wade—have done remarkable work comparing and contrasting all the major stage models and have discovered strong convergence. Every model might look at one side of the mountain (one looks at needs, another at cognition, for instance), but it's the same mountain. They may give somewhat different names to the stages or sometimes subdivide or regroup them differently. But the underlying phenomenon is the same, just like Fahrenheit and Celsius recognize—with different labels—that there is a point at which water freezes and another where it boils. This developmental view has been backed up by solid evidence from large pools of data; academics like Jane Loevinger, Susanne Cook-Greuter, Bill Torbert, and Robert Kegan have tested this stage theory with thousands and thousands of people in several cultures, in organizational and corporate settings, among others.

Every transition to a new stage of consciousness has ushered in a whole new era in human history. At every juncture, everything changed: society (going from family bands to tribes to empires to nation states); the economy (from foraging to horticulture, agriculture, and industrialization); the power structures; the role of religion. One aspect hasn't yet received much attention: with every new stage in human consciousness also came a breakthrough in our ability to collaborate, bringing about a new organizational model. Organizations as we know them today are simply the expression of our current world-view, our current stage of development. There have been other models before, and all evidence indicates there are more to come.

So what are the past and current organizational models in human history—and what might the next look like?