

About value systems:

- We can identify what is important for us by identifying the **goals** that we go after.
- We can organize **hierarchically the set of goals** that we pursue in **levels**, or layers, where upper levels have lower resolution (they are less specific), lower levels have higher resolution (they are more specific) and different levels are tied up to bottom in **branches**.
 - We adapt the level of resolution with our ability to **zoom in** (go down) or **zoom out** (go up)
 - Goals are **nested** in such a way that **micro-goals** nest in **goals** which nest in **macro-goals** (kind of matryoshka dolls but with a one-to-many nesting instead of the one-to-one).
 - Roles we enact, games we play or tasks we engage perform simultaneously a **set of goals**.
- Each goal comes with the **set of selective perceptions, emotions and memories** that contribute and serve as **motivation** towards the attainment of the goal. I like to understand this as **units of behavior**. They are referred also as “**micro-personalities**”, frames of reference, **motivations**, or stories. We can understand our value system as the summation of all micro-personalities inside.
- Each micro-personality can be represented as the movement from **A → B** (where A is the current state and B is the desired goal) plus the **feedback system** that helps track movement, including the identification of **tools** and **obstacles**: **positive emotions** happen when we move towards the goal, while **negative emotions** happen when something blocks us in our move forward. In fact, we can **double the emotional engines** of motivation: the positive emotions that come when we get closer towards what we want plus the lack of negative emotions that come when we escape out of what we do not want.
- A system of goals organized hierarchically like this is what we call the **value system** and can be drawn as a **pyramid**. We build it slowly through life as we choose which goals matter to us from experience, from imitation, from learning or from inspiration.
- The whole value system grows inside as a big **abstraction**, our own value system, that we hold as the **complete set of rules**, or **expectations**, about how the **world** works and how to behave.
- On a moment-by-moment basis, we offer our value system to the world, piece at a piece, as **actions**.
 - When actions perform as expected, we create movement, and we confirm the validity of our micro-personality and the whole value system. We also think and feel that we are doing **good**.
 - But when actions do not perform as expected, **uncertainty** happens, and we enter the **unknown**. We experience a **mistake** or an **error**. We also think and feel that we are **not doing good**. Usually, we think and feel that we are doing **bad**. Nevertheless, the specific micro-personality which is not working as expected needs to be **updated**, which means maybe **fixed** or maybe **replaced**.
- This update goes from extremely **easy** to extremely **difficult**. The lower in the hierarchy, where resolution is high and uncertainty is low, the easier it is. The higher in the hierarchy, when resolution is low and uncertainty is high, the more difficult it is.
- This update involves **letting go** what is not working anymore. This letting go could be understood as the **sacrifice** to be made to keep functional in the world. It also could be understood as the object of **detachment**, the thing that we do not want to become attached to.
- When an error happens, the very first important thing is to **identify the level** at which an update is needed. We better look first at the lower, simplest levels and then go up step at a step.
- We keep **balance**, meaning **mental balance** and **emotional balance**, when we are able to update micro-personalities at the lowest level possible.
- When we need to update high-level micro-personalities, then we easily can become **unbalance**. **Depressed** people always go fast to the highest level.
- We find meaning in any action that performs on several layers of the value system. The more layers, the more meaning we find. What is **meaningful** is that action that aligns meaning from the bottom up at all levels of your hierarchy of values.
- We can experience the “**feeling of meaning**” in the body as the feeling that includes high concentration, no rumination at all, deep engagement, loss of vulnerability, loss of sense of time, and sense of ritualization. This can also be called as “**flow**” and maybe it is the opposite of “anxiety”.

About the value system in communities and society:

- Our individual value system has extremely high **similarities** to the value systems of those people around us at family level, at community level, and at society level.
- The **commonality** of the value systems, with its minor differences, build up to the **belief system** or **morality system** of different groups and societies. This way, our individual value systems are also nested in the belief systems of the group which are nested in the belief system of society.
- As **personalities** build in **individuals** to facilitate the fulfillment of **sets of goals at all different levels, now and later**, so do **societies but at collective level**.
- However, the **level of abstraction** reaches so high that most individuals **loss understanding and connection** between their own value system and those of their groups and society. A **systemic view** restores this understanding and helps align again the values of individuals, groups, and society.

About the value system and our own biology:

- Each goal comes with the **set of selective perceptions, emotions and memories** that contribute and serve as **motivation** towards the attainment of the goal. This are **units of behavior** or “**micro-personalities**”. We understand our value system as the summation of all micro-personalities inside.
- We come to life with a minimum set of goals, or micro-personalities, embedded which are clearly biological or genetic (while all others are social or cultural). These **fundamental value systems** are the **needs** of living creatures and are **three** as follows:
 - Self-maintenance:
 - **ingestive** (hunger, thirst); and
 - **defensive** (pain, anger/aggression, panic/escape, thermoregulation)
 - Self- propagation: **reproductive** (affiliation/care and sexual desire)
- The brain takes care of these basic value systems (survival function) at the **hypothalamus** (which unfolds them) and the **amygdala** (which watches about malfunctioning and threats).
- The hypothalamus unfolds micro-personalities **once at a time**. But life demands a **more complex approach** as (i) we need to take care not only now in the present but also later in the **future**; and (ii) we need to take care not only **individually** but at a **collective** level. The **frontal cortex** helps to handle this complexity by allowing sophisticated **abstractions** (which is thinking separate of action) so as playing what if scenarios in order to find the right set of (higher, more complex) goals.
- Additionally, the brain has **two different hemispheres** to handle the two big different situations we live. The **left** hemisphere handles the **known**, the **linear rational** thinking, the **fine** motor action. The right hemisphere handles the **unknown** (the error), the holistic pattern recognition thinking, the **gross** motor action.
- We can easily match the “action that works” as the procedural memory, which is the foundation of the automatic pilot behavior, unconsciousness, and Kahneman’s system 1. On the other hand, we can match the “action that needs to be updated” as the biggest case for awareness, consciousness, and Kahneman’s system 2.

About stories and responsibility:

- We call a micro-personality also “**a story**” as each micro-personality becomes a story **when** is being **narrated**. This way, we can easily understand that “**we are stories**” and that “**we live inside stories**”.
- We can **self-author** our own story, and change what it was simply wrote by itself, by re-writing or re-framing a new one as a way of finding meaning and living a **meaningful life**.
- We call **responsibility** to the act of choosing your own goals and committing to them.
- Meaning will happen when the chosen goals are fully aligned in a way that help you and help your growth; help your family and help your community; and help your society. When all these happen, men recognize you, women select you and society helps you. This I call “**triple win**”.
- Meaning meets security at family level when “my responsibilities become your care and your responsibilities become my care”. Meaning meets security at society level when “**my responsibilities** become **your rights** and your responsibilities become my rights”.

About the learning through old stories:

- We call a micro-personality also “**a story**” as each micro-personality becomes a story **when** is being **narrated**. This way, we can easily understand that “**we are stories**” and that “**we live inside stories**”.
- All societies have **packed** in stories all their **learnings** regarding **how to act** in the world, which is the same as to say which goals to pursue or which values to embody. Those stories were initially transmitted orally; later, also in writing.
- These stories were offering as **religion**, as **fairy tales** (like those of Disney), or **romances**, or simply as **oral teachings**. All of them constitute **the realm of ethics** in society and talk **morality**: what is good and what is bad.
- Hypothetically, these learnings happened first by being acted and then packed in stories that were simply representations of the action. We understand them as stories that **talk the walk**.
- As actions were reality, the representation of the actions can be understood as **meta-reality**. It is this meta-reality that was then embedded into **fictional agents** (mainly **gods** or **super humans**) that embodied the good and the bad whose actions were then related so as being easily kept, shared, and learned.
- This perspective of meta-reality offers a reading of old, ancient texts (like those coming from Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Bible, Buddha’s teachings, and so on) as **handbooks of psychological** and **social behavior** which are meaningful and useful.
- This perspective also helps to accommodate fictional positions like **Zeitgeist** or **Yuval Noah Harari**.

About the stories and meta-stories that we find in ancient texts:

- Ancient stories care about how we should better act when we let the **known, explored territory** (A → B) and **fall** into the **unknown, unexplored territory** (the error). The first is referred as **order** and the **walled garden** (Paradise, Eden, Gautama’s house), the second is referred as **chaos** and the **dragon of chaos** (the leviathan) while the fall is referred as the **snake**, the rabbit hole, the curiosity.
- When referred to the **individual**, the **right sacrifice** (or detachment) is the way back to the known. When referred to the **collective**, main conclusion is the need of **leadership** (at the top of dominance hierarchies) by those with the ability to **pay attention** and to build order out of chaos by **using words**.
- The big meta-story talks about how stories themselves transform by offering **archetypes** to fully understand the different **forces** at play: the **Great Mother** (creation/destruction), the **Great Father** (order/tyranny), and the **Archetypal Son** (hero/adversary). Archetypes are **patterns** always at play. The Great Mother and the Great Father beautifully match with **yin** and **yang**.
- **Optimal action** and **balance** occur in the **balance** of chaos and order, yin and yang.
- The most meaningful life, as set in the Sermon of the Mount is to “serve the higher intention possible plus live and act in the present moment.”

About Jordan’s approach to lecturing:

- The continuous referral to big names like Freud, Jung, and Piaget; Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Solzhenitsyn.
- Set of axial distinctions that help to understand the differences of what is better separated:
 - science (new mindset which builds abstraction to focus on the object) and religion (old mindset which builds stories to focus on the action).
 - wake thoughts (choose coherence and sacrifice completeness) and dream thoughts (choose completeness and sacrifice coherence).
 - ethology (which studies animals by observing their behavior at natural conditions) and scientific research (which studies animals in laboratory conditions).
 - talk the walk (which refers to articulate the action into words) and walk the talk (which refers to embody into action what is abstraction).
- The monolog which builds on a permanent, hard self-questioning.

About the highlights of what is important and useful:

- the mastering of how to enter the unknown and extract value and share it with others (**pay attention**).
- the mastering of **letting go** what is not anymore needed and make the right inner sacrifices.
- the mastering of thinking, speaking, and writing as the keys for job and opportunity in the XXI century (**word**).

About SIY and how to match some key concepts:

1. understanding goal-directed attention and how to master them.
2. defining vision and values as the self-motivation engine (the self-authoring journaling exercise).
3. monitor emotions as markers of meaning / tools and anxiety / obstacles