

*Barry Johnson*

# And

## **Volume One: Chapter 29**

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*Making a Difference  
by Leveraging  
Polarity, Paradox or Dilemma  
Volume One: Foundations*

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## Table of Contents

Chapter titles link to chapters. ToC button at bottom of all pages returns here.

---

<b>Introduction to Volumes One and Two</b> .....	1
<hr/>	
<b>Section One: The Basics – Why? What? How?</b> .....	4
Chapter 1    Why? .....	5
Chapter 2    What? .....	11
Chapter 3    How? .....	15
<hr/>	
<b>Section Two: Part <i>And</i> Whole – Each of us is unique <i>And</i> All of us are connected.</b> .....	22
Chapter 4    Family as the Whole .....	23
Chapter 5    Organization as the Whole .....	29
Chapter 6    Organization as the Part .....	43
Chapter 7    Nation as the Whole .....	47
Chapter 8    Nation as the Part .....	71
Chapter 9    Ethics and National Culture .....	77
Chapter 10    The Part <i>And</i> Whole Energy Chain .....	83
Chapter 11    The Part <i>And</i> Whole Polarity in Our Brain .....	89
<hr/>	
<b>Section Three: Continuity <i>And</i> Transformation – We change most rapidly by first embracing who we are.</b> .....	92
Chapter 12    Expansive Leader .....	93
Chapter 13    Paradoxical Change and Getting Unstuck .....	99
Chapter 14    The Recalcitrant Oncologists .....	107
Chapter 15    “Pass One–Pass All” in South Africa .....	115
Chapter 16    Mother Tongue <i>And</i> English in South Africa .....	121
Chapter 17    Continuity <i>And</i> Transformation in Our Brain .....	125

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<b>Section Four: Justice <i>And</i> Mercy – All of us are Accountable <i>And</i> all of us are Loved, no exceptions!</b>	129
Chapter 18 Justice <i>And</i> Mercy for the Individual	131
Chapter 19 Justice <i>And</i> Mercy in Organizations	143
Chapter 20 Justice <i>And</i> Mercy Within a Nation	151
Chapter 21 Justice <i>And</i> Mercy On the Planet	157

---

<b>Section Five: Part <i>And</i> Part – From polarization to optimization</b>	171
Chapter 22 Claiming Power <i>And</i> Sharing Power	173
Chapter 23 Information Sharing <i>And</i> Information Security	183
Chapter 24 President Trump Supporters <i>And</i> President Trump Opposition ...	191
Chapter 25 The Global Nuclear Arms Race Between Us <i>And</i> Them	203

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<b>Section Six: The Genius of <i>Or And</i> the Genius of <i>And</i> – The rejection of <i>Or</i>-thinking is an example of <i>Or</i>-thinking.</b>	208
Chapter 26 The Genius of <i>Or And</i> the Genius of <i>And</i>	209
Chapter 27 Six Ways Polarities Show Up	217
Chapter 28 Is It a Problem <i>Or</i> a Polarity?	223

---

<b>Section Seven: Stacking Polarities</b>	231
Chapter 29 <i>Or</i> With <i>And</i> Helps Us Address Poverty, Racism and Sexism...	233
Chapter 30 <i>Or</i> With <i>And</i> Helps Us Address the Climate Crisis	245
Chapter 31 Women and Other Marginalized Groups in Shared Leadership is Right <i>And</i> Smart	257
Chapter 32 Yang <i>And</i> Yin	269

---

<b>Section Eight: Doing <i>And</i> Being</b>	277
Chapter 33 Making a Difference <i>And</i> Enjoying Life	279
Chapter 34 I–It <i>And</i> I–You: The Limits of Polarity Thinking...	285

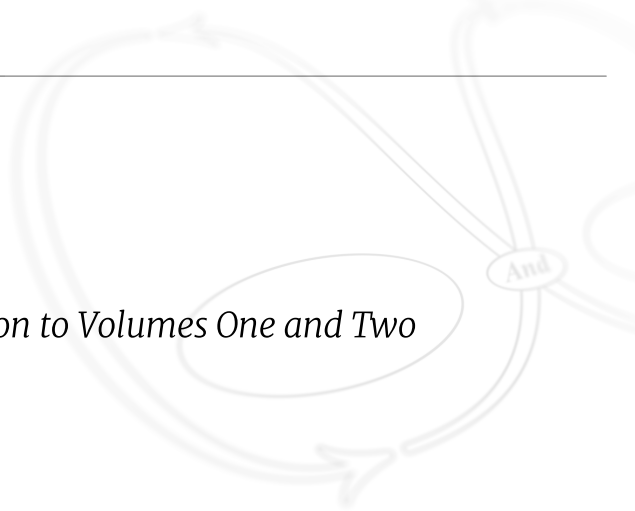
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<b>Postscript Articles: A Polarity Lens On the COVID-19 Pandemic</b>	291
OpEd Winning On Two Fronts – Health <i>And</i> Economy	292
Editorial Individual Freedom <i>And</i> The Common Good	294

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<b>Resources</b> .....	300
Appendix A Our Polarity Assessment™ as a Resource .....	301
Appendix B <u><i>And: Volume Two</i></u> as a Resource .....	305
Appendix C Realities of All Polarities .....	309
Annotated Bibliography .....	321
More Praise for <u><i>And</i></u> .....	325
About Barry .....	329
Blank Maps for Your Duplication and Use .....	330

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## Introduction to Volumes One and Two

I am in Brazil being warmly welcomed by a representative of Natura outside the front entrance to their main building. They know that I have written about polarities so they smile as they translate the Portuguese words carved deep and large into the wall: “Being Well *And*<sup>1</sup> Well Being.” They explain that “Being Well” means that we must take care of Natura as a company. It must be financially sound and healthy. “Well Being” means that it is equally important to take care of those who work at Natura, the community, and the environment. (*from Chapter 6*)

### **This Book is the First of a Two-Volume Set.**

#### **Volume One – Foundations**

Volume One is a resource for people who want to make a positive difference. How? By overcoming two obstacles: resistance to change and polarization. From a problem-solving perspective, either of these challenges could be overwhelming. From a Polarity Thinking™ perspective, both can be addressed by replacing *Or* with *And* when *And* is required.

For example, the question, “Am I going to hold on to my values *Or* accept the change proposed?” is likely to create resistance to the change. That resistance could be significantly reduced by replacing *Or* with *And*. “How am I going to hold on to my values *And* gain the benefits of the change proposed?” We can save the baby *And* throw out the bathwater. (*Section Three*)

The question, “Am I going to support the group that wants to decentralize *Or* the group that wants to centralize?” is likely to create polarization. That polarization could be significantly reduced by replacing *Or* with *And*. “How do we get the benefits of decentralization *And* the benefits of centralization?” Effective decentralization requires effective centralization. (*Chapter 5*)

“Am I going to support ‘Black Lives Matter’ *Or* ‘All Lives Matter?’” This false choice is less polarizing if *Or* is replaced with *And*: “Black Lives Matter” *And* “All

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<sup>1</sup> When the word “and” is used to connect two poles of a polarity, it will be capitalized and in italics: *And*. When the word “or” is used, incorrectly, to connect two poles of a polarity, it will also be capitalized and italic: *Or*.

Lives Matter.” It is precisely because all lives matter that disproportionate attacks on and incarceration of black people matters. (*Chapter 7*)

Regardless of the size of the system that you want to change, this book guides you through a clear process:

1. **Seeing:** Is this an issue where *And* is required?
2. **Mapping:** How can I see a more complete picture and respect alternative views?
3. **Assessing:** How are we doing with this polarity?
4. **Learning:** What can we learn from our assessment results?
5. **Leveraging:** What action steps will we take to make a positive difference?

Reading this book will help you address resistance to your efforts to make a difference. Also, it will help you address chronic conflicts that become vicious cycles as both sides become more polarized.

You will learn when and how to bring *And* into your efforts to make a positive difference. When done well, supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking will help you convert the wisdom of those resisting change into a resource to support a more effective change. *And*-thinking will help you join polarized groups and convert a vicious cycle into a benefit for all. The results will benefit both groups and the larger system of which they are a part.

## Volume Two – Applications

Volume One is from my perspective with a lot of input and help from others. What is missing are important other voices. When considering groups with power and privilege which have dominance in the United States and those groups that have been marginalized by the dominant group, I am a member of the dominant group in every category. I am white, cis male<sup>2</sup>, financially secure, college educated, raised in a hetero-normative all-white family, from a Christian tradition, without physical or mental disabilities. Having the power and privilege that comes by being in these groups does not make me a good person or a bad person. But membership in the dominant group does come with responsibility to learn from those who are marginalized. It also includes sharing power with them and interrupting the practices and policies of the dominant group that contribute to their marginalization. This marginalization is oppressive and dehumanizing for both the dominant and the marginalized groups. Some marginalized groups include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BI-POC), women, LGBTQI+<sup>3</sup> people, the poor, those from religious traditions other than Christian, and those with physical or mental disabilities.

Volume Two includes the voices of people from marginalized groups. Each author provides an example of how they have applied Polarity Thinking to make a difference in their life and work. The authors come from a variety of disciplines. They have worked inside organizations as founders and leaders. They have also worked

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<sup>2</sup> Cis men are men assigned “male” at birth and feel that “man” and “male” accurately describe who they are.

<sup>3</sup> LGBTQI+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, plus other identities.

as external resources to organizations as coaches, trainers, organizers for justice and equity, consultants, and teachers. At least one author in each chapter has completed a Two-Year Polarity Mastery Program.

Their stories can be used and adapted to your unique situation. The variety of examples will expand your possibilities and help you avoid common pitfalls as you apply Polarity Thinking. These diverse examples demonstrate how you can succeed in making a difference by combining your life experience with Polarity Thinking and the Polarity Map®.

### **Start with the Chapter That Interests You Most.**

Though Volume One is written in a logical sequence, I encourage you to find the chapter that seems most relevant to you and read it first. Which chapter connects to where you want to make a difference?

### **All Are Loved *And* Accountable – All Are Connected *And* Each is Unique.**

This book begins and ends with two double-messages (polarities) that come to us from most religious traditions.

1. All of us are loved unconditionally, without exception, *And* we are all accountable for our actions and inactions, without exception. In our effort to make a difference, we need to hold ourselves and others accountable. At the same time, the context for our accountability is that we are loved unconditionally (*Section Four*). When our message of accountability is combined with an often unstated message of unlovability, we generate a natural resistance from the self, family member, organization, or the country receiving the message of unlovability.
2. We are all connected in a unified whole *And* we are each unique. Neither our unity nor our uniqueness can be lost (*Section Two*). We can make a difference by affirming the reality of our connectedness *And* our uniqueness. We need not struggle to make us connected *Or* to make us unique. We are already both.

Not recognizing these two polarities (*1 & 2 above*) undermines our efforts to make the positive differences we seek to make with our families, organizations, and countries. Not recognizing these and other polarities in this book has contributed to organizational dysfunction, gross inequity and the marginalization mentioned above. Recognizing and intentionally leveraging these polarities and others can make a difference in how well our organizations are run, how financially sound they are, and how effective they are at enhancing our quality of life on the planet for all of us. My hope is that *And: Volume One* and *And: Volume Two* will support you in making your difference in the world.

Barry Johnson (he, him)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In this book, I recognize diversity of identity and use she, her / they, them / he, him. For people I know well, and those identified in the public arena, like Dr. MLK, Jr., I use the pronouns they use for themselves.

## Chapter 29

### Or With *And* Helps Us Address Poverty, Racism and Sexism

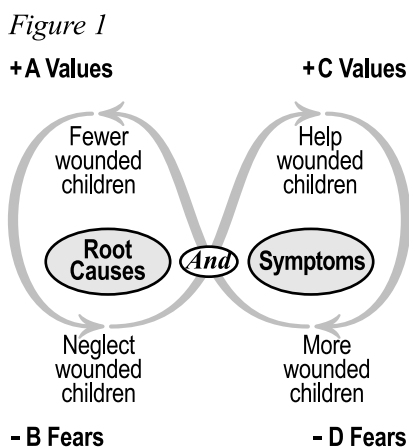
#### Root Causes *And* Symptoms

China is an 8-year-old who lives in the Avondale neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. Avondale is the location of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. China is one of hundreds of children Dr. Victor Garcia has treated at the hospital trauma center. China was shot multiple times while walking on the sidewalk with an adult friend who was the intended target. Dr. Garcia and the trauma unit team were able to save China. But, in the process, the 8-year-old lost one eye and is paralyzed from the waist down.

Dr. Garcia knew that creating and running the trauma center was absolutely necessary, *And* he knew that China and the many other wounded children he kept seeing on the operating table were symptoms. He wanted to run the best trauma center possible *And* to address the root causes for the flow of wounded children. Dr. Garcia asked for help in a presentation about his situation at a Systems Thinking conference we both attended. After hearing each other's presentations, we decided to see if a polarity lens might be useful.

*Figure 1* framed our concerns. Dr. Garcia wanted to continue running the trauma center to help the children arriving with various gun and knife wounds (+C). Yet that was not enough because it was focused only on the Symptoms. This focus, without also focusing on Root Causes, would lead to more wounded children (-D). He needed to also address the Root Causes to reduce the number of wounded children (+A) without neglecting the wounded children (-B).

Before ever hearing of Polarity Thinking, Dr. Garcia understood the need for addressing *both* Root Causes *And* Symptoms. This intuitive wisdom led him to create an organization called CoreChange that was





focused on addressing Root Causes. *Figure 1* became a wisdom organizer for his intuitive wisdom.

As we explored the polarity of Root Causes *And* Symptoms, often we found that a root cause behind one symptom was also a symptom with a root cause. *Figure 2* is a simple example of a Root Cause viewed as a Symptom.

(1) The fact that China was shot can be viewed as a Symptom with (2) Poverty and Racism as Root Causes. Also, (3) Poverty and Racism can be seen as a Symptom with (4) Systemic Institutional Practices and Policies as Root Causes which themselves (5) become Symptoms. As we move deeper toward more basic Root Causes, we find ourselves in search of (6) an “evil intent” or “evil source” which we must blame, convert, overpower, or destroy. But what if there is no evil source? An alternative to an “evil intent” or “evil source” as a root cause for China’s situation can be found in a stack of polarities in which *Or*-thinking is used when *And*-thinking is required.<sup>R108</sup>

*Chapter 21* showed that focusing on one “good” to the neglect of its interdependent “good” leads to an unintended “evil.” This reality is compounded within a stack of polarities. For example, below is a list of “good” things that most of us would value.

We would like to:

1. Be effective problem solvers,
2. Protect “Us” (our family, our organization, our country),

Figure 2

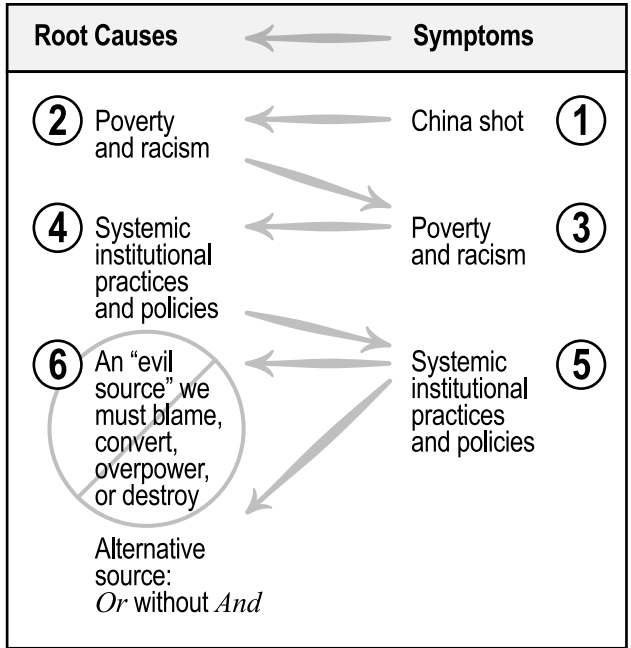
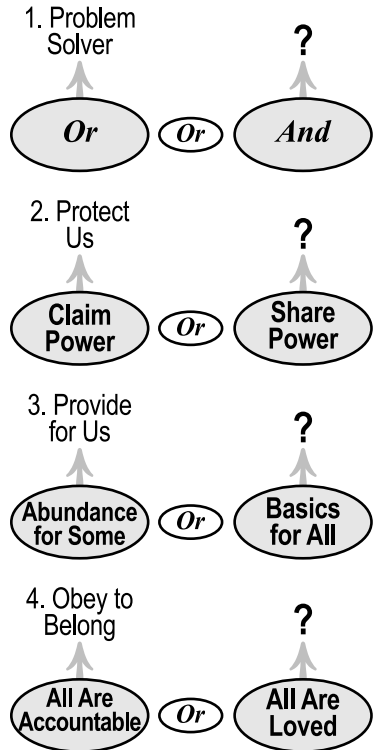


Figure 3



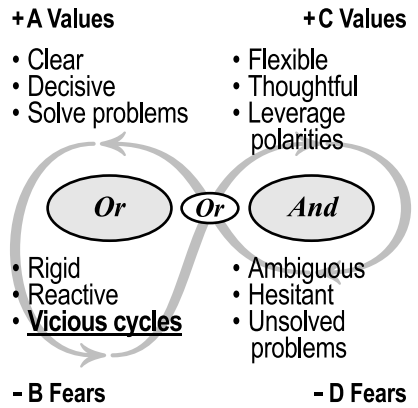
3. Provide for “Us” (ourselves and our family),
4. Belong within our group – be one of “Us.”

These natural desires can be seen as the upside of the left poles in *Figure 3*. There is nothing wrong with any of them. They only become a source of dysfunction when they are pursued to the neglect of their interdependent upsides whose absences are indicated by question marks in *Figure 3*. Interdependent upsides are invisible to us when we unconsciously approach this stack of polarities with an *Or* mindset.

### 1. Be an Effective Problem Solver

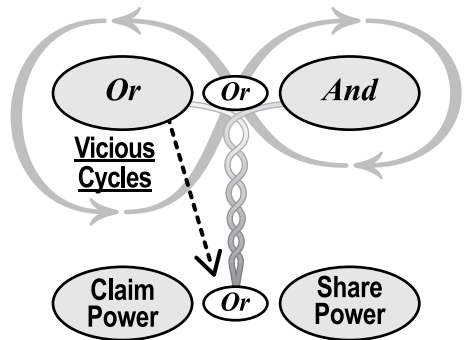
*Figure 4* shows a Polarity Map® of the top polarity in *Figure 3*. When the two poles are connected by *Or*, we assume that we must choose between being a Clear, Decisive Problem Solver (+A) *Or* an Ambiguous, Hesitant person who is unable to Solve Problems (-D). This false choice leads to an over-focus on being Clear without being Flexible and becoming Rigid; being Decisive without Thoughtfulness and becoming Reactive; and Solving Problems without Leveraging Polarities. This leads to Vicious Cycles because we frame this and other polarities as if they were problems to solve.

*Figure 4*



*Figure 5* summarizes *Figure 4*, allowing us to stack it on top of the Claim Power/ Share Power polarity. Vicious Cycles represents also being Rigid and Reactive. We bring these downsides with us as we address the question of whether we should Claim Power *Or* Share Power.

*Figure 5*



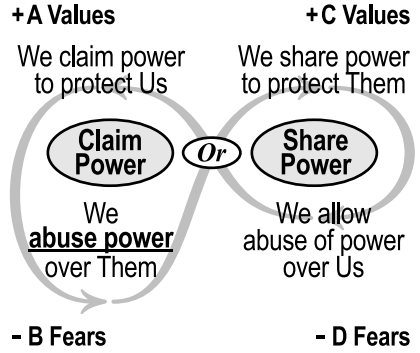
Notice that there is also a dotted arrow from the *Or* pole to the ellipse between Claim Power *Or* Share Power. This indicates how the unconscious bias for *Or*-thinking in the first polarity is also used for all the polarities below it in the stack. As we look at the polarity below, our view of this second polarity is radically influenced because the polarity below is already in the downside of *Or*-thinking.

### 2. Protect “Us” (Our Family, Our Organization, Our Country)

*Figure 6* shows claiming power to protect Us (whoever Us is anywhere in the world) (+A) while not sharing power to protect Them is an abuse of power (-B).

Where does the drive to claim power over Them come from? It comes naturally through wanting to protect ourselves and our families. It expands as we want to protect our company, our tribe, and our country. If we assume that *either* We claim power to protect Us (+A) *Or* We allow abuse of power over Us (-D), we will not consider sharing power to protect Them (+C). We will make sure that We claim power while preventing Them from claiming power. We must have power over Them to protect Us from Them. The result is We abuse power over Them (-B).

Figure 6



When I work with the U.S. military, I join them in their mission to “Serve and Protect.” Many men, women, and members of the LGBTQI+ community have given their lives to protect their families and their country. This same desire to protect family and country is a fundamental motivation for those of other countries, our allies and enemies. In the United States, this desire to protect has resulted in us spending more on national defense than China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, United Kingdom, India, France, and Japan combined.<sup>68</sup>

Our desire to protect those we love and the country we love is natural and powerful. This deep, essential desire becomes dysfunctional when it is combined with *Or*-thinking about power. From an *Or* perspective, my country must have more power than any other country. Alternatively, my country must join with others so that the Us becomes a group of allies with enough collective power over other countries to protect Us from Them. One example of Us is NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), with Them being non-NATO countries.

Figure 7

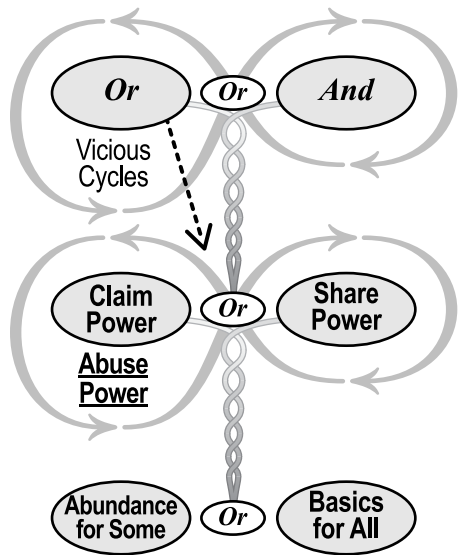


Figure 7 summarizes the increasingly dysfunctional effects of combining the vicious cycles from *Or* without *And* with the Abuse of Power from Claiming Power without Sharing Power. We bring these combined downsides with us as

<sup>68</sup> Alston, Philip. *Statement on Visit to the USA*. United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, December 15, 2017.

we address the question of whether we should provide Abundance for Some *Or* Basics for All.

### 3. Provide for “Us” (Ourselves and Our Family)

Protecting Us is not enough. *Figure 8* summarizes our desire for the freedom to provide abundance for Us. We want Us to have the basics: food, water, shelter, clothing, education, work with a living wage, healthcare, and if possible, the joy of living in abundance (+A). If we frame this issue as Abundance for Some *Or* Basics for All, we will seek power over Them in order to provide abundance for Us. This results in gross inequality with a loss of the basics for more and more (-B).

Efforts to bring equality in providing basics for all (+C) will be resisted either consciously or unconsciously because of the fear that we will lose the freedom to provide abundance for Us resulting in our loss of abundance (-D). To the degree that we have an unconscious bias for *Or*-thinking, we will have an unconscious bias against providing basic healthcare, food, and shelter for everyone. This will be true even among those dedicating time and money to providing these basics for all.

Recall the story in *Chapter 5* of a multinational organization that had alignment of everyone to go from the downside of Autonomous Business Units (-B), which was costing them millions of dollars, to the upside of Integrated Business Units (+C). Even with unanimous agreement that they needed to move toward Integrated Business Units and that the cost of not going was high, they were not able to gain the benefits of Integrated Business Units (+C).

Figure 8

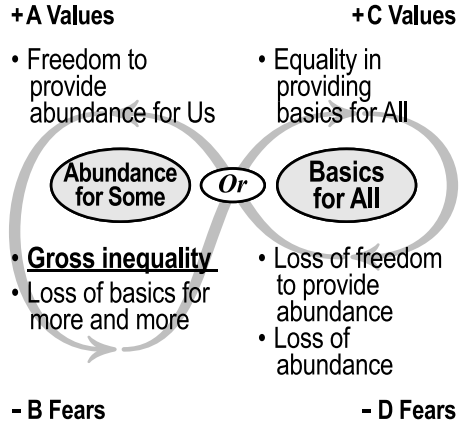
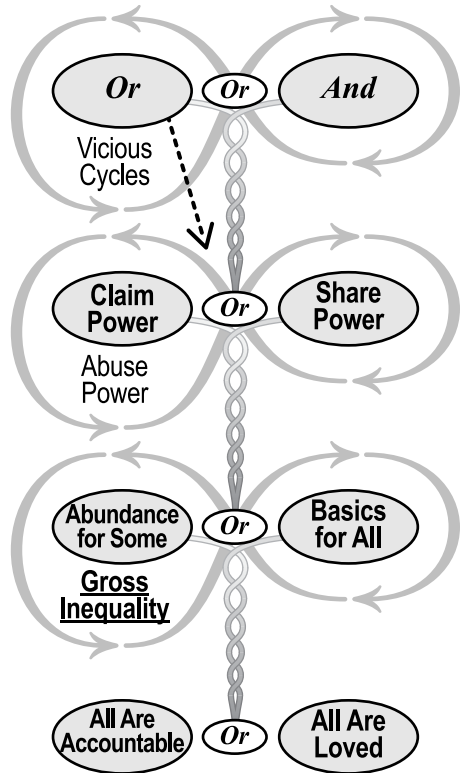


Figure 9



The reason is the same as for those in *Figure 8* who find themselves not gaining basics for all (+C). In both cases, the issue is framed as a problem to solve with (-B) as the problem and (+C) as the solution. In both cases, there is a powerful value not being recognized (+A) and an equally powerful, often unconscious fear (-D) that keeps them from gaining the desired outcome they want (+C). Until we see Abundance for some *And* Basics for all as a polarity in which *both* are possible, the present framing of Abundance for some *Or* Basics for all will continue to be a primary cause and perpetuator of poverty worldwide.

*Figure 9* on the previous page summarizes an increase in dysfunction as polarities are stacked. Vicious Cycles and Abuse of Power are combined with Gross Inequality. This disastrous combination is what we bring with us as we address the question of whether All are Accountable *Or* All are Loved.

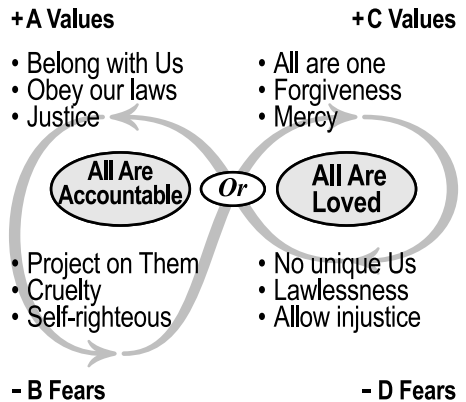
#### 4. Belong Within Our Group: Be One of “Us”

We all have a need to belong. Because this need is not as conscious or as obvious as our want to protect and provide, it is easy to underestimate its influence on how we think and act. Our need to belong is satisfied, in part, by creating an Us, i.e., our group. *Figure 10* shows that a way to stay a member of Us is to obey our laws which creates our form of Justice (+A).

There is another sphere of belonging in which we realize we all are already one (+C). This unity consciousness has been identified by mystics from various religions over the ages. Martin Buber describes it as the “I and Thou” relationship.<sup>69</sup> We all belong from before our life, throughout our life, and after our life. This unconditional belonging is not based on our obedience or lack of obedience to the laws we create or to our enforcement of them in the name of justice. It is a belonging based on unconditional love, forgiveness, and mercy. This universal belonging includes belonging to our many subgroups of Us and our need to obey our laws and to seek justice. It contains the double message that All are Accountable *And* All are Loved.

This understanding is not available in the world of *Or* without *And*. In a world where *either* we support the Us to which we belong and obey its laws and seek its justice (+A) *Or* we lose our unique form of Us and allow lawlessness and injustice (-D). That way of framing belonging leads to Us projecting on Them the things we cannot admit to about Us, and to cruel and self-righteous treatment toward Them (-B).

Figure 10



<sup>69</sup> Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937, reprint Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004.

One beautiful, positive example of creating an Us *And* Them internationally is the opening ceremony of the Olympics. Each team arrives with their own national flag and clothing that proudly identify Our team and Our country where We belong. This sense of belonging as a part of Us is a great feeling. There is an Us and there are other teams representing their countries who become Them. When the team from my country (Us) is competing with a team from another country (Them), I cheer for my team and celebrate if they win. In this context, the identification of Us *And* Them becomes a source of enjoyment and life enhancement for all.

Drawing a line as a circle around Us and a circle around Them (differentiating Us from Them) is perfectly natural. Where we draw the line is not as important as how we treat those on either side of the line. In our effort to belong, we draw a circle around Our country, Our race or ethnic group, Our gender, Our sexual identity, Our religious group, or Our economic group, and call those inside the circle: “Us.” Two questions arise from creating our membership within the circle: “How do we treat those inside the circle (Us)? *And*, how do we treat those outside the circle (Them)?”

When we ask these questions from an Us *Or* Them perspective, combined with the need to belong, we are likely to choose Us over Them. We are likely to claim positive things about Us: to contrast Us from Them in ways that favor Us; to agree to protect Us from Them; to be clear to the world that we are not one of Them; and we pledge allegiance to Us.

For example, citizens of the United States affirm belonging through our pledge of allegiance:

*I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

When you read this pledge, think about the questions raised earlier: How do we treat those inside the circle (our fellow citizens)? How do we treat those outside the circle (citizens of other countries)?

From a polarity perspective, we recognize the false choice between those on either side of the line no matter where we draw the line. We recognize that to see Us completely is to love Us *And*, to see Them completely is to love Them. We recognize that it is in Our interest to claim Our power *And* to share power with Them. It is also in their interest to claim their power *And* to share power with Us.

In summary, the unconscious need to belong leads to our claiming membership in different subgroups we call Us, which creates other subgroups we call Them. We tend to see the relationship as Us *Or* Them rather than Us *And* Them. This is because of our tendency to see things from an *Or* perspective in the first place. Also, seeing the relationship as Us *Or* Them helps secure my belonging with Us. For example, a statement like, “I am not a Muslim, I am a Christian,” reinforces my belonging to My group (Christian) by clearly differentiating Myself from Them in another group (Muslim). I can further solidify my belonging with Us by demonstrating

my commitment to protect Us and provide for Us. This combination increases my tendency to embrace Us while decreasing my tendency to embrace Them.

*Chapter 21* discussed our need to identify a Them who look different than Us (an obvious “not us”) on whom to project those things we cannot admit are true of Us. For me, as a white male, the two most obvious “not us” groups are people of color and women. The stronger the need to project on Them, the stronger the unconscious need for power over Them.<sup>R109</sup> If we have power over them, we can define Our “reality” about Us and Them. For example, we can define Us as smart, caring, and industrious and deny the fact that at times we are stupid, ruthless, or lazy. The unconscious need to project can be as strong as the need to protect, provide, and belong.

If we can identify Them as evil, savages, gangs, terrorists, infidels, animals, or criminals, we can rationalize our right, even our obligation, to claim power over them. The degree of inhumanness we employ to gain and maintain power over Them will be matched by the degree of inhumanness We need to project on Them. They become less than human so We can live with being less than human to Them.<sup>R110</sup>

With our power over them, we create a justice system which protects Us from Them, gives Us financial advantage, establishes that we belong and they do not, and allows Us to project on Them any negative thing we do not want to recognize as true of Us. For wealthy, white, cis men in the United States, the most obvious “not me” are poor people, people of color, and women. This becomes an unconscious source of poverty, racism, and sexism.

### **A Hyper Vicious Cycle Causing and Perpetuating Poverty, Racism, and Sexism**

The four polarities identified above are not a complete picture. There are more polarities involved. At the same time, combining the four downsides from choosing the left pole to the neglect of the right pole demonstrates how we can significantly contribute to poverty, racism, and sexism without identifying an “evil intent” or an “evil source.”

In *Figure 11*, The four upsides of the left poles without their interdependent partner (the four upsides of the right poles) leads to the downsides of the left poles combining in a downward spiral, a hyper vicious cycle that is a primary cause and perpetrator of poverty, racism, and sexism.

*Figure 11* provides a summary. The desire to be a problem solver without leveraging polarities leads to being rigid and reactive, contributing to vicious cycles. The desire to protect Us without protecting Them leads to claiming power without sharing power, which becomes an abuse of power. The desire to provide for Us without providing for Them leads to gross inequality. The need to belong to Us by obeying our laws and supporting our justice system without experiencing universal belonging, forgiveness, and mercy leads to projecting what We cannot own on Them with self-righteousness cruelty.



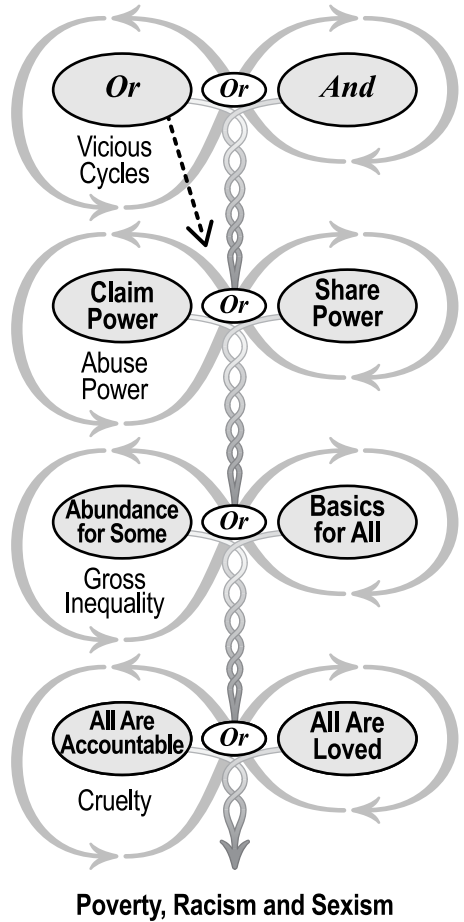
When we persist in focusing on the four left poles, first we get the downsides of the left poles, then we get the downsides of the right poles as well. Those of us wanting to make a difference by reducing poverty, racism, and sexism would benefit greatly from understanding and leveraging these four polarities.

### The Temptation to Find an “Evil Source”

Before moving on, I would like to clarify what I mean by, “There is no evil source.” It is tempting to identify a person or group or country as an “evil source” to explain the reality of “evil” in our world. From my perspective, there are evil acts that we have done and continue to do toward each other. This includes any form of abuse of ourselves or others. The suicide bombing described in *Chapter 21* is an example. There are evil results from those evil acts. This includes the death of the suicide bomber, others killed in the bombing, and all those impacted by the deaths. It is important to recognize evil acts and evil results and to hold ourselves accountable for them. At the same time, there is a difference between identifying a suicide bombing as an evil act with evil results and identifying a suicide bomber as an inherently “evil source.”

The bomber is not inherently evil. No person, group, or country is inherently evil. The actions and results of the slave owner, the dictator, the child molester, the invading country, or the leader and followers of acts of genocide might all be identified as evil. Yet, to identify the perpetrators as “evil” denies the reality that they are more than the acts we identify as evil. A person or group or country is always more than our worst selves. It is dehumanizing to them and to us to see them as simply “evil.” To see them as simply evil is to see them as less than human and beyond forgiveness. It is to disconnect them from us as if we could. The very act of de-connecting is de-humanizing. By doing so, we are claiming to be categorically not them. They are evil and we are not. This shift in our relative status with them gives us the right and even the responsibility to destroy them. If we can only destroy the “evil source,” we will bring good to the world. Notice how we have arrived at the very argument for the genocide of some group as an “evil source!”

Figure 11





We can identify evil actions and evil results without the need to identify ourselves or anyone else as inherently evil. Whatever our contribution toward evil in the world, fortunately, it cannot disconnect us from the rest of humanity and nature. We are all connected, and we are all loved unconditionally as we do our best to make a difference.

### Replacing *Or* with *And* Within this Stack of Polarities Provides Hope in Addressing Poverty, Racism, and Sexism

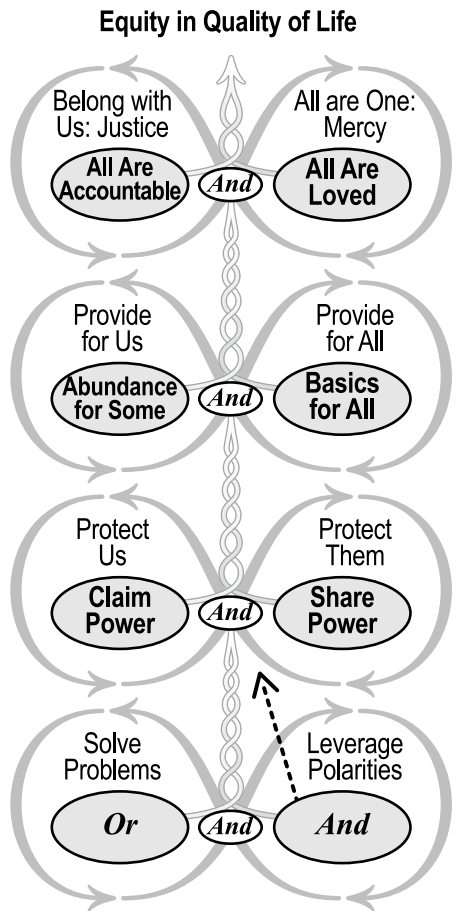
You can leverage the natural tension between the poles of a polarity so it becomes a positive, self-re-enforcing loop or virtuous cycle lifting you and your organization to goals unattainable with *Or*-thinking alone.

Figure 12 connects the poles of the four stacked polarities with *And* building from the bottom up. By leveraging these polarities well, the positive synergy of benefits from the polarities can move us toward Equity in Quality of Life. We can Solve Problems *And* Leverage Polarities; Protect Us *And* Protect Them; Provide for Us *And* Provide for all; Belong with Us while pursuing Justice *And* Experience the reality that All are one in the Mercy of unconditional love.

This power of universal, unconditional love protects us, our loved ones and our enemies from hate, retribution, and lifelong efforts to obtain that which cannot be obtained because it is already ours; provides food for the soul from an unlimited source, which expands in the giving and receiving; affirms that all of us Belong and there is nothing we need to do or think or not do or not think in order to belong; removes the need to Project parts of ourselves we cannot acknowledge on to Them because we can acknowledge all of it with accountability (Justice) *And* know we are loved (Mercy).

*And*-thinking is not a solution to poverty, racism, or sexism, but it is a required mental framework. Without supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking, our most sincere efforts will be radically undermined, and no amount of money, commitment, or alignment will compensate.<sup>R111</sup>

Figure 12



### **New Realities in Chapter 29**

- Reality 106 The vicious cycle caused by poorly leveraging one polarity becomes a hyper-vicious cycle when combined with a number of other poorly leveraged polarities.
- Reality 107 Supplementing *Or* with *And* creates a virtuous cycle in each of the polarities in a stack. This results in a hyper-virtuous cycle in which the benefits are multiplied providing equity in quality of life for all.
- Reality 108 An alternative to an “evil intent” or “evil source” as a root cause for chronic issues like poverty, racism, and sexism can be found in a stack of polarities in which *Or*-thinking is used when *And*-thinking is required.
- Reality 109 The stronger the need to project on Them, the stronger the unconscious need for power over Them.
- Reality 110 The degree of inhumanness we employ to gain and maintain power over Them will be matched by the degree of inhumanness We need to project on Them. They become less than human so We can live with being less than human to Them.
- Reality 111 *And*-thinking is not a solution to poverty, racism, or sexism, but it is a process requirement. Without supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking, our most sincere efforts will be radically undermined, and no amount of money, commitment, or alignment will compensate.

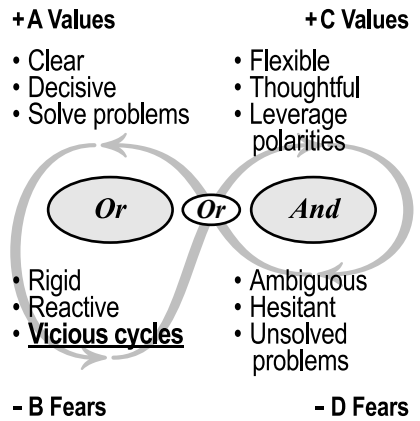
## Chapter 30

### Or With And Helps Us Address Climate Change

This chapter focuses on a second stack of polarities with a focus on climate change. *Figure 1* provides the same starting point as *Chapter 29* with “Or” Or “And” as the first of four polarities we will combine in a stack. As described in prior chapters, we have an unconscious bias for Or-thinking. The desire to be a clear, decisive problem solver (+A) with its corresponding fear of being an ambiguous, hesitant person who cannot solve problems (-D) leads us to over focus on Or to the neglect of And. The result is that we lose the upside of And, being flexible, thoughtful, and able to leverage polarities (+C). Instead, we find ourselves mired in the downside of Or, becoming rigid, reactive, and caught in vicious cycles (-B).

*Figure 2* shows the Family/Environment polarity. “Family” in this context means close relatives: parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, and others to whom we feel closely bonded. “Environment,” as used here, means all families and all of nature. *Figure 2* also shows us bringing the downsides from our Or choice in *Figure 1* to our question about whether we should choose our Family Or the Environment. The dotted arrow reminds us that the Or bias continues through all the remaining polarities in the stack.

*Figure 1*



*Figure 2*

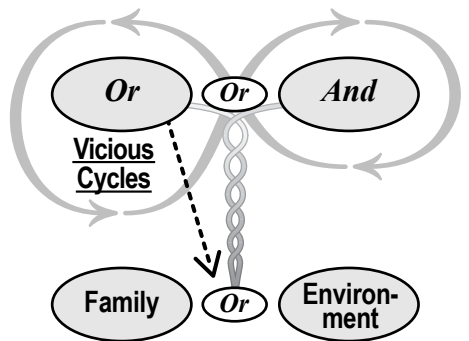
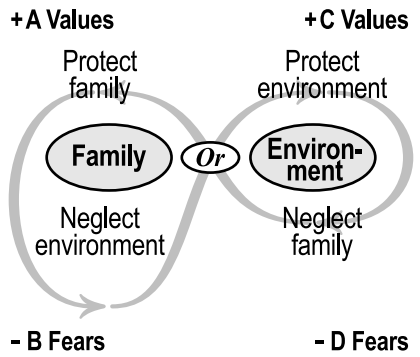


Figure 3 summarizes the results of choosing between Family Or Environment. Given that choice, almost everyone will choose Family. It becomes a more obvious choice from the (+A/-D) point of view. The question is, “Do I want to Protect my family (+A) Or Neglect my family (-D)?” The arrow between (-D) and (+A) reflects the choice and indicates the movement of energy on the infinity loop toward Protect Family (+A). Love of family combined with the unconscious, false choice between Family Or Environment leads to an over-focus on protecting the Family to the neglect of protecting the Environment. The result is to neglect the Environment (-B).

Figure 3

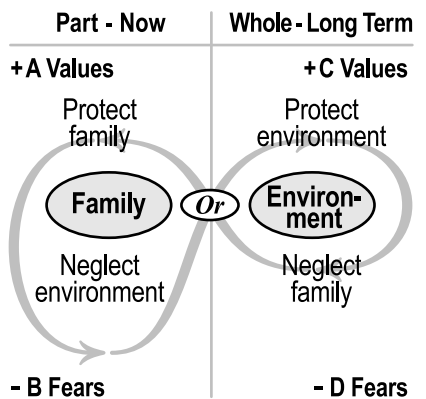


Two important dimensions that impact the decision to choose Family over Environment are connection and urgency.

1. Connection to my Part of the Whole – The Family is a small Part of the Environment which is the Whole. For many it is easier to feel connected to and protective of our immediate Family (Part) than the larger and more abstract notion of the Environment (Whole). This closer connection to Family increases the likelihood that we will choose Family over Environment.
2. Urgency for protecting my part – The connection with Family brings with it an urgency to make sure the Family is protected. The Environment is large and complex, and it feels less urgent and more like a long-term issue. As a result, we are likely to choose Family and get to the Environment later.

Figure 4 shows these two dimensions with “Part – Now” above the left pole and “Whole – Long-Term” above the right pole. This combination of connection and urgency explains why we favor Family when making the false choice between Family Or Environment.

Figure 4



From an Or perspective, those focusing on the Environment (Tree Huggers) appear to have chosen the Environment over Family. From that perspective, it is easy to see why some people would resist seriously looking at the climate crisis. This understandable choice leads to an over focus on protecting Family Now (+A). The result is to Neglect the Environment and the Long-term survival of the family. (-B).

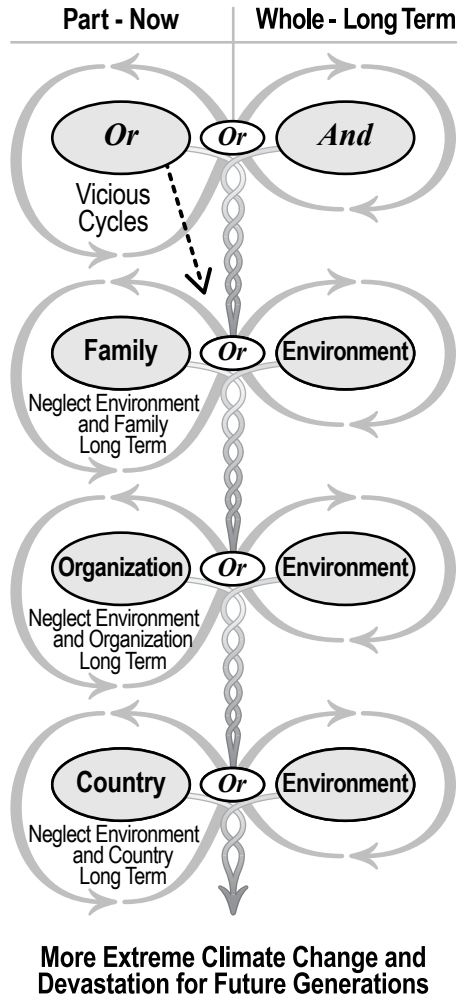
Figure 5 contains the stack of four polarities with *Or* connecting the poles. Moving down the stack, the left poles are expanded from Family to Organization to Country. Though the left pole Part gets bigger, the right pole Whole remains the Environment. As with the Family in Figure 4, we tend to have more direct and immediate concerns for protecting our Organization or Country than for protecting the Environment.

When given the false choice between protecting my Organization and providing work for our employees now *Or* protecting the Environment sometime in the future, I am likely to choose to protect my organization now. This *Or* choice leads us to Neglect the Environment and the long-term interests of my company. An Environment that does not support human life will also not support my company.

The same is true when given the false choice between protecting my Country now *Or* protecting the Environment sometime in the future. I am likely to choose to protect my Country and its immediate needs to be strong and healthy. This choice leads us to neglect the Environment and the long-term interests of the Country. An Environment that does not support human life also will not support the Country.

As mentioned earlier, *Or*-thinking undermines the ability to consider the science behind climate change let alone invest time and energy in addressing it. *Or*-thinking leads to the following assumption: “If climate change is real, I cannot protect my family, my organization, or my country.” With that assumption, I will grasp for any indicator that climate change is not real. I will welcome the possibility that there is still confusion over the issue. Confusion is a form of resistance. It protects us from harsh realities. It can be comforting to think, “Maybe it isn’t true.” I group climate change confusion as a type of climate change denial because they both have the same impact of not giving the climate crisis the attention it deserves. The climate crisis is real, *now*. Denial only makes things worse.

Figure 5



*Or*-thinking was an important reason that the U.S. Senate voted 95–0 against signing the Kyoto Protocol. *Or*-thinking also served as the basis for President Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord 20 years later.

Though it is understandable that any of us would choose to protect our Family, Organization, and Country now over choosing the Environment in the future, these are false choices that combine to result in more extreme climate change and devastation for future generations. This is indicated at the bottom of the stack in Figure 5.

### Addressing the Climate Crisis Now

Focusing on the Part we feel most connected to (Family, Organization, and Country) gives us an unconscious sense of urgency to take care of those parts. We assume we can take care of the Whole (Environment) in the long-term. Those of us appealing for attention to the climate crisis now have an increasing sense of urgency. It comes from the conviction that climate change already has a negative impact, and in the long-term it will have a disastrous impact on our Family, Organization, and Country. Also, we are concerned about the impact on the other animals and plants that share our planet.

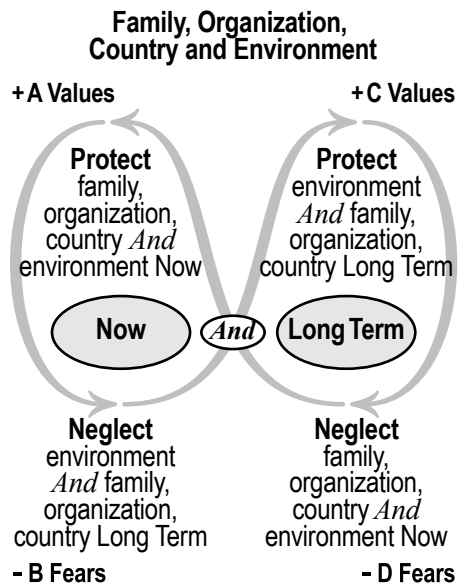
My son, Luke, has been concerned about the climate crisis for many years. His sense of urgency increases with every report on climate change and its impact now and in the future. I have joined him in my own sense of urgency about the climate crisis. This chapter is not intended to convince readers that climate change is real and its impact will be devastating. I encourage you, instead, to look at current reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

I believe the scientists studying climate change are right; we have urgent work to do. The question is not whether we protect our Family/Organization/Country *Or* the Environment. This is a false choice. We can and must do both. The question is, “How do we protect them *And* the environment *Now And* Long-Term?”

Figure 6 reframes the question. This map is a modification of Figure 3. The pole names have been changed to *Now And* Long-Term. Each quadrant begins in bold with the content from Figure 3 and then includes what is missing to reflect the new poles.

In this map, the greater purpose statement includes Family, Organization, Country *And* Environment. This reflects

Figure 6



the reality that all of us want to protect our Family, Organization, Country *And* all of us want to protect the Environment. It is a false assumption that those of us wanting to protect Family do not care about the Environment. It is also a false assumption that those of who want to protect the Environment do not care about Family.

When we put *And* between the poles, Family *And* Environment combined with Now *And* Long-Term, notice what happens in each upside of *Figure 6*. We affirm that we can and must protect our Family, Organization, Country *And* Environment now (+A). The natural, sometimes unconscious urgency we feel about protecting our Family, Organization, Country is supplemented with the conscious urgency that we protect them by protecting the Environment. We can and must protect both now.

Leveraging this polarity also affirms that we can protect our Family, Organization, Country *And* the Environment long term (+C). We can maintain an Environment in which our great, great, grandchildren can flourish. For that to happen, we need to ensure that plant and animal life are allowed to flourish.

**And Brings Possibilities to the Climate Crisis Discussion**

*Figure 7* provides the possibilities that come from supplementing *Or* with *And*. In this new stack, we build from the bottom up using the natural tension between the two poles to lift the system toward a Greater Purpose: Sustainability for Family, Organization, Country *And* Environment.

Starting at the bottom, we can solve problems (upside of *Or*) *And* leverage polarities (upside of *And*). The dotted arrow from *And* in the right pole indicates that we bring *And*-thinking to the other polarities going up the stack. We can protect Family *And* Environment now (upside of Family) *And* long-term (upside of Environment); protect Organization *And* Environment now (upside of Organization) *And* long-term (upside of Environment); protect country and Environment now (upside of Country) *And* long-term (upside of Environment). Leveraging one polarity well helps in leveraging the next one well.

*Figure 7*

**Sustainability for Family, Organization, Country and Environment**

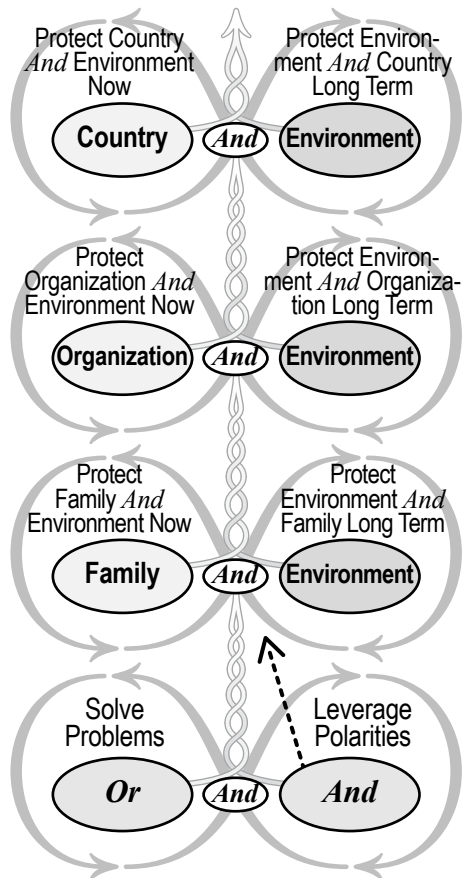


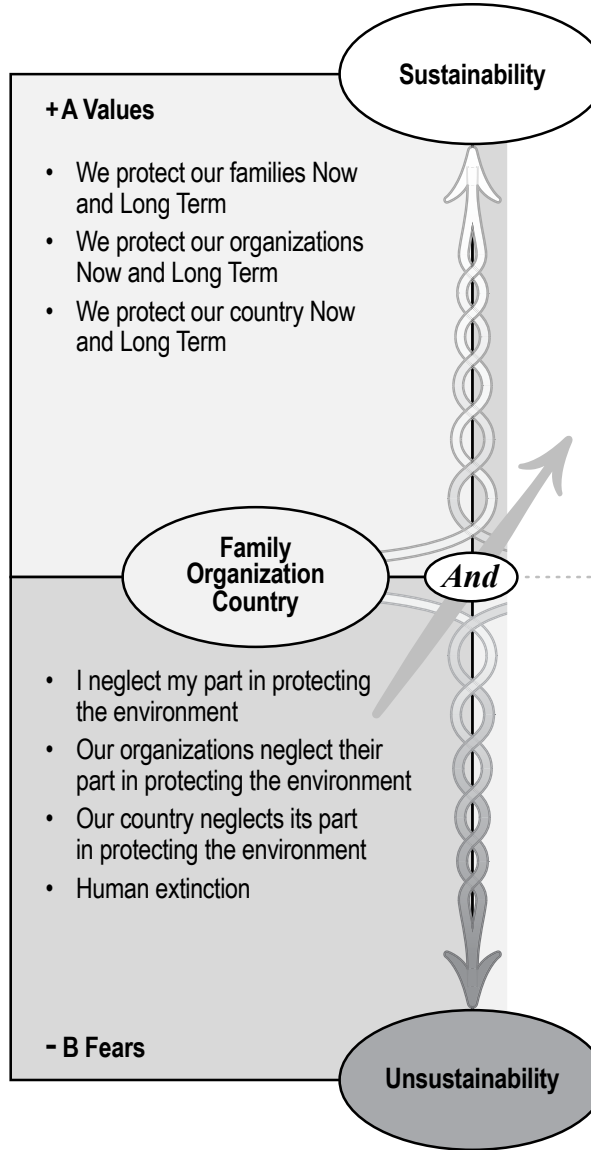
Figure 8

**Action Steps**

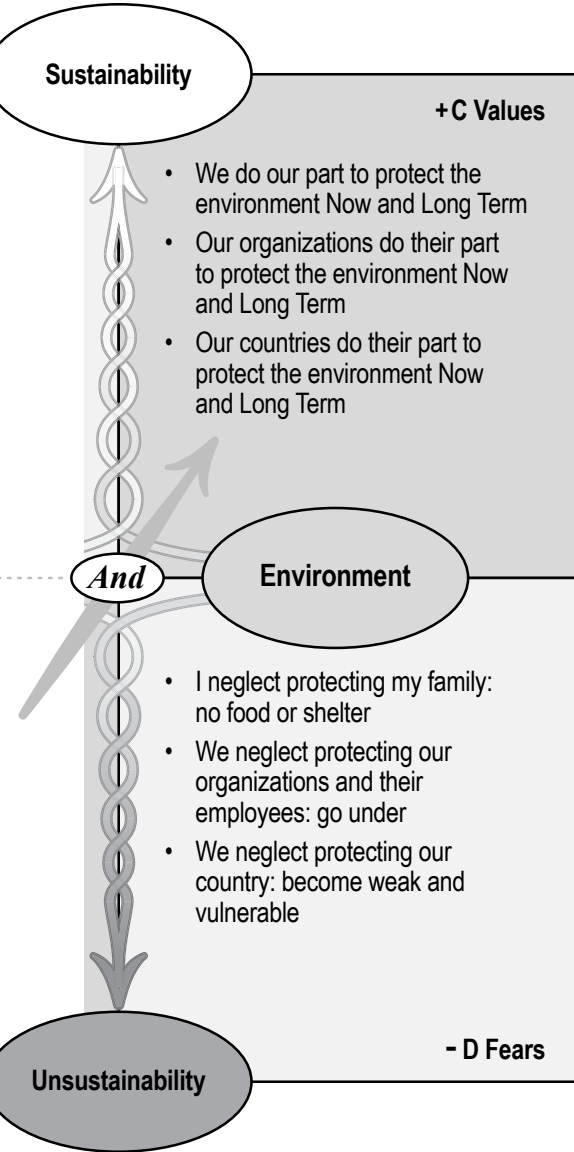
- Provide the basics, including job training for families losing work in transition to renewable energy
- Create renewable energy businesses (HL)
- Retain/gain country strength with renewable energy (HL)
- Explicitly use *And* (HL)

**Early Warnings**

- Denial/confusion about climate change
- Increase in average temperature, etc.
- USA Senate votes 95-0 not to sign Kyoto Protocol
- Trump pulls U.S. out of Paris Climate Accord 2017







**Action Steps**

- Retain/gain legislation protecting our environment from pollution and excessive climate change
- Create renewable energy businesses (HL)
- Retain/gain country strength with renewable energy (HL)
- Explicitly use *And* (HL)
- U.S. recommits to Paris Climate Accord and future accords

**Early Warnings**

- Increase in families losing fossil fuel related jobs without alternative means to care for families
- Increase in fossil fuel and related businesses closing
- Identifying others as “evil” deniers and polluters: feel self-righteous indignation

### Taking Action to Address the Climate Crisis – the SMALL Process

**Seeing:** The first step in seeing is to remember that seeing is loving. If we could see, completely, those denying or confused about the climate crisis and those organizing to address the climate crisis, love would be the result. The second step in seeing is to see relevant polarities. In this chapter, I have focused on a version of the Part *And* Whole polarity: protecting Family, Organization, Country *And* protecting the Environment. Family, Organization, and Country are three polarities stacked with the *Or/And* polarity. The other polarity that emerged as important was Now *And* Long-Term.

**Mapping:** The reason to map a polarity is to see beyond the two poles connected by *And*. The full map allows us to Assess, Learn, and Leverage the polarity through Action Steps and Early Warnings.

*Figure 8*, on previous pages 250 and 251, is a full Polarity Map® with Action Steps and Early Warnings.

Family, Organization, and Country is the left pole *And* the Environment is the right pole. Within each quadrant, the focus is on Now *And* Long-Term. The Greater Purpose Statement is Sustainability and the Deeper Fear is Unsustainability: an environment that will not sustain life.

The map does not include all possible content within each quadrant or all possible Action Steps and Early Warnings. Instead, it frames the conversation, valuing and respecting the upsides of both poles.

**Assessing: The map uses a “trend arrow”.** The trend arrow question is, “At this time, is the energy trending (or needing to trend) toward the upside of Family, Organization, Country (-D toward +A) or toward the upside of Environment (-B toward +C)? In my assessment for the United States in 2020, the energy needs to trend toward the upside of Environment (+C) because we have over-focused on protecting our Family, Organizations, and Country to the neglect of the Environment.

**Early Warnings (EW -B)** causing me to make this assessment included:

- Denial/confusion about the climate crisis. This denial/confusion comes from wanting to protect Family, Organization, Country combined with the false assumption that we must choose between those things *Or* the Environment.
- Increase in average temperature and growing indicators of problems resulting from climate change.
- In 1997, the U.S. Senate voted 95–0 against ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. This unanimous vote was not an indication that the senators did not care about the environment. It indicated the unconscious bias for *Or*-thinking.
- In 2017, President Trump withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord. Support for this decision came from citizens and legislators who saw it from an *either/Or* perspective and chose Family, Organization, and Country.

These Early Warnings contributed to my assessment that the trend arrow needs to point from (-B) toward (+C). If you see it the other way, switch the arrow so it points from (-D) toward (+A). You also could see it differently for a different country or at a different time. Regardless of where the trend arrow points, Action Steps are needed for each upside.

**Learning:** If we determine that we need to go to the upside of the Environment (+C), it means, paradoxically, that first we should focus on Action Steps to protect the Family, Organization, and Country (AS +A). Then, we should focus on Action Steps to protect the Environment (AS +C). Before planning to protect the Environment, we need to be very explicit about plans to protect our Family, Organization, and Country. This paradoxical change process was described as “getting unstuck” in *Chapter 13*.

**Leveraging:** This final step in the SMALL process includes Action Steps to maximize the upsides and Early Warnings to minimize the downsides. Because we are wanting to move to (+C), we begin, below, with identifying Action Steps for (+A).

**Action Steps** (AS +A) to gain (or maintain) the upsides of Family, Organization, Country (+A) include:

- Provide the basics, including job training for families losing work in the transition to renewable energy. Advocates for the Environment first must be clear that we are committed to protecting families impacted by the switch from fossil fuel to renewable energy. The *And* message is that we can protect Families *And* the Environment. This commitment fits with the polarity of Abundance for Some *And* Basics for All in *Chapter 29*. Coal miners, oil and gas industry employees, and others affected by the shift to renewable energy deserve the basics: food, water, shelter, clothing, education, work with a living wage and healthcare. We can and must protect them *And* the Environment, now and long-term. Legislation to protect the Environment should also protect the Family. We cannot allow legislation to perpetuate the false choice between Family *Or* Environment by addressing only one side of the polarity.
- Create renewable energy businesses. Just as we can and must protect the Family *And* Environment, we must do our best to protect our Organizations *And* the Environment. For example, how might we protect businesses reliant on fossil fuel by supporting them in shifting to renewable energy? How do we address the impact on owners and employees when businesses do not survive the shift? We can and must protect Organizations *And* the Environment. This action step is High Leverage (HL) because it contributes to retaining/gaining the upsides of both poles.
- Retain/gain country strength through renewable energy (HL). Many wars have been fought over access to fossil fuels located within national boundaries. Sun and wind are more widely available. Energy independence

through renewable energy is a good way to protect our Country *And* protect the Environment. We can enhance national security while caring for the Environment.

- Explicitly use *And* (HL). Our communications and actions must be clear that we are leveraging key polarities in order to protect our Families, Organizations, and Countries *And* the Environment Now *And* Long-term. Efforts to address the climate crisis without explicitly leveraging these key polarities undermine those efforts radically.

**Early Warnings** (EW -D) of over-focusing on the Environment to the neglect of Family, Organization, Country (-D) include:

- Increase in families losing fossil fuel related jobs without alternative means to care for those families.
- Increase in Fossil fuel and related businesses closing. These concerns need to be acknowledged, respected, and addressed by the Action Steps in support of the upside of Family, Organization, and Country (+A).
- Identifying others as “evil” deniers and polluters – feel self-righteous indignation. This is a version of the Justice *And* Mercy polarity. When we have trouble admitting our own contribution to the climate crisis, it is easier to project our shortcomings onto “them.”

**Action Steps** (AS +C) to gain or maintain the upside of Environment (+C) include:

- Retain/gain legislation protecting our environment from pollution and climate change. What I list here is simply placeholder examples to represent an ongoing need for legislation and enforcement to slow down and reverse the impact of the climate crisis.
- Create renewable energy businesses (HL).
- Retain/gain country strength with renewable energy (HL).
- Explicitly use *And* when addressing the tension within polarities that are part of the climate crisis struggle (HL).
- Re-affirm Paris Climate Accord and future accords.

### Planning *And* Implementing

The SMALL process is done with key stakeholders first as a planning discussion in which possible Action Steps and Early Warnings are identified. When moving to implementation, high leverage Action Steps are a helpful place to start because they simultaneously support both upsides. It is also important to make sure that enough Action Steps are implemented to support the upside of the pole you are moving from to avoid the downside of the pole you are moving toward. When that is done, it will be easier to implement the Action Steps to gain or maintain the upside of the pole you want to move toward at this point in time.

## Summary

The issue of the climate crisis is more complicated than this chapter can begin to reflect. At the same time, a polarity lens can be useful in addressing complicated issues by identifying underlying tension patterns and leveraging them.

When asked whether we want to protect our Family, Organizations, and Country *Or* protect the Environment, we will likely choose Family, Organization and Country. Connection and urgency drive this choice. For example, we are likely to feel more connected to Family than the Environment and to feel more urgent about protecting Family now than the environment, which we feel we can address long-term.

When we stack Family, Organization, and Country on the left side with Environment on the right side and connect the two sides with *Or*, the Environment pole is neglected. Connecting the two sides with *And* changes how we communicate about, and influences the actions we take, to slow down and reverse climate change.

Both advocates for the Environment and those denying the climate crisis care about protecting Family, Organization, and Country. Also, both care about the Environment. Both also feel a sense of urgency. Those denying climate change unconsciously feel that it is urgent to protect their Family now. Those organizing to reverse the climate crisis consciously feel that it is urgent to protect the Environment Now in order to protect our Families Now *And* Long-term.

The SMALL process is useful. Viewing the issue through a polarity lens encourages respect for the values and fears of *both* those denying the climate crisis *And* the Environmental advocates. When planning, if the present trend needs to move from the downside of Family, Organization, and Country to the upside of Environment, it is important to identify Action Steps to protect Family, Organization, and Country first and then identify Action Steps to protect the Environment. When implementing, it is often helpful to do high leverage Action Steps first because they support the upside of both poles. It is also helpful to make sure enough Action Steps supporting the present pole are being carried out to hold on to the benefits of that pole while going after the upsides of the interdependent pole. In many cases, the Action Steps for both upsides can then be carried out simultaneously.

*And*-thinking is a framework for making a difference with climate change. Without supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking, efforts to reverse the climate crisis in time to protect future generations are undermined radically. The survival of future generations is dependent, in part, upon supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking.<sup>R112</sup>

## New Realities in Chapter 30

Reality 112 *And*-thinking is a framework for addressing climate change. Without supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking, efforts to reverse the climate crisis in time to protect future generations are undermined radically. The survival of future generations is dependent, in part, upon supplementing *Or*-thinking with *And*-thinking.

# Praise for And



“Polarity Thinking has revolutionized how we approach tough problems in our work. There are countless moments – from making a big decision as a management team, to launching an issue campaign that requires navigating fraught political waters, to building deep and lasting coalitions, to building more inclusive and collaborative teams – in which we map out a polarity to push our thinking and hone our strategy. In today’s complex world of politics and advocacy, identifying ways to better leverage key polarities has exponentially increased our impact. We are vocal evangelists and have shared the tool with countless customers and partners who have adopted it to increase the efficacy of their own progressive advocacy work!”

~ **Lanae Erickson**  
*Senior Vice President for Social Policy & Politics :: Third Way*



“The fight for equity, inclusion, social justice and humanity is not an ‘or’ argument. It is a ‘must’ argument which can only be achieved when advocates and allies augment *either/Or*-thinking with *both/And*-thinking. These two volumes are uniquely divided between Foundations skill building in Polarity Thinking, and a wide variety of Applications of *both/And*-thinking. The two volumes contain critical information to help us all break the divisiveness that can result from only using *either/Or*-thinking.”

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*Founder/Program Director, The White Privilege Conference*



“Polarity Thinking is one of the essential disciplines underlying our vital and never-ending search for win-win solutions to our many challenges and dilemmas. Barry Johnson has given us an invaluable gift in creating – and now deepening – this powerful tool. It can help us arrive at *And* solutions in a world that often seems hopelessly tangled in a bipolar dance within polarities. Along with systems thinking, Polarity Thinking is an essential skill that should be part of the education of every human being on the planet, especially anyone charged with leadership responsibilities.”

~ **Raj Sisodia**  
*FW Olin Distinguished Professor of Global Business, Babson College  
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