



Three Divides

The Ego to Eco framework begins with what we call the “iceberg model” of the current socioeconomic system. Why an iceberg? Because it assumes that, beneath the visible level of events and crises, there are underlying structures, mental models, and sources that are responsible for creating them. If ignored, they will keep us locked into reenacting the same old patterns time and again.

Progressing through the levels of the iceberg from surface to depth will illuminate several blind spots that can help us rebuild our economy and society to be more intentional, inclusive, and inspired.

Like the tip of an iceberg—the 10% that is visible above the waterline—the symptoms of our current situation are the visible and explicit parts of our current reality. This “symptoms” level is a whole landscape of issues and pathologies that constitute three “divides”: what we call the ecological divide, the social divide, and the spiritual divide.

The Ecological Divide. We are depleting and degrading our natural resources on a massive scale, using up more nonrenewable precious resources every year. Although we have only one planet earth, we leave an ecological footprint of 1.5 planets; that is, we are currently using 50% more resources than our planet can regenerate to meet our current consumption needs. As a consequence, one third of our agricultural land has disappeared over the past 40 years. Rapidly falling water tables are taking us on a path toward food riots. Food prices are expected to double by 2030.

The Social Divide. Two and a half billion people on our planet subsist on less than \$2 per day. Although there have been many successful attempts to lift people out of poverty, this number, 2.5 billion, has not changed much over the past several decades. In addition we see an increasing polarization in society in which the top 1 percent has a greater collective worth than the entire bottom 90 percent.

The Spiritual-cultural Divide. While the ecological divide is based on a disconnect between self and nature, and the social divide on a disconnect between self and other, the spiritual divide reflects a disconnect between self and Self—that is, between my current “self” and the emerging future “Self” that represents my greatest potential. This divide is manifest in rapidly growing figures on burnout and depression, which represent the growing gap between our actions and who we really are. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2000 more than twice as many people died from suicide as died in wars.

The ecological, social, and the spiritual-cultural divides represent three different tips of the iceberg of massive institutional failure. We are collectively creating results that nobody wants.