



25<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
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international symposium  
Seattle, WA  
July 13 - 16, 2015



# One Size fits all? A model of human growth and its application to systems thinking

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# Your Presenters



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# An introduction



This presentation is an appetiser.  
We encourage you to read the paper.





# Clare Graves

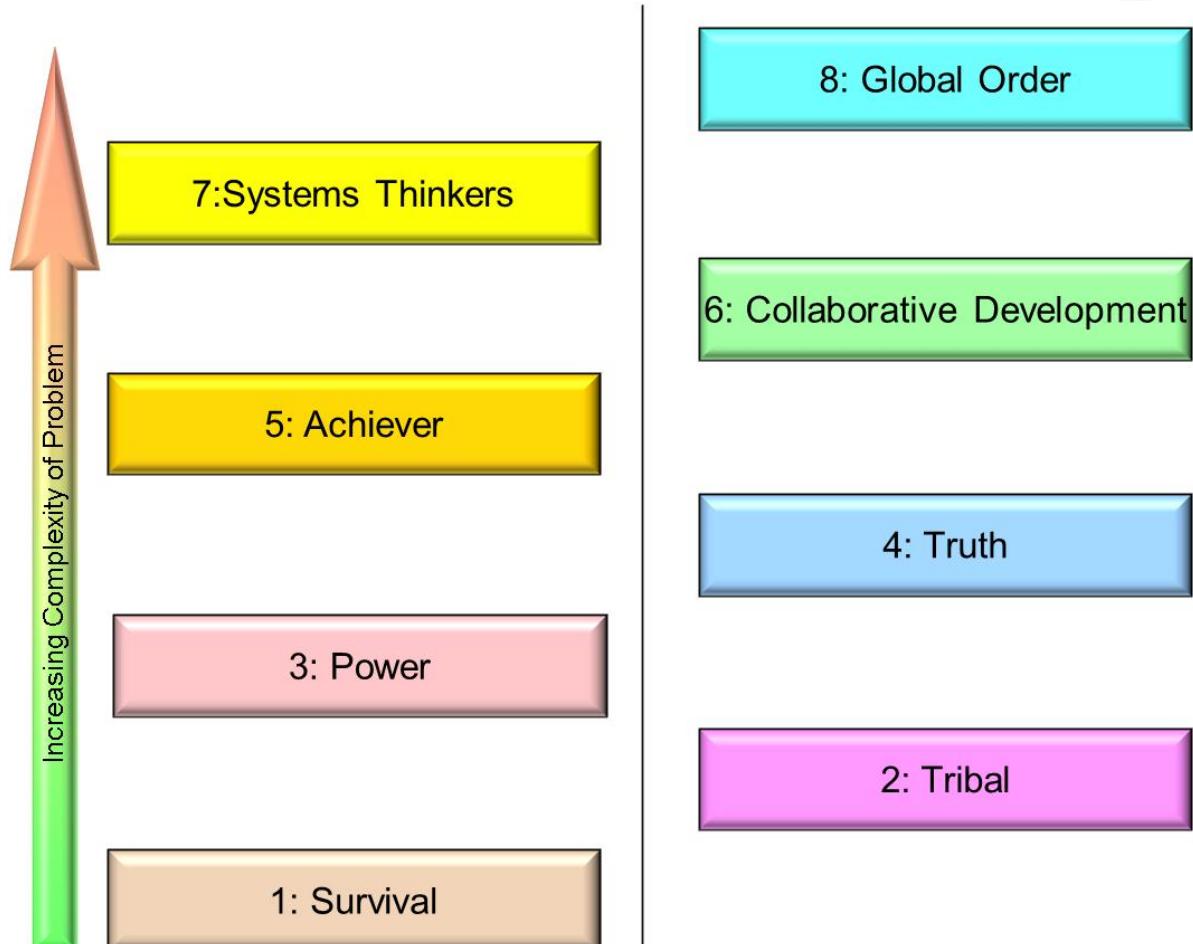


- Mid-twentieth century, Clare W. Graves taught psychology at Union College in Schenectady, New York
- Chris Cowan and Don Beck used it as the basis for their book *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change*





# 8 Levels of the Graves Model





# Graves level 1 – Survival





# Graves Level 2 – Tribal



- Internal, self-sufficient
- Us versus them mindset
- Low interest to improve



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# Graves Level 3 – Power



Help is for wimps

This Graves is all nonsense – just fix things now

What big picture? – my team and I are the big picture

Process and is for those (others) who don't know what they are doing – I do

If we do things my way - we will be alright

Look – I'm good – so I can take more risk than the weaklings

How does this help me - now



Strategy is for wimps

If things go wrong we'll fix them then – I'm good in a crisis

What does the boss say?

The SE view

- These are the “hero fire fighters”, dictatorial Program Managers
- Not the friends of Systems Engineering
- If they weren't so prevalent and powerful they might be laughable



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# Graves Level 4 – Truth



- Likes laws, rules, processes, governance, discipline, etc.
- The process does the thinking not the person
- Only one right way to do things – bipolar thinking. Want to eliminate differences - all do the same thing
- Cannot cope easily with ambiguity, uncertainty or risk
- Based on the principle of mistrust. Tends to create micro-managers



SE View: Certification, auditors, reviewers, safety, checklist, six sigma





# Graves Level 5 – Achiever



- Recognize there are many ways to solve a problem
  - Look for strategy, improvement, performance - quality not quantity
  - Extroverts, goal-orientated, risk takers, explorers, adventurers, entrepreneurs, opportunists and politicians
  - Want to control their own success rather than rely on the system
  - Politically savvy, working with the system rather than overthrowing it
  - Law is a rule for fools but a guide for wise men

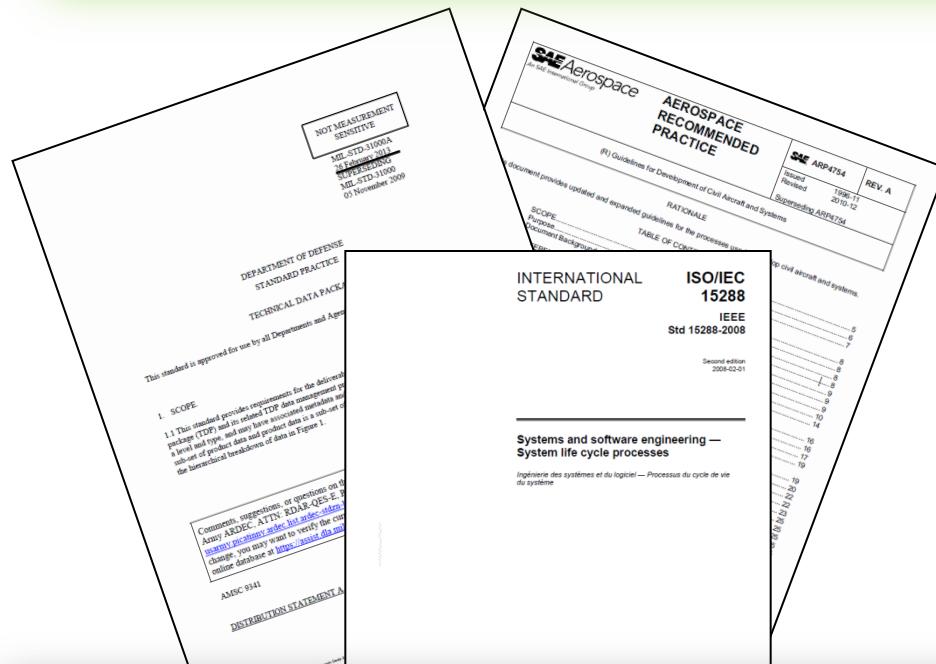
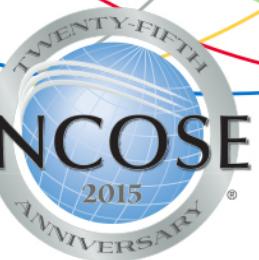


SE View: Copes with ambiguity, pursues success, can cope with complexity

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# Graves Level 6 – Collaborative Development



## The SE view

- Good at listening and collaborative working; may take a while to deliver



- The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one
- All people have an equal say in decisions
- Coordinators, facilitators and coaches rather than managers
- Collaboration to develop standardized approaches that we can all use
- Collaboration may be more important than results



# Graves Level 7 – Systems Thinking



- Knowledge is power
- Seeking knowledge is a lifetime quest
- Respect competence, reject ignorance
- Comfortable with uncertainty



SE View: Often “residential experts”; best in position where they can share; thrives on complexity



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# Graves Level 8 – Global Order



Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace  
You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you will join us  
And the world will be as one

John Lennon

- It is only by consensus and unity can we fix the world's problems
- There is always a bigger picture
- There really is a better way – together we can find it
- Everything is connected
- Complexity / ambiguity?  
Chance for clarification and making things better
- Things really can get better



The SE view

- Do these people actually exist?

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# Muppets guide to the Graves Model



7: Systems Thinkers



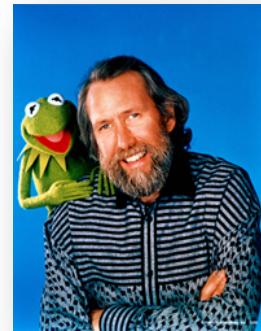
5: Achiever



3: Power



1: Survival



8: Global Order



6: Collaborative Development



4: Truth



2: Tribal

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# A guide to your own Graves level



I'm an 8 (obviously)

3

I'm disappointed you think  
I'm only ....

3

A check list would help

4

This was boring

Not 7

I see how to exploit value  
from this

5

Fascinating- but need to  
research further

7

No time for this

1

You could train people to 5

4

Looking forward to next  
standards meeting

6

I'm proud be a 3

3

I'm struggling – how can I  
use this ?

2 or 4

I want more guidance on  
this

4

I'm the next guitar rock god

3

Looking forward to orchestra  
practice next week

4

I love ambiguity – it's a  
rewarding opportunity

At least 5

I hate ambiguity

2 or 4

I could have done a better  
job on this paper

3, 5 or 7

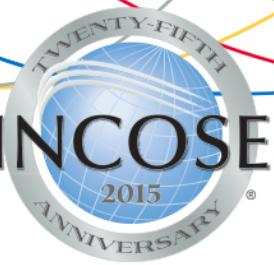
OK, but I've got a better  
model

7

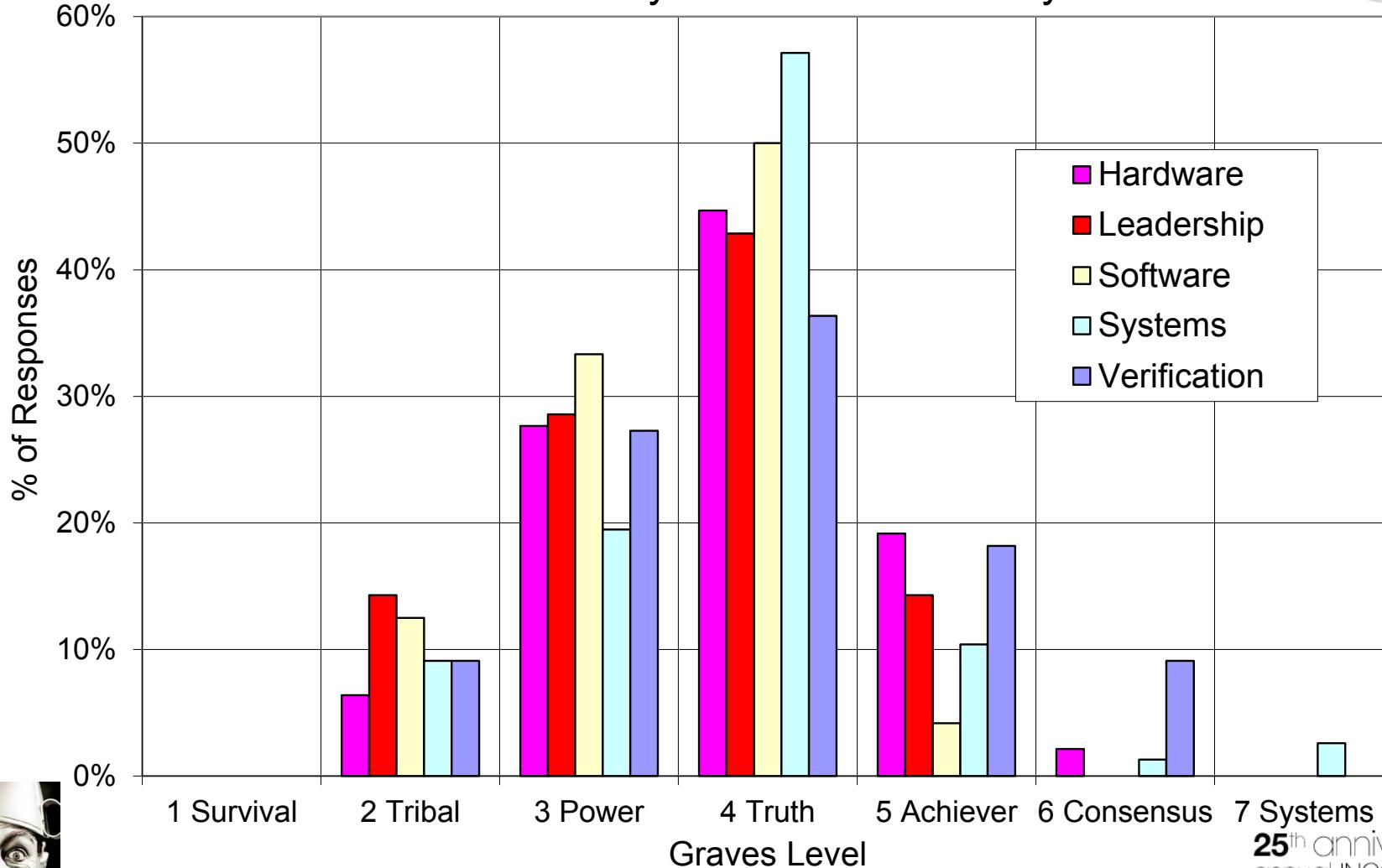




# Measuring Graves Level Distributions



Process Checker Analysis - Graves Level by Role





# 5 – 4 interactions



5: Achiever



4: Truth

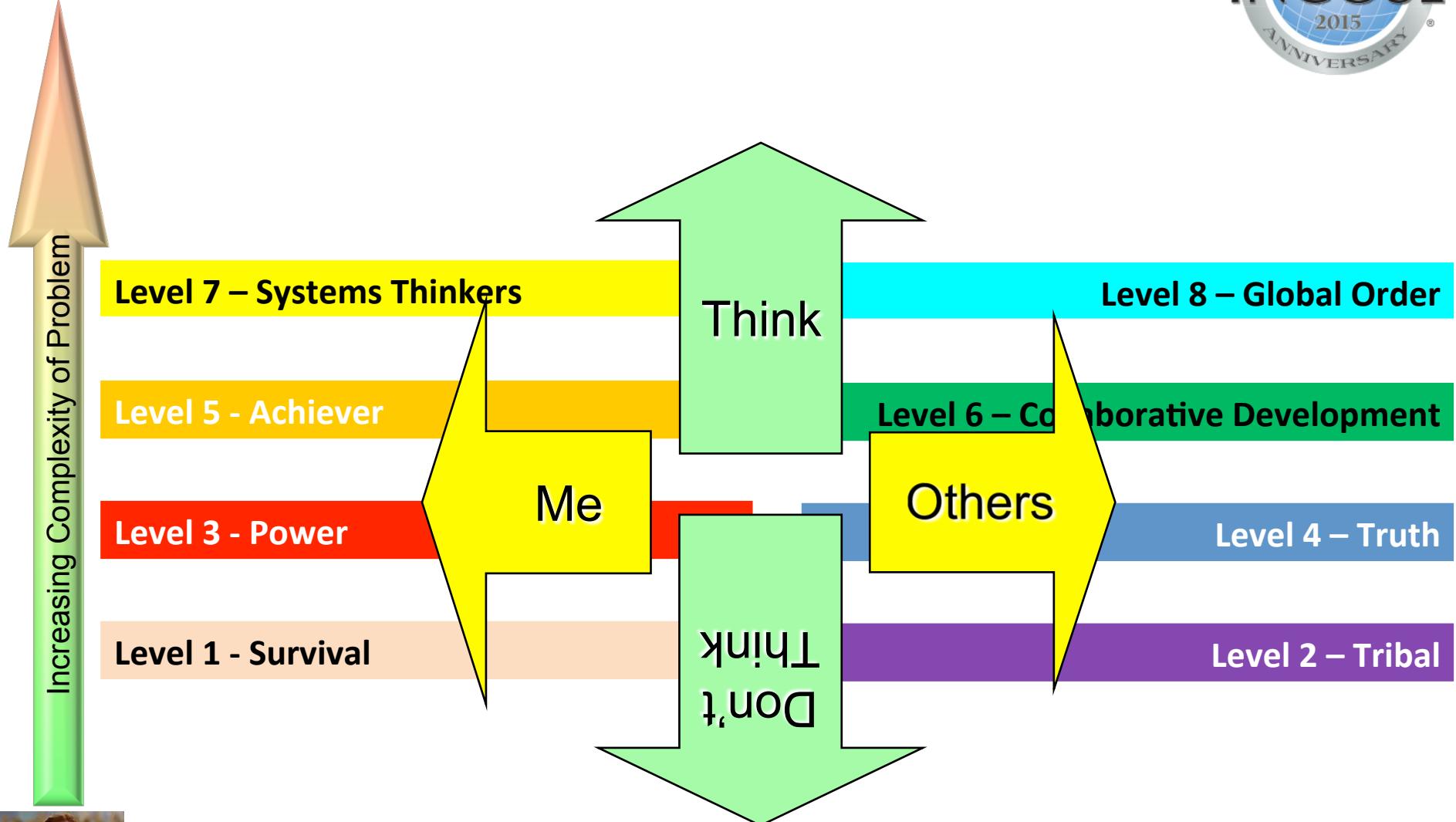


- Maturing a process with a 5 led to problems when used by a 4
- Requirements written by a 5 cannot be implemented by a 4 (or tested)
- 5s will try to improve the world but a 4 will want to keep it the same.
- 5s will understand risk but a 4 will not know how to deal with it
- A 4 will eventually lead a 5 to burnout





# Get the most from the model:





# Get the most from the model: Approach the problem



Me	Others
Level 7 – Systems Thinkers	My
Level 5 - Achiever	Mine
Level 3 - Power	Me
Level 1 - Survival	I
Level 8 – Global Order	All
Level 6 – Collaborative Development	Us
Level 4 – Truth	They
Level 2 – Tribal	We

What is best motivation? Internal (odd) or External (even)  
Use language “heard” by listeners  
Apply an approach that’s possible to implement

**Do:** Acknowledge tribal groups and mix tribes and leaders to blend new team

**Do:** Test new tools and processes at the level that will use them

**Do not:** Expect flexible responses from a team lead by Level 3

**Do not:** Expect Level 5 metrics and charts to motivate Level 4





# Get the most from the model: ID and make changes



- Use most effective communication for level
  - Choose stories that will resonate

For Level 6:



“Your work is important because it brings families together”

- Provide reasoning that will be accepted



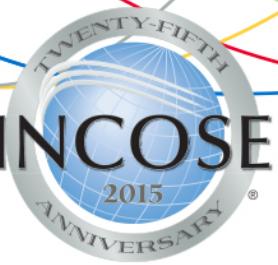
For Level 3:

“This change provides new leadership opportunities, continued professional growth, and advancement.”





# Summary



- Systems Engineers have to work with, integrate, and persuade others to undertake Systems Engineering
- They need to recognise that “*people are different*” and have empathy with their positions / world views
  - All the levels have value (even the 3s!)
- The Graves model gives Systems Engineers a way to:
  - Understand peoples’ motivation
  - Understand how to communicate with different people
  - Create teams of the right people to match the problem
  - Recruit and develop the right people in the organisation
- The Graves model offers insight into how teams work together and what may effectively motivate and encourage teams at different levels





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# Questions



## Reminder of the levels

**Level 7 – Systems Thinkers**

**Level 5 - Achiever**

**Level 3 - Power**

**Level 1 - Survival**

**Level 8 – Global Order**

**Level 6 – Collaborative Development**

**Level 4 – Truth**

**Level 2 – Tribal**



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# Use Graves as an SE

## 1st Define what SEs do:



- Approach problem
  - Understand bias, form approach that is appropriate and feasible
- Influence teams and people
  - Understand motivation and limitations
- Bring people together
  - Know how people work in teams
- Id and make changes
  - Communicate , explain, justify, prove

# Get the most from the model

