

SECTION ONE/CHAPTER

5

Meet The Sphere

*Once we recognize it is there,
it is hard not to see it.*



We have all met THE SPHERE before. We know it well because it has always been here, even when obscured by The Box. THE SPHERE represents our experience of living and the nature of the world, as we know it. It is the natural shape of things.

Once we learn to recognize it for what it is, THE SPHERE is as easy to see as our own fingertips and it appears wherever we look. At its most basic level, THE SPHERE of *Being Spherical* is a picture of things in relationship to one another. Whether animal, vegetable or mineral, personal or communal, cosmic or subatomic, THE SPHERE represents any dynamic system of relationships we choose to picture and wish to understand better.

In THE SPHERE we see dynamic relationships depicted as patterns and shapes. In considering THE SPHERE we see that:

- Our relationships with parents, partners, friends, children, associates and even people we have never met, as well as our heredity, experiences, culture, education, jobs, health, intelligence and beliefs, combine to influence and shape our *personal spheres*.
- Personal spheres (individuals) link up to form *organizational spheres*. We see relationships between personal spheres influencing and shaping families, tribes, clans, teams, communities, companies, institutions, countries, societies and any other grouping.
- All personal and organizational spheres, as well as all spheres in nature, connect to form the *global sphere*. The global sphere consists of the dynamic patterns of interrelationships within and between human populations, animal species, technologies, natural resources and all other manifestations of life.
- Ultimately, because every sphere at some level connects to every other, every sphere influences and contributes to the shape of the *universal sphere*. In *Being Spherical*, the universal sphere represents everything—known and unknown—in relationship. All of existence is one sphere.

No sphere is an island.

THE SPHERE is composed of *nodes*. Nodes are the subjective and objective, tangible and intangible, elements that represent a person, organization, community or any system.

When thinking about life in terms of personal, organizational, global and universal spheres, we recognize that a key characteristic of THE SPHERE (all spheres) is *interconnection*. When we envision any system of any size, we see individual spheres coming together, linking and clustering to form ever-larger spheres.

Because no sphere exists in isolation, every sphere influences the shape of other spheres to which it connects. Therefore, as we will see in detail in later chapters, every sphere is dependent on every other for its own shape. *Interdependence*, another key characteristic of THE SPHERE, is a basic aspect of life. We see examples in the spheres of young children, who depend on their parents for nurturing, protecting and shaping. We see interdependence between the spheres of the farmer, the land, the weather, the tractor manufacturer, the supermarket operator and food buyers. We see interdependence in action on the ball field and on the battlefield. In the global sphere, we see interdependence increasing with every new political, social and economic connection between people and nations.

Because THE SPHERE represents the interconnected and interdependent nature of life, it is also by nature complex and *self-organizing*. Like any living community, or the physical universe itself, THE SPHERE is always changing. It is never the same shape twice. With every small alteration in one part of a sphere, the entire sphere changes shape. Changes compound upon changes, interacting and feeding back, continuously reshaping THE SPHERE.

We see self-organization in the spheres of family members gathered at the dinner table, coworkers chatting in the hallway, audiences applauding in a theater, crowds moving down the street, aborigines dancing around a fire, planets forming around a star, galaxies swirling in space, ants swarming a morsel, fish fleeing a predator, brain cells forming ideas, birds flying south for winter.

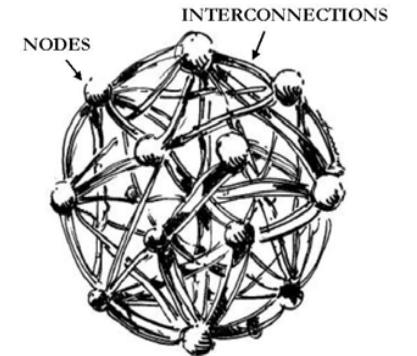
Through its dynamic interconnections, THE SPHERE continually responds and adjusts itself to current conditions. If we look at an animated rendering of THE SPHERE, we see its shape constantly shifting and re-forming in response to changes in its environment.

When envisioning the spheres of our lives we see that as individuals our unique qualities, characteristics, thoughts and behaviors influence the shape of every sphere we touch, whether those spheres are other people, groups or entire societies.

We cannot know our own shape or understand our own lives without seeing ourselves in relationship with others. We cannot understand ourselves or other people without understanding how our own unique shapes influence the shape of the world in which we live.

Being Spherical is about seeing, understanding and influencing—for the better—the shape of other spheres.

THE SPHERE is a unifying visualization and an adaptive vocabulary for putting us in accord with the prevailing reality.



From a spherical perspective, we recognize that everything influences everything else.