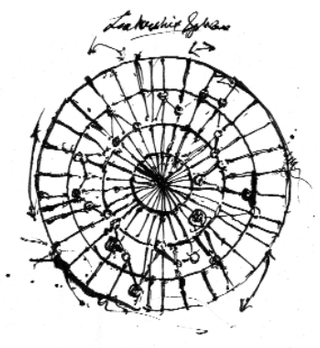
SECTION ONE/CHAPTER

# 6

# Meet The SMT

*THE SPHERE is the guiding vision; the Spherical Modeling Tool (SMT) is the practical application.*



*THE SPHERE and the SMT may appear to be separate entities, but they are one and the same.*

*Being Spherical* begins with being aware. The greater our awareness of the interconnections and interdependence among and between spheres–the greater our awareness of the complex and self-organizing nature of life–the more meaningfully and positively we influence the shape of others and the world. Out of awareness of THE SPHERE comes understanding. From awareness and understanding come the attitudes and actions necessary to bring us into accord with the prevailing reality.

*Being Spherical* is both a conceptual and a practical approach to awareness. THE SPHERE, which we have just met, serves to make us aware of the emerging worldview. The Spherical Modeling Tool (SMT), is a hands-on awareness process for seeing the interconnections and interdependence in systems (spheres).

THE SPHERE and the SMT form a whole: The SMT guides us in the process of seeing THE SPHERE. THE SPHERE provides meaning and context to the applications of the SMT.

Section Five and the Appendix provide in-depth explanations of the SMT and its applications. At this point in our story, the most important thing to know about the SMT is that it provokes questions; it does not provide answers. The picture painted by the SMT does not tell us what to do or how to do it. When using the SMT, the goal is subjective awareness, not objective analysis. The SMT's function is to broaden perspectives, to guide understanding of complex interrelationships and to facilitate communication among individuals and groups.

**By visualizing systems as dynamic, interconnected and interdependent patterns, the SMT enhances our ability to respond appropriately to the prevailing speed, obstacles and conditions.**

As with THE SPHERE, the defining characteristic of the SMT is its use of shape and pattern as a means for analysis and understanding. The SMT depicts the condition (shape) of a system (sphere) by depicting the interrelationships (patterns) between data points (nodes). Nodes, which in the SMT represent different aspects or qualities in a system, are spheres in their own right. The interconnections, which represent the relationships between nodes, form the patterns that depict the overall shape of the sphere.

**Both THE SPHERE and the SMT look at dynamic systems in life as patterns and shapes.**

The first thing we notice when applying the SMT to understanding a system is that the shape of every sphere is unique.



Every sphere is a distinct combination and clustering of nodes. We see at a glance that all nodes are interconnected. We also see that every node contributes interdependently to the total shape of the system. We see how changes in one node influence all others. In addition, when we look at the SMT over time or sequentially, we see the processes of self-organization depicted as continuously changing patterns and shapes.

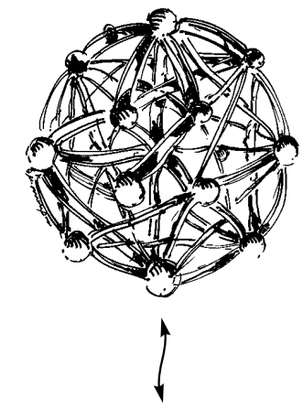
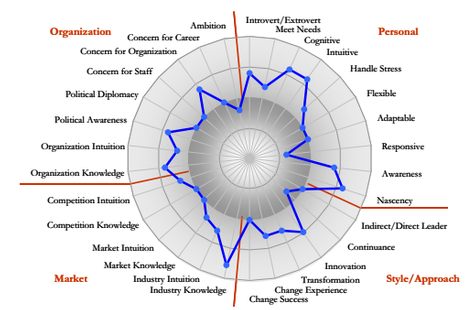
Briefly, the SMT works like this: individuals and/or groups determine what system (sphere) they wish to examine and better understand. They identify and label specific nodes, which represent people, attributes, responsibilities or any other aspect of the system. They position the nodes around the sphere, clustering them according to relationship. The participants then assign a value to each node based on goals, objectives, expectations, need, intent or some other predetermined evaluation criteria.

The SMT automatically plots the individual nodes and interconnections creating a pattern superimposed on a spherical background. The resulting pattern, or shape, represents a snapshot of the interrelationships between nodes and the current condition of the system. At that point, the SMT is ready for analysis. From the analysis of the patterns, questions emerge. The questioning process produces a heightened level of awareness about the dynamic realities of the system (sphere) and the interrelationships that give it form.

In a personal SMT, for example, nodes represent relationships with friends, spouse, family, coworkers, health issues, learning activities, emotional state, personal finances, spirituality, or any of hundreds of other aspects of the person's life. The individual using the SMT positions the nodes around the sphere and assigns each a value. Plotted on the sphere, the patterns reveal the current state of the individual as a unique shape, which serves as the catalyst for evaluation, understanding, awareness and action.

Like THE SPHERE, the SMT is a guide to seeing the big picture. The image created by the SMT helps individuals and groups transition from seeing systems in isolation to seeing their fundamental interconnections and interdependence. As with THE SPHERE, the SMT facilitates a greater understanding of the dynamic relationships that shape our lives, our organizations and our world.

***Applications for the SMT include:*** *health evaluation, organizational analysis, conflict resolution, decision making, self-actualization, trends analysis, career development, performance improvement, financial assessment, employment assessment, project management, time management, environmental impact analysis, leadership and more.*



Leadership SMT