



## TETRASYNTHESIS: A four-fold generic methodology

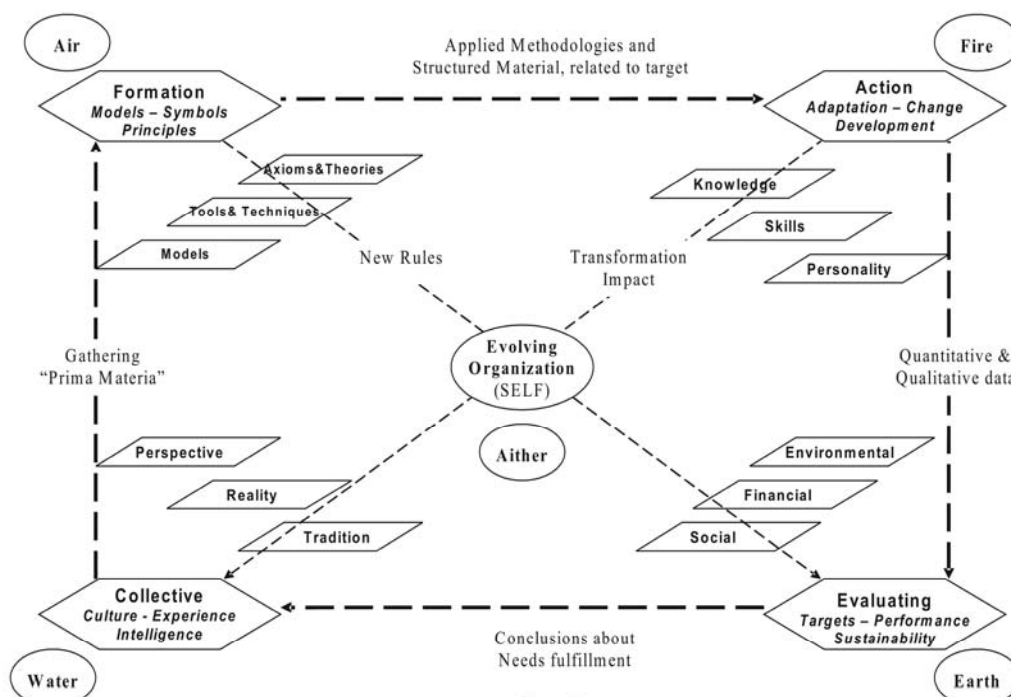
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*One becomes two; two becomes three; and out of the third comes the one as the fourth.  
(The Axiom of Maria)*

A four fold generic methodology (*Tetrasynthesis*), aiming to support evolving (learning) organizations in their quest for *anelixis*, will be outlined here. This methodology concerns gathering and transforming unstructured collective material, implementing it appropriately in the field and evaluating its results. Following the concept of *open source*, *Tetrasynthesis* is more a suggestion rather than a model. It is not a closed set of non-flexible procedures and rules; rather it serves like a “reserve bank” of various concepts, techniques, and tools not only for consultants or facilitators but for anyone who wishes to use it. The user has the option to choose among these “ingredients”, according to his/her individual characteristics and the needs of the application field. In that way he/she has the chance to *project* him/herself onto the methodology and actually *dive into* the problem, permitting the solution to emerge through the problem itself.

*Tetrasynthesis* consists of four *Elements*: Collectivity, Formation, Action and Evaluation; each one has three *Components*. There is also a *Fifth Pole* in the centre, as shown in the diagram below.





The *Ocean of Collectivity* is the first element; everything is derived from here and everything returns here. It refers to the *past*, the *present* and the *future* of the examined system; its three components *Tradition, Reality and Perspective*, correspond to the *culture, knowledge and innovation* of the specific organization or community, as described before.

The next element is the *Laboratory of Formation*. Here the unconstructed richness that was gathered from the collective source is getting transformed in order to be used in the next element. The aim is to formulate that material into specific methodologies and structured documentation, appropriate to be applied in each occasion. Formation consists of *Models, Tools & Techniques*, and *Axioms & Theories*. Some of these components have been presented in a previous part of the paper, while an archetypal model will be outlined in the last part.

The following element is the *Transformational Action*. The methodology and material resulted from the Formation phase, along with the facilitator's skills, experience and intuition, are the *magical* ingredients that enter the *caldron* of the aimed transformation. Under the term transformation are meant the development of knowledge, skills and personality (training and coaching), along with the shift of the way we perceive ourselves in our environment and interact with it. If there is any substantial impact on the system, it is direct (diagonal) and is embodied straight to the individual, group, organization or society. The whole process actualizes in three steps: *Adaptation, Change and Development*.

The element that concludes the circle and reinitiates the process is the *Evaluation of Results*. Here the quantitative and qualitative data derived from the application of transformation are analysed and appraised, concerning *Targets* (single appraisal), *Performance* (comparative) and *Viability* (more holistic and with time perspective) of the examined system or project in economic, social and environmental level. If the results are satisfactory, another diagonal impact will take place by the adoption and legislation of these techniques and tools for wider use.

The fifth pole, *Aether* or *Quintessence* or *Self*, is the purpose of the whole methodology, because it absorbs and reconstructs the knowledge accumulated from its operation, thus serving the goals of an *evolving organization*.

There is a well shown correlation between the elements and the functions of the system, the four psychological functions (according to *Jung*) and the four elements of nature (according to *Empedocles* and *Aristotle*), presented in the following matrix.



<i>System element</i>	<i>System function</i>	<i>Psychological function</i>	<i>Natural element</i>
Collectivity	Source (Input)	Feeling	Water
Formation	Planning	Thinking	Air
Action	Materialization	Intuition	Fire
Evaluation	Feedback	Sensation	Earth

Amongst the four elements a right-hand side *flow* is developed, visualizing the continuity and the direction of the outputs of each element. This flow is important for the system because: the *source* has value only if its ‘waters’ are collected and put into use; the *method* is valuable only if it is implemented; the *data* is useless if it is not evaluated; finally it is disastrous if the *results* are not returned to the source.

It is possible though to consider the flow as left-hand side one; in that way it reflects the ability (power) of each element to retrieve successfully to the content of the previous one. Therefore, *Formation* is relevant to the power of *collection* and *synthesis*, *Action* to the *transformation* power, *Evaluation* to the power of *visualization*, and *Collectivity* to the power of *assimilation*.

The two diagonal relations don’t mean a straight-forward transition, they indicate the result needed; in a way they compose opposite couples. Thus they contribute to the goal of the *evolving organization*, which knowledgeably qualifies the impact of transformations on the whole and reassign the functioning rules. The evolving process, attributed with a straight forward movement, whilst combined with the turn around flow, synthesizes the spiral of *anelixis*.

As aforementioned, the “recipe” is unique each and every time; it bows though to a uniform logic, similar to the holistic concepts of the ancient philosophers. Every time it is critical one to choose from the right mixture, such as appropriate ways for extracting the collective material, suitable combination of techniques and tools, proper appraisal systems etc. In this way the purposes of individual needs can be met, transforming, in a symbolic way, “the basic metals into gold”.