

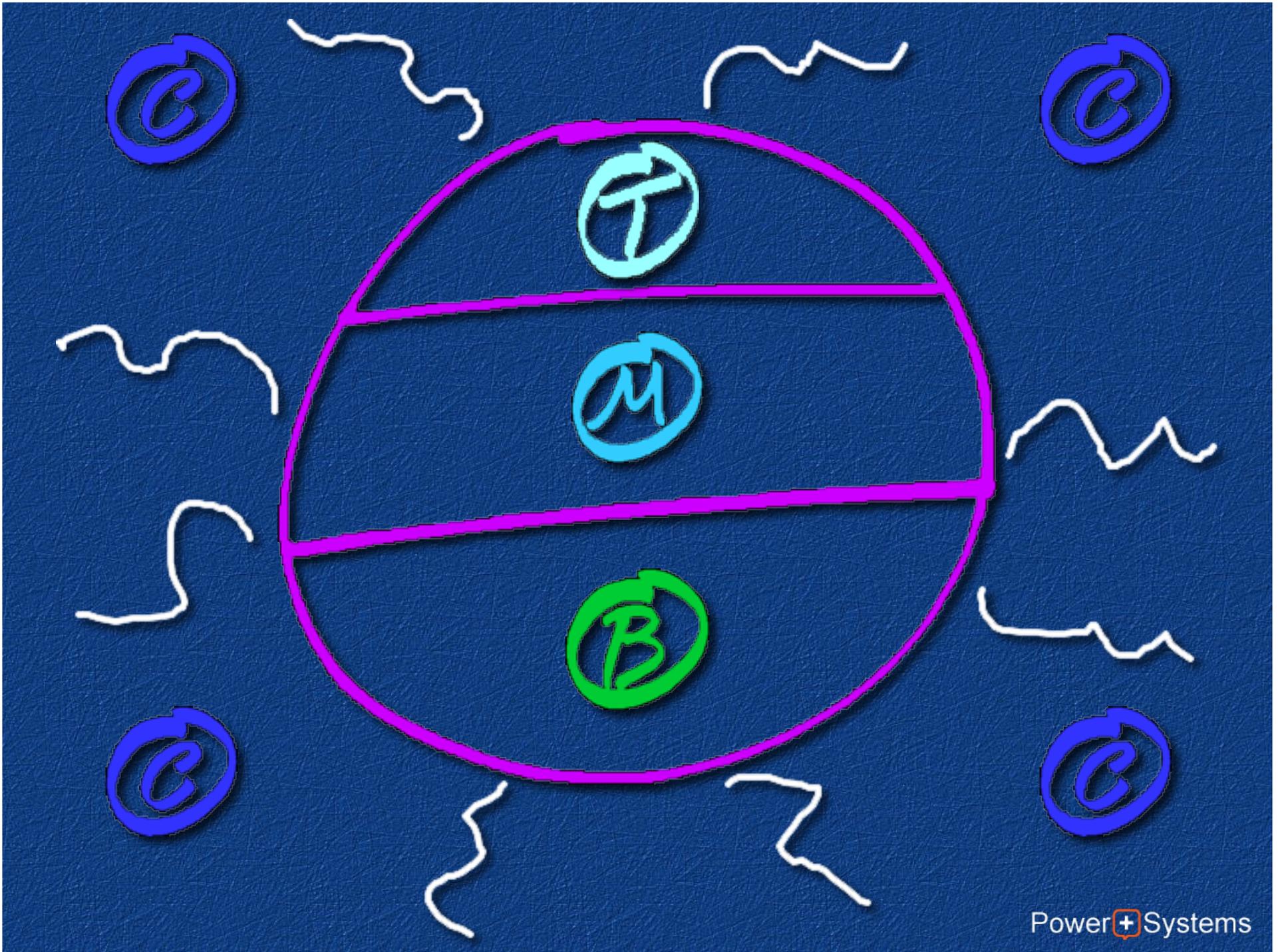
The Whole Systems Framework *

Using Organizational Space to Understand Human Systems

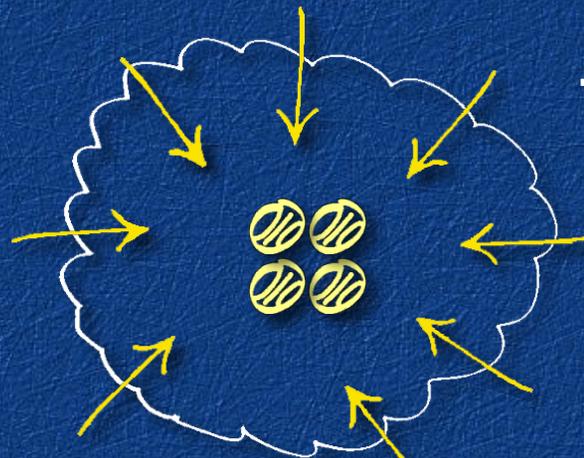
Beth Thompson, April 21, 2012

Woodland Hills, California

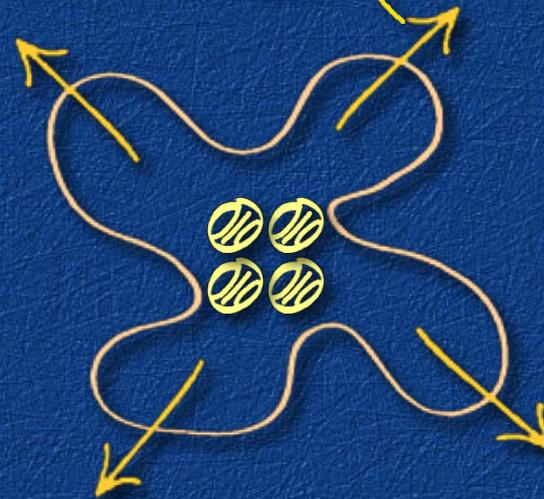
* Barry Oshry, Power and Systems, Boston, MA



Group in Spaces



Turf



Alienation

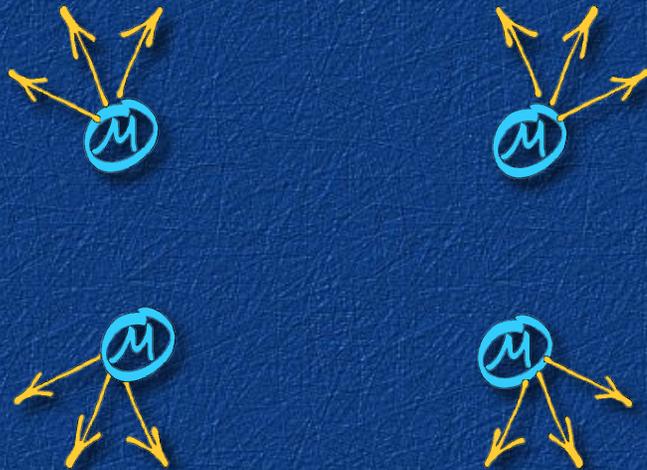
"Them"



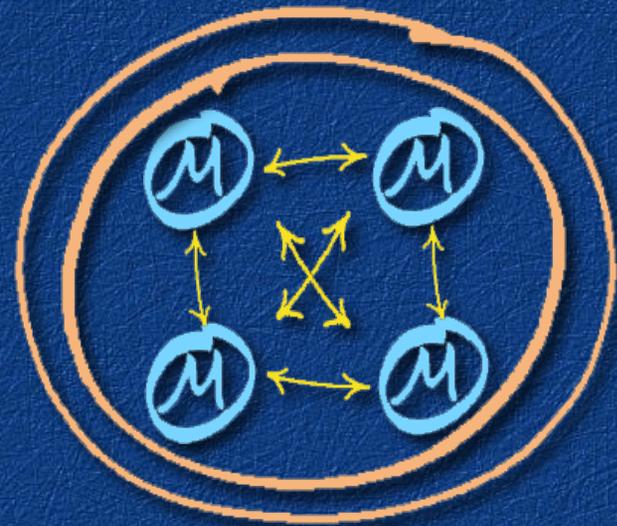
Groupthink

Systems

☒ Individuate

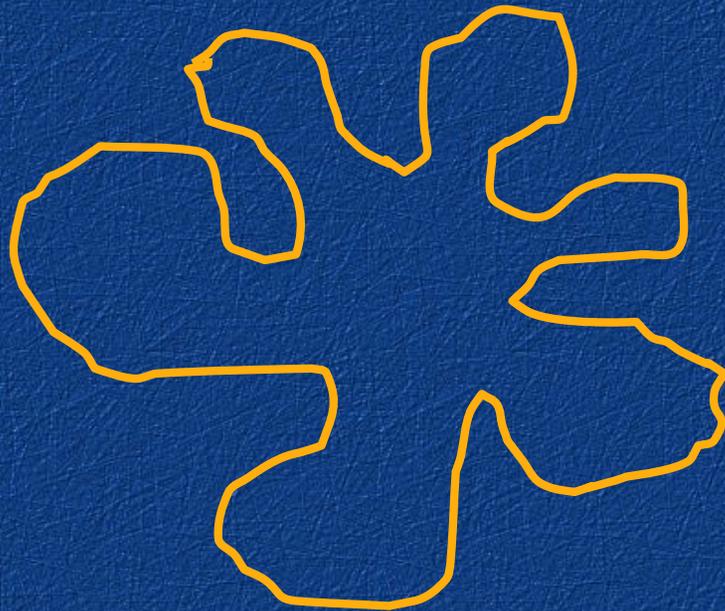


☒ and they Integrate

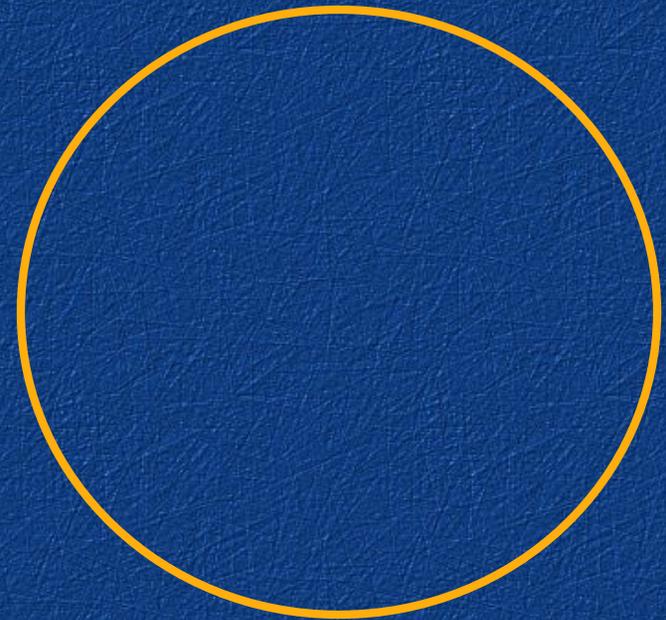


Systems

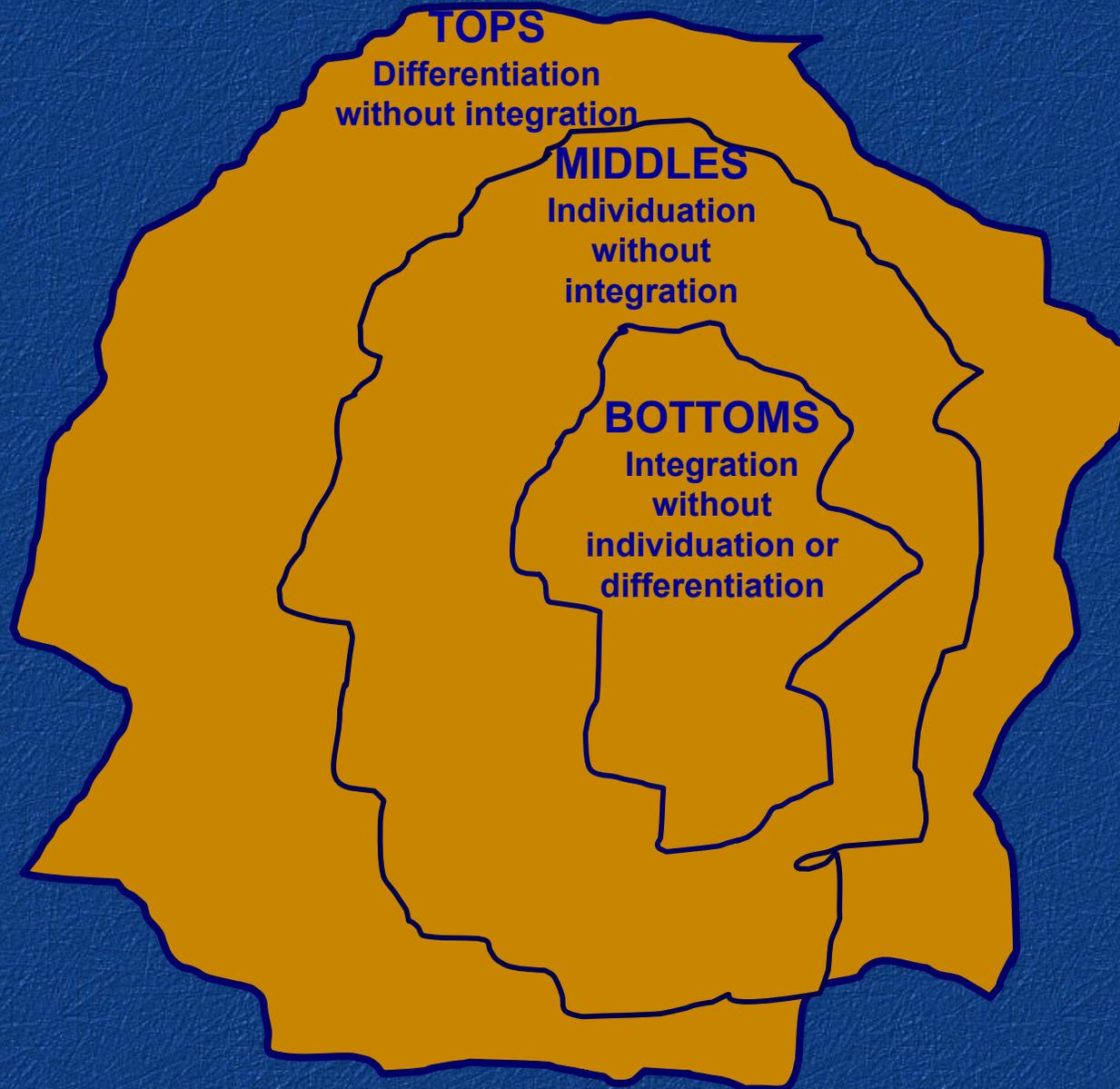
⊕ Differentiate



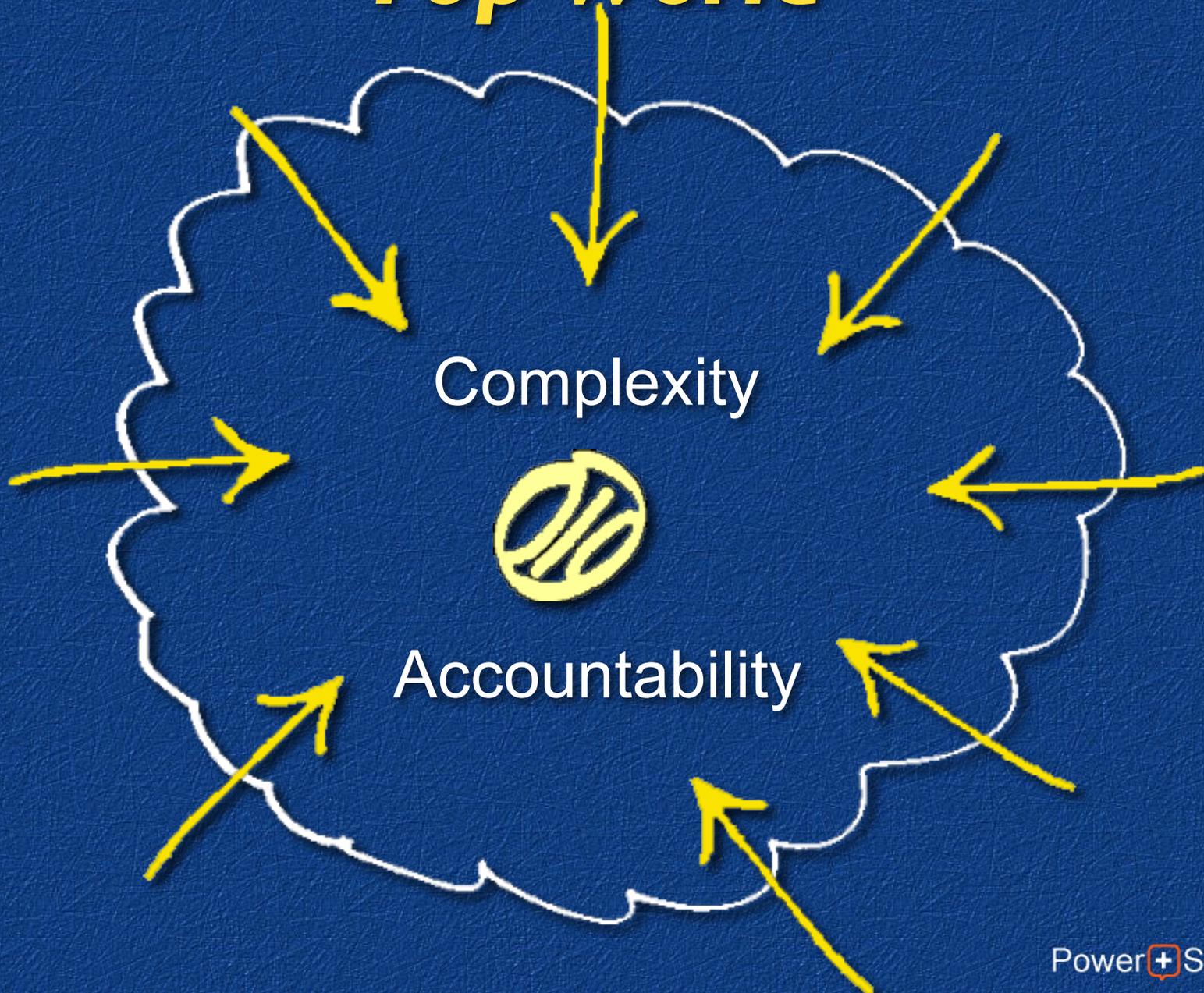
⊕ And they
Homogenize



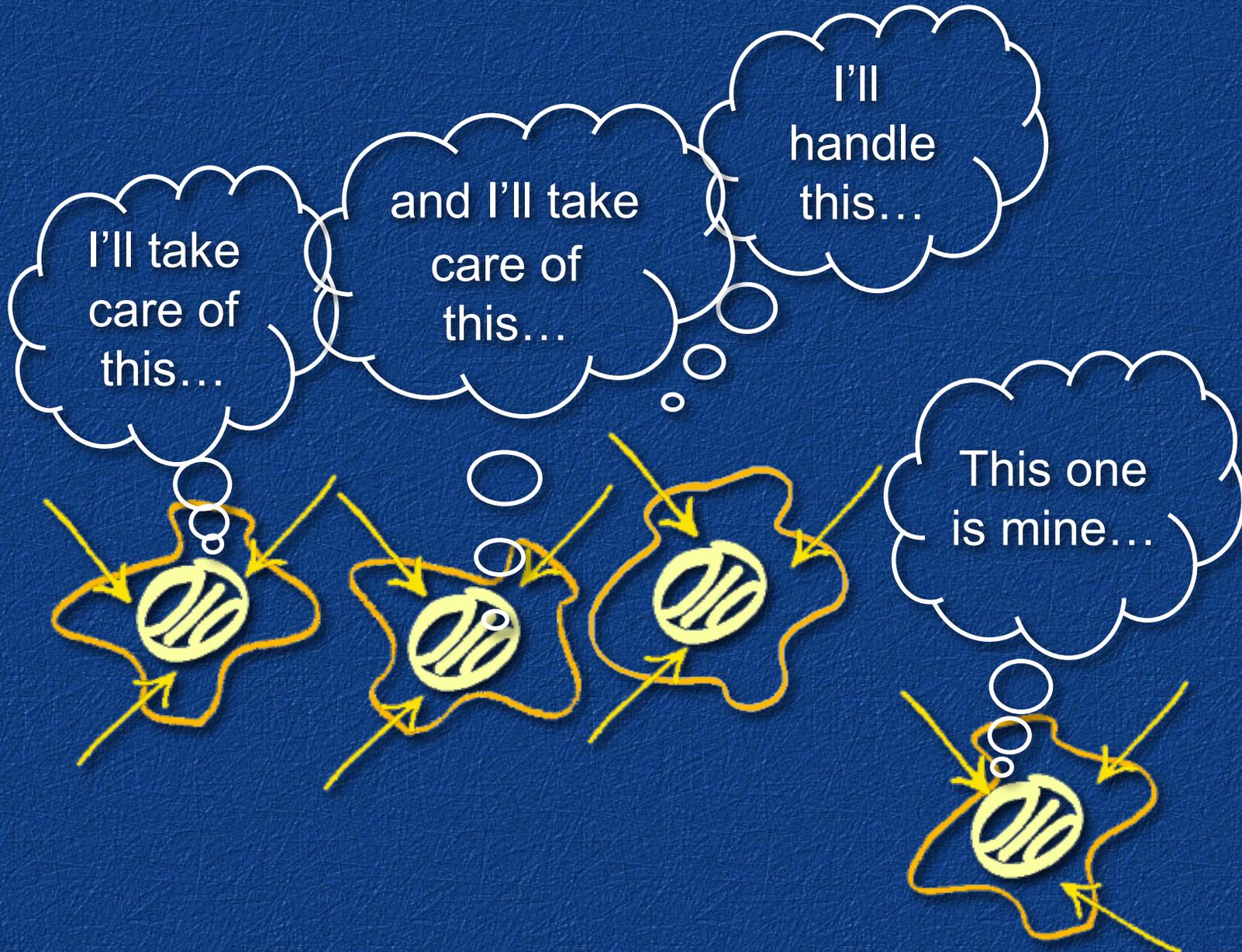
Systemic Imbalance



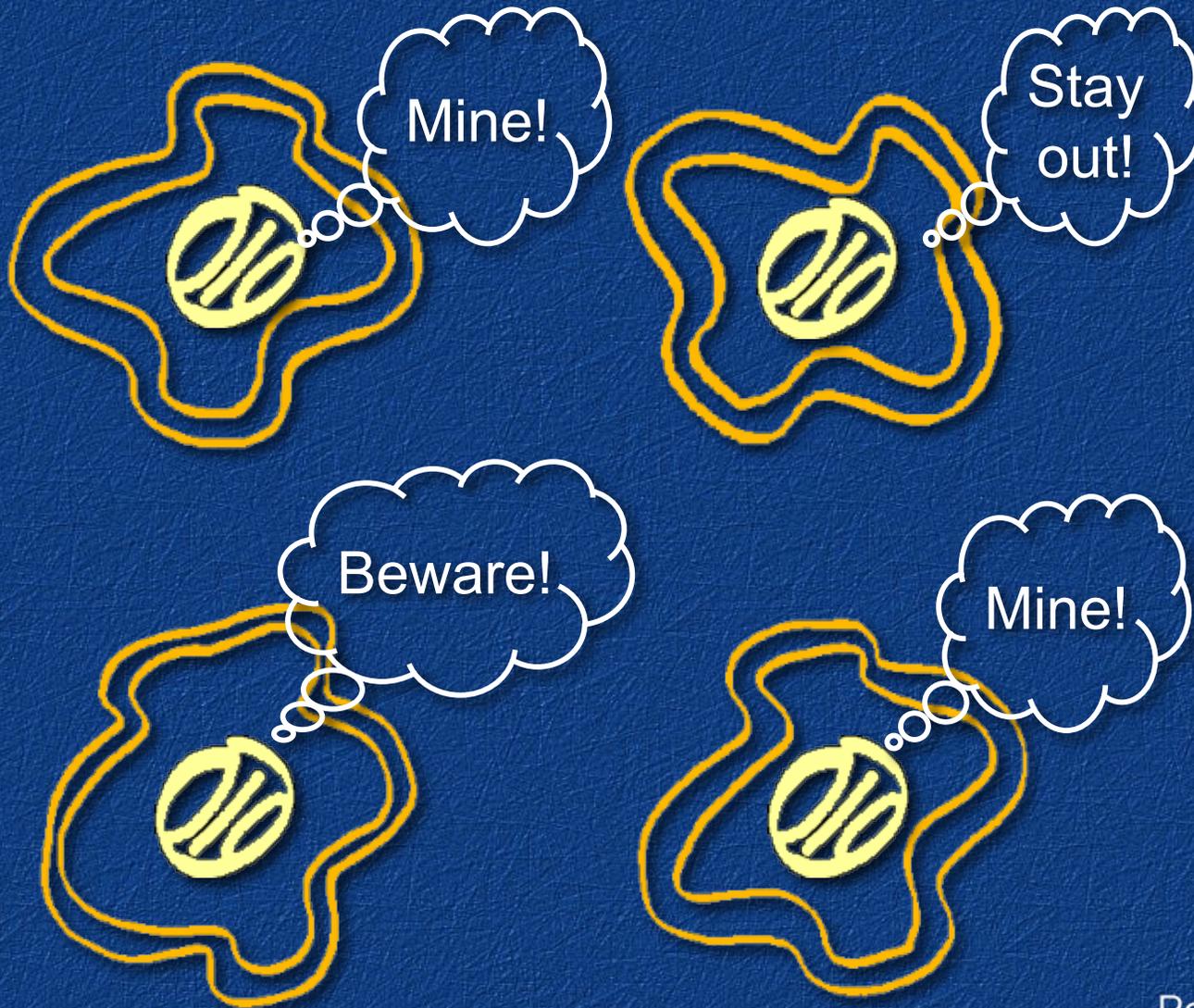
Top World



Coping with Complexity; Differentiation

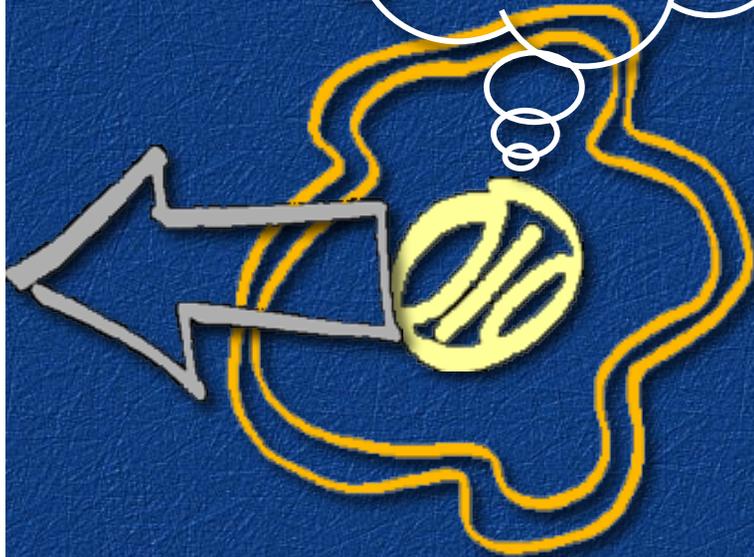


Turf and Directional Warfare



Directional Differences

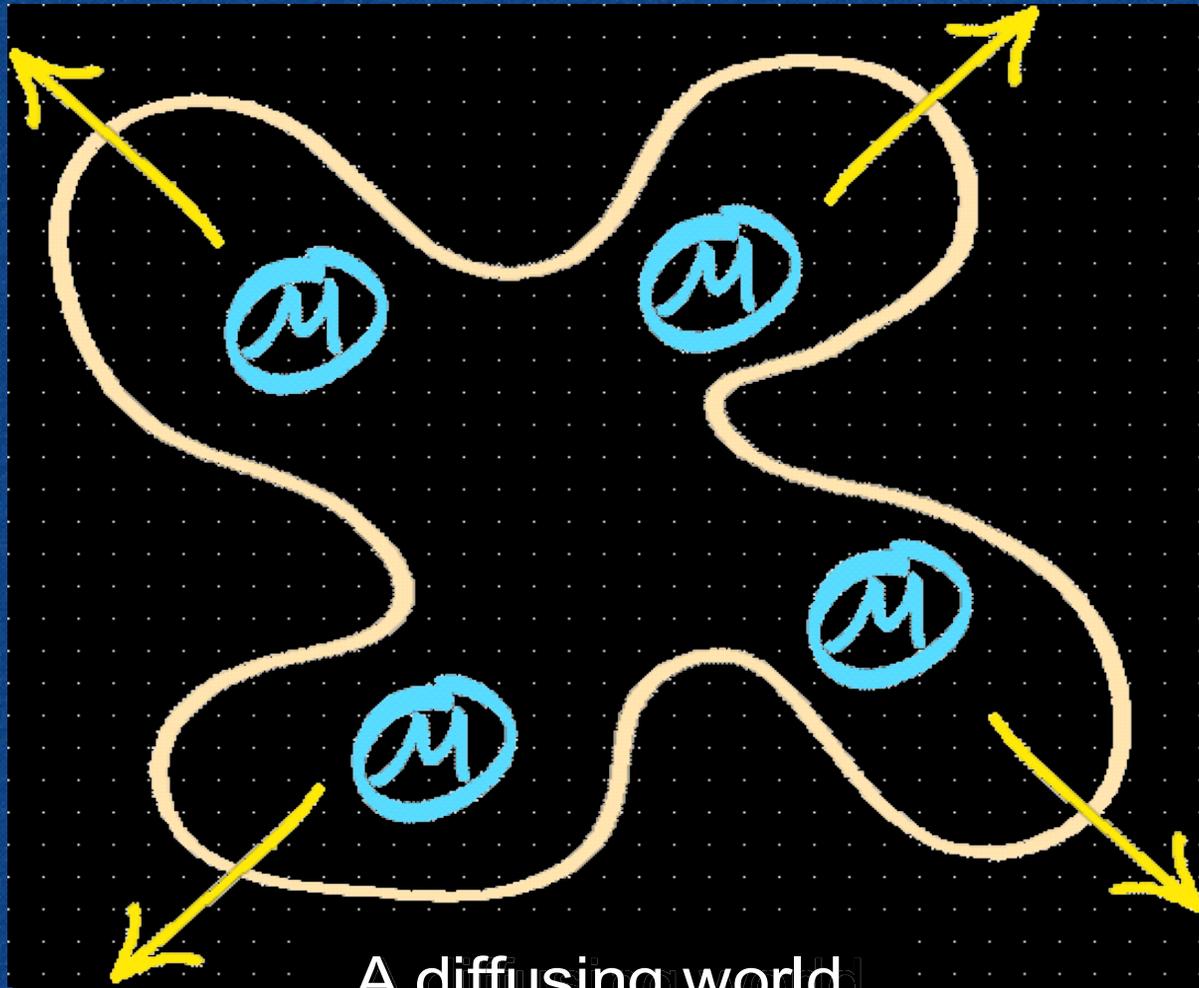
I say
this way!



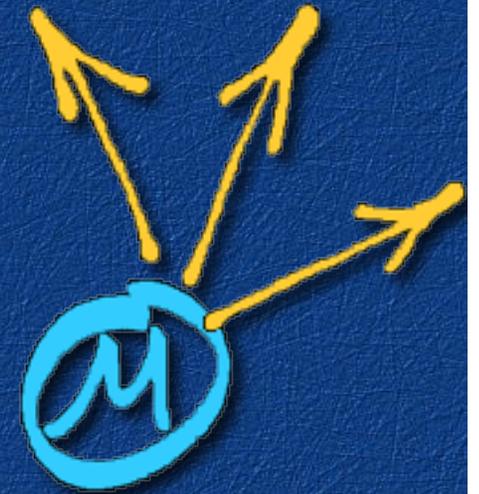
and I say
this way!



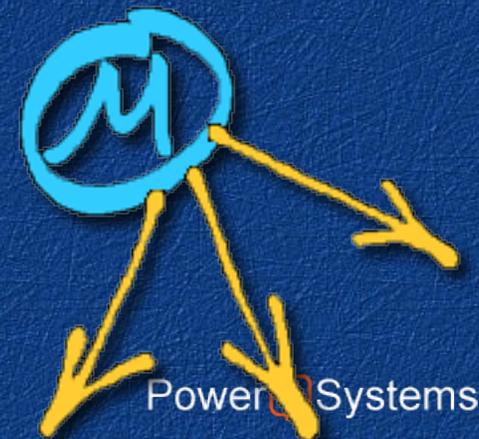
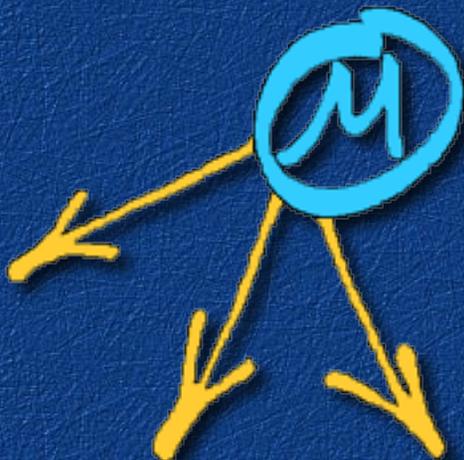
Imbalance in the Middle: Individuation without



A diffusing world



Individuation



Imbalance in the Bottom World: Integration without Individuation or Differentiation



In the
Bottom world
we develop a
“**We**” mentality



In Search of Balance

Homogenization and Integration Strategies for TOPS

- **Interchangeability – Walking in one another's shoes.**
- **Sharing High Quality Information – so that TOPs are well aware of one another's dilemmas.**
- **Mutual Coaching – Requires openness and commitment.**
- **A Powerful Shared Vision – What are we jointly committed to?**

In Search of Balance

Integration and Homogenization Strategies for Middles

- **A Powerful, Shared Vision – What is missing in this system? What can middles do that has never been done before?**
- **A sacred commitment to regular meetings – Middles only, no TOPS.**
- **Integrative activities – sharing information, using that information to diagnose system-wide conditions, problem-solving, mutual coaching.**

In Search of Balance

Individuation and Differentiation Strategies for Bottoms

- **Encourage individual differences – Encourage members to use (risk) their uniqueness in the service of the system’s mission.**
- **Pursue diverse strategies - Don’t limit yourself to a single strategy. Come at your goal from a variety of directions...**

Belief, Powerful System Knowledge and the Courage to Act

Belief – All system members (Top, Middle, or Bottom – need to believe that power is a real possibility for the system.

Powerful System Knowledge – All members need to understand the system story as they are living it.

Conditions affect relationships - Issues are systemic, not personal. Learn how to master the space.

Courage – Risk new ways of relating. Are we willing to create a new story?

An Exercise

Pick the condition that comes closest to approximating a situation you're in:

- **Member of a TOP System – experiencing turf and directional warfare.**
 - **Member of a Middle System – experiencing isolation and alienation issues**
 - **Member of a Bottom System – experiencing group – think issues.**
-
- **Get clear about what the power of your system could be if it were balanced.**
 - **What would you be able to accomplish?**
 - **Discuss at your tables with fellow participants.**