



## The P~P~S Success Guide to Mastering Your Memes

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The guide you find here serves as a handbook to memes and the way they shape your life. In the following pages, you will find information on how to identify the memes that are part of your psyche, how they affect your psyche and techniques to rid yourself of harmful memes. Our ultimate goal is to empower you to become a *free thinker* so that you can reach your life's dreams. We think you'll find that the information here will help you to do this in a way that no other resource can. Enjoy!

### The Nature of Memes

We sometimes say that ideas can take on a life of their own. While we usually take it for granted that the saying is metaphorical, the science of memetics understands the saying much more literally – ideas *can* be living organisms. How can this be true? How could a belief be alive? The answer begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Charles Darwin. Darwin, as you may know, is credited with developing the biological theory of *evolution by natural selection*. During his voyage around the world on the *HMS Beagle*, Darwin began to formulate a simple but powerful theory that explained the amazing biological diversity that we see in the world and how organisms could come to change over time. The theory proposed a mechanism called “Natural Selection,” and it required three simple conditions. In order for natural selection to work on a population of organisms, that population must:

1. have variants
2. have variations which are heritable – i.e. offspring resembled their parents
3. have heritable variations that contribute to or detract from the organism's ability to survive and reproduce.

So imagine, for example, a population of moths that appear in a shade of white or mottled brown. In the forest that they live, the mottled brown moths blend in well with the bark of the trees that populate the forest, whereas the white moths stand out clearly. Now suppose that you have a population of 50 white moths and 50 brown moths. How do you imagine



the population will change in a few generations? Presumably, because the brown moths blend into their surroundings, they will be harder to detect by predators and therefore tend to survive more often than their white counterparts. Over time, fewer and fewer white moths will appear in the population until there are none left. This is natural selection at work – it changes the make up of the population over time.

But what does this have to tell us about ideas? Enter Richard Dawkins. In 1976, Dawkins published a book entitled *The Selfish Gene*. The main thesis of the book was that natural selection did not act on organisms, but rather on the genes found inside of those organisms. Plants, animals, humans and bacteria are, on Dawkins's view, merely vehicles for the genes. Our interest in this book lies in a short chapter in which Dawkins ventured to extend Darwin's theory. Dawkins proposed that natural selection would operate on *any* class of entities that demonstrated the three properties I listed above whether organic, inorganic or otherwise. Dawkins then argued that ideas or beliefs could come to have these three properties. That is, certain ideas clearly reproduce by taking root in other people's mind, ideas can vary in certain ways and that these variants can be more or less fit to survive depending upon the nature of the idea. Let's take the organization of the solar system for example. There were, at one time, a number of variant ideas about how the planets and the sun were arranged. One idea suggested that the earth was at the center of the solar system and a second argued that the sun was at the center. Each of these is a belief that was entertained at one period in time, and which came to be held by different groups of people. Yet as time passed, one of those beliefs died off, just as the white moths died off. It simply couldn't compete with its rival in light of emerging evidence. This is how natural selection can act on beliefs or ideas. Dawkins dubs these thoughts that compete with each other to survive and reproduce "memes."

Of course, beliefs and ideas aren't like tigers or trees, at least not in the biological sense. They are symbiotic organisms – they require another living being as their environment for sustenance and shelter. And just like other symbiotic organisms, they can be good for their host (mutualistic organisms) or they can be harmful to their host (parasitic organisms). Here's an example of a harmful meme: "have a Coke and a smile." You might remember it as a commercial jingle from the 80's. Sounds harmless enough, but the meme isn't all that good for you. The idea that drinking Coke will make you happy is



supposed to get you to drink the product and it worked on a lot of people. Coke *does* make people *superficially* happy, and that helps the meme spread. The meme convinces you to drink the product and the product reinforces the meme. But drinking Coke isn't all that good for you. It's a lot of sugar, food coloring and caffeine, and we understand pretty well how sugar and caffeine in large quantities can affect our health. So why do we act against our interest in being healthy? Memetics tells us that it's because we're infected with a meme, which is connected to a product that incites our senses. The meme brings us something that makes us happy and so subconsciously we allow it to direct our behavior.

The example I discussed above described a single meme acting on the mind. Often times though, memes work together in clusters or groups called a *meme complex*. When memes do work as a collective, individual memes in the collective often specialize or employ more particular strategies to survive. This gives a way of classifying memes.

1. Offense Memes – memes that suggests reward for their survival or replication. This is a strategy that encourages *meme infection*. McDonald's provides a great example here. Their slogan, "We love to make you smile!" has the reward of good feelings built right into the meme.
2. Defense Memes – any meme that suggests punishment for *failing to support or reproduce the meme*. The belief that non-Christians go to hell is an example of a powerful defense meme. It is this meme that, in part drove, missionaries to convert Native Americans to Christianity. The conversions, of course, further perpetuated the meme that non-Christians will be punished for their lack of Christianity.

Memes of these varieties aren't limited to advertising or to religion. They find their home in all facets of our culture. You'll find them in our politics, art and music – everywhere.

The fabric of our society is constructed out of memes and other cultural influences. We call this social fabric the *Social Matrix*. Social scientists categorize different layers of the social matrix by the range of their effects or how many people they influence. There are three general categories of these social matrixes:



1. The Root Social Matrix (RSM) – This is the underlying worldwide collection of cultural influences on humanity. The memes and cultural influences that constitute the root social matrix influence the greatest number of people.
2. Meta-Social Matrixes (MSM) – These are the highest divisions of the root social matrix. The best example would be the cultural norms of a given nation.
3. Sub-Social Matrixes (SSM) – These are groups or sects within any larger meta-social matrix. Any Christian Denomination is a sub-social matrix. The American Medical Association and its principles constitute a sub-social matrix as well.

The essence of a social matrix is that it is a collection of tenets and beliefs that tie members of the social group participating in the matrix together.

As pervasive as memes are, it's important to understand what memes are part of your psyche and how they are affecting you. Ultimately, you want to be a *free thinker* – someone that is aware of their memes and consciously chooses which to embrace and which to remove. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people are *controlbots* – people who are unaware of their memes and unwittingly embrace memes regardless of their effects. Accepting the McDonald's meme may not be that healthy for you, but there are far more harmful memes – memes that lead to racism, sexism or homophobia. This is why it's so important to discover which memes are inhabiting you now.

### **Notes:**

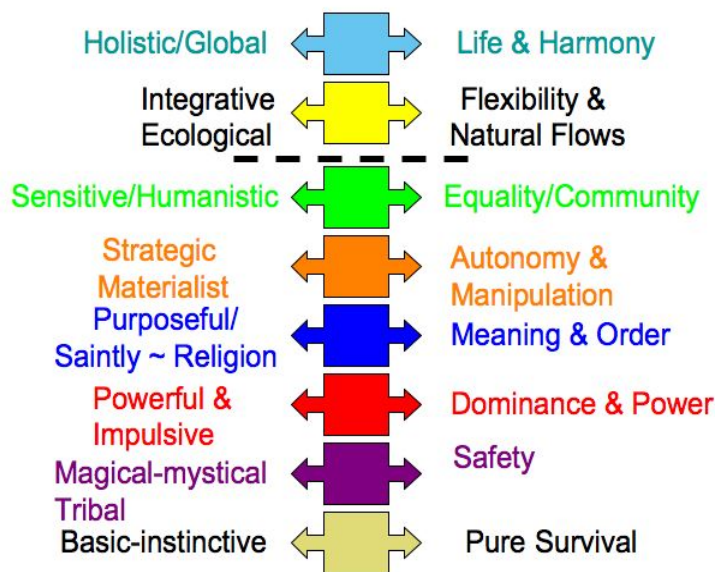


## Values Memes

Now that we understand the basics of memes, let’s look at a more specific variety of these mind viruses – the values meme. Values memes, also called <sup>v</sup>memes, help to inform and define the values that we live by. And just like all memes some values memes are good and healthy, while others are harmful. Some <sup>v</sup>memes help to create understanding, caring, happy people, while other values memes can create a life of pain, stagnation and unhappiness. Values memes help to create your world-view and consequently they impact all of your life choices.

To help you understand <sup>v</sup>memes and the role they play in our life and in human history in general, I am going to draw on the work of Dr. Clare Graves. Graves developed a hierarchical system for classifying memes, which you can see in the chart below.

### Basic <sup>v</sup>Meme Structure



The right side of the chart describes the memes in terms of their focus or what the particular meme is aimed at achieving. The left side of the chart describes the memes in terms of how widely its considerations range. For example, only the individual is considered at the first level. At the top level, the entire planet is considered. The left side of the chart also describes some of the key psychological traits associated with the meme, for example, anyone at the level of the red meme level is concerned with

their personal power and tends to be impulsive.

Ordered as it is, the hierarchy represents both a historical trend in the evolution of human values, as well as a path of individual development. Moving upward from the beige meme, the individual or society begins to expand its awareness. There is a greater



awareness of the world and all that is in it as well as an awareness of the increased responsibilities that come with the greater understanding of the world.

Starting at the bottom, you will see a basic-instinctive <sup>v</sup>meme whose focus is on pure survival. Once the individual masters the challenges of pure survival, he progresses to the level of securing personal and psychological safety by banding together in tribes and forming tribal associations. This is the purple level of <sup>v</sup>memes. Having secured safety, individuals are now free to explore their personal power, including dominance over other members of their tribe and family. This is the red <sup>v</sup>meme level. The expression and test of personal power generally leads to conflict and disorder. The continual conflict pushes humans to develop some sort of meaning out of the chaos brought about by the struggle for power and this leads to the blue <sup>v</sup>meme level. However, imposed order creates new conflicts. Humans are both social creatures and individuals. We possess an ego. Therefore, the order imposed by the blue <sup>v</sup>meme creates a new conflict. How does one exercise free will and personal power in the face of imposed social structure? This pressure creates the level of the orange <sup>v</sup>meme. This level of thought about autonomy and the manipulation of society and its rules in order to exercise personal power creates conflicts of its own. In chief, the manipulation of others for personal gratification leads us to considerations of equality and fairness in communal living.

Now in order to identify the <sup>v</sup>memes that are active in your life, we need to take a closer at each level of the hierarchy of memes so that we can understand the particular characteristic of each level. Let's start at the bottom.

**Beige <sup>v</sup>meme** – Survival Oriented Values



**Purple <sup>v</sup>meme** – Safety Oriented Values

**Red <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values of personal power

**Blue <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values structures that create meaning and order in the world

**Orange <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values autonomy



**Green <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values equality

**Yellow <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values natural flows and flexibility

**Turquoise <sup>v</sup>meme** – Values life and harmony





Before you read the next section in the manual, I want to suggest a brief exercise. Use what you have just learned to identify what you feel to be your dominant  $\forall$ meme and sub-dominant  $\forall$ meme to be. Try to think of at least one example of how your chosen dominant and sub-dominant  $\forall$ memes both empower and disempower you at this time in your life.

## **Memes and Self-Healing**

Now that we have the foundation in place to detect how our memes are affecting us, it's time to learn how to heal ourselves when they have harmed us. Let me begin by introducing a new term – the *shadow-self*. Each of us has a shadow-self; the part of your psyche that once served you, but now has the effect of slowing your personal growth and evolution. Why does the shadow-self resist these changes? The reason is that it is composed of memes – memes that are built to survive. Moreover, these memes are commonly generated during periods of high stress and self-defense. Because of their origin, these memes are typically highly charged, easily activated and very resilient.

What this means is that whenever you encounter new ideas, when you experience periods of high stress or you are working to change yourself, your shadow-self will flare up. All of those memes that constitute your shadow-self will become active, attempting to direct you away from the new ideas and away from the changes.

You will know that you have identified a life experience where your shadow-self is being activated because you will have some combination of the following symptoms around the event that activated your shadow-self:

- Mental blockage
- A feeling of physical, emotional or spiritual numbness
- A feeling of fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, giddiness or any emotion that seems either out of character for who you feel you are now. Your reaction may be of a seemingly disproportionate magnitude relative to the situation
- Physical sensations such as stomach rumblings, indigestion, shortness or breath, muscle tightness, joint pains, constipation or loose stools, seemingly unusual circulatory changes, headache, fatigue, or just about any sort of physical



sensation. You may be surprised to find that problems you've had with your body suddenly get worse, or even spontaneously clear up

- Saying things or acting in a way that is out of character for you

When you experience these negative reactions, remember that the shadow-self is a collection of memes. These memes are working together to create a self-concept that is exerting its influence on you. This means it is essentially the *dark side of the self that you want to experience or experience without pain*. One can easily prove this concept by being open and honest enough to ask the question, "how would I feel if I didn't think that thought?" Typically, you will notice that all related stress evaporates when you disengage the memes.

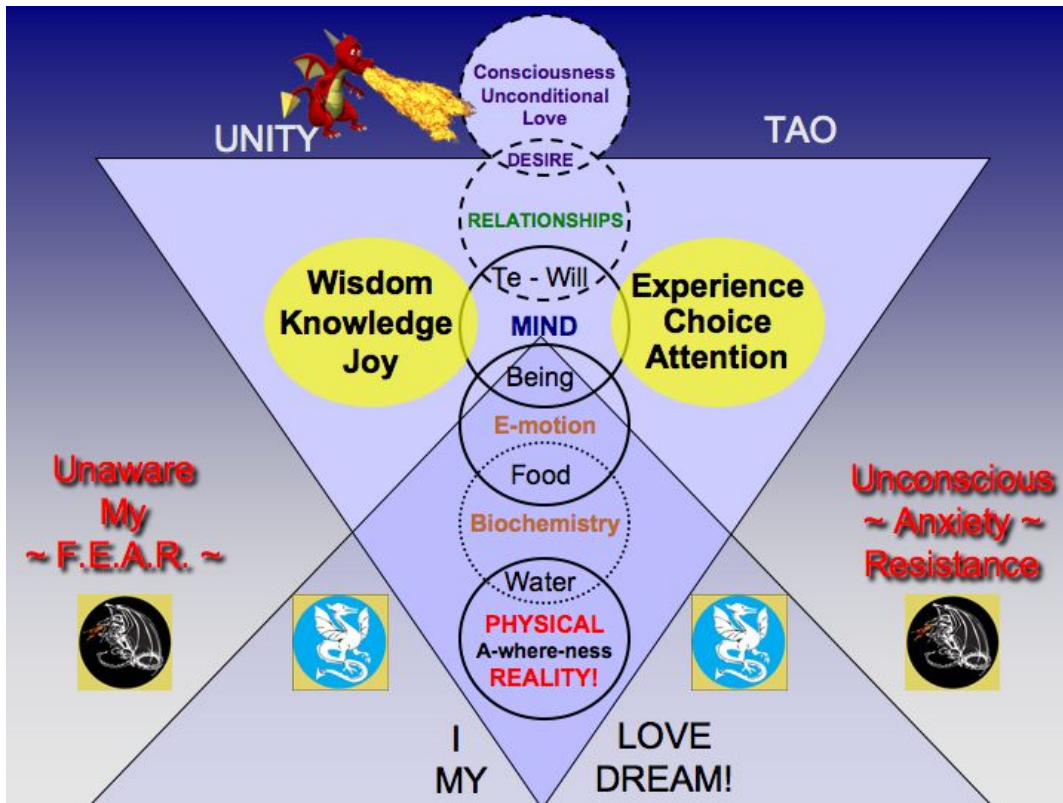
**Notes:**



Beyond the simple technique I describe above to release the stress generated by your memes, there are four steps that you can take which can facilitate your self-healing.

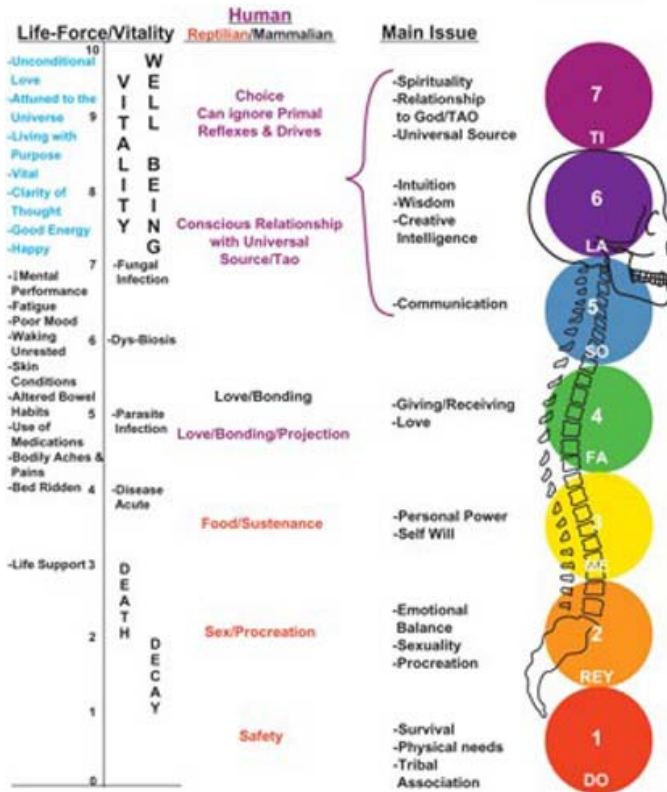
#### 4 STEPS TO SELF-HEALING

1. Realize that *desire* creates *will*





2. Fuel your dream changes





3. Management by DETACHMENT:

- a. Make manageable changes initially
- b. Clean your house and work-space
- c. Use Feng-Shui principles!
- d. Eliminate unnecessary material belongings!
- e. Set daily goals
- f. Evaluate your relationships
- g. Address addictions honestly and determine whether they empower and support your dreams



4. Forgive Your Self!

- a. Forgive your self for any feelings you may have of guilt, shame or judgment over addictions.
- b. Forgive your self for any attachments you may have to disempowering:
  - i. Memes
  - ii. <sup>v</sup>Memes
  - iii. Relationships with animate beings or inanimate things – i.e. attachments to belongings like cars, houses, jewelry, cigarettes etc.



## Communicating through the Memes in Others

Coming to grips with your own memes is certainly challenging, but as you've probably realized now, your interactions with memes doesn't stop with your own. Other people have their own meme infestations and so your relationships are shaped by those memes as well. This section of your guide addresses how you can communicate with people who are listening through the filter of their memes.

All of us listen through the filter of our memes. This isn't necessarily bad, depending on which mind viruses are inhabiting you at the time. However some memes can be very limiting. People who suffer from these limiting memes will exhibit *selective hearing* – they will *only* be able to understand through the filter of their *shadow-self*.

When communicating with such people, you must very carefully use the *feedback* you will gain from speaking and working with them so that you may be sure that they heard what you intended to communicate to them. *Often their memes filter out any information that may transform or heal the shadow-self. Memes are like data bits in a computer, and like a computer, the more data you input, the more data combinations there may be. The problem is that the more junk or disempowering data in any mind, the more the mind attempts to combine good with disempowering data. The result is often negative feelings when attempting to make positive changes in your life!*

Below, you will find a number of methods that you can use for communicating with anyone whose shadow-self has caused them to become selective listeners.

### Methods for Effective Communication

1. Identify the other person's dominant and sub-dominant <sup>v</sup>memes structure wherever possible.
2. Speak to them at the level of their reality or up to one values meme higher. If you address them at a higher <sup>v</sup>meme level they typically evade your communication/offering by writing you off as unrealistic! Out of your mind!



3. Find out what their dream is through a language that they can hear. How can you align your interests with theirs? To the degree that there is alignment, there is likely to be congruence.
  - a. Think before you speak or you may lose your chance to create the connection you seek.
  - b. If you are on the receiving end of a challenging communication that may well be good for you if successful, remember that *any meme-complex worth living is worth the challenge!*
4. How would you feel or how would your life change if you excluded that schema from your life?
5. When you find yourself making judgments or assumptions about someone, remember to ask yourself, “*Is it really true?*” If you aren’t sure, ask!
6. Always be willing to accept or offer a better meme or meme-complex that improves your partner’s chances of achieving their dreams.
7. Remember that change takes energy and to the degree that your communication requires that the listener make a change, you must assess their energy availability. If they don’t have enough energy, they won’t be able to make the change.

Each of these techniques will help you to either recognize how you might be listening selectively or to diagnose the ways in which others are selective listeners. Once you’ve done this, you can avoid the judgments created by the shadow-self that can inhibit communication.

This concludes our *P~P~S Success Guide to Mastering Your Memes*, but let me end with a final reminder. The path to the free thinker isn’t a short one. The memes that make up our shadow-selves are often deeply rooted in our personal history. So understand that this is a life’s work. Just stick with it, the rewards are worth it!





**Notes:**