

You Cannot Work With a System You Cannot See

A visual introduction to how one Human System
produces experience, response, and repetition

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Most people are taught to work on what their system produces.
SCF begins earlier. It makes the organization producing those
outputs visible.



The Problem We Usually Work On

Why people keep working on the visible problem

We usually work on what we can see.

The anxiety.

The overthinking.

The shutdown.

The people-pleasing.

The conflict.

The repeated outcome.

Because those are visible, they become the explanation.

But the visible problem is not always the source. It is often a downstream consequence of how the system is already organized.



KEY POINT

What you can see is often the output, not the producing organization.



If you only work on what is visible, you can keep changing the expression while leaving the organization producing it untouched.

Different Expression. Same Organization.

How one system can produce different-looking outputs



Different parts of life can show different outputs. That does not automatically mean different generators. The same underlying organization can express itself differently under different conditions.



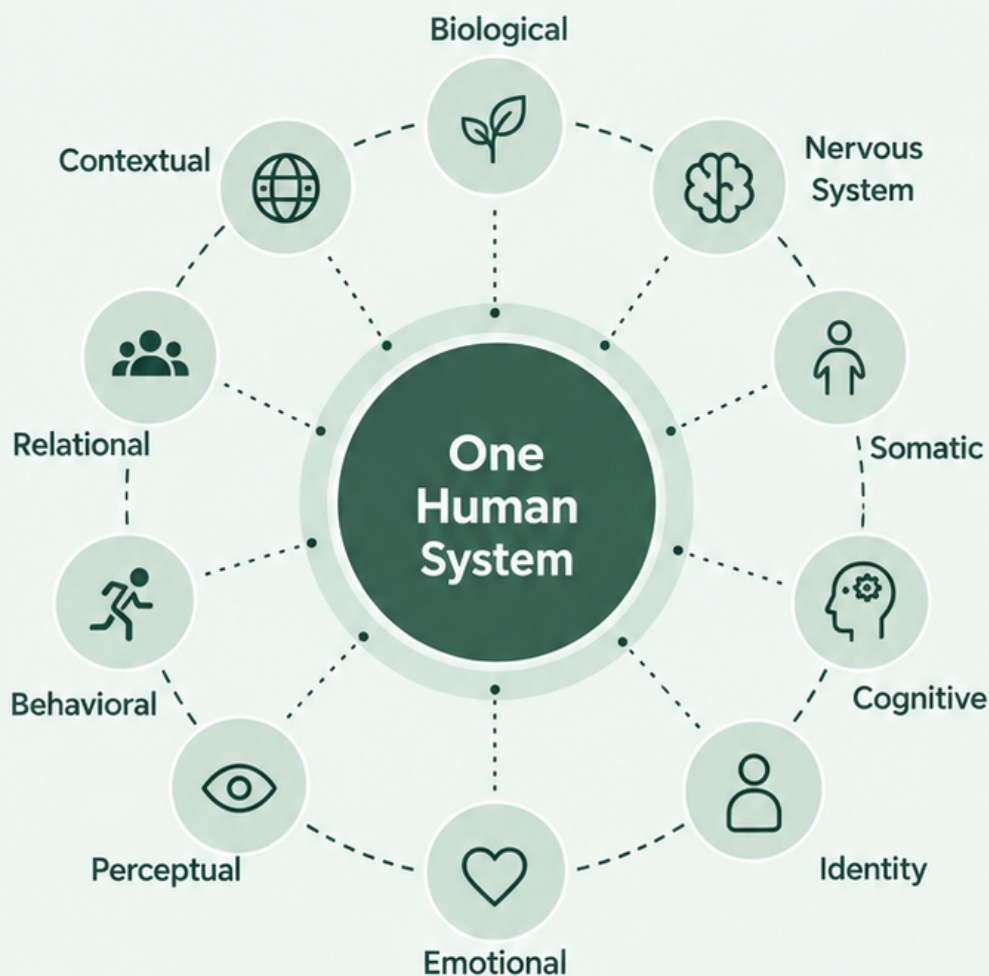
KEY POINT

Changing one expression does not automatically change the organization producing it.

One Human System

The same system becomes visible in different places

You do not have ten separate lives happening. You have one Human System becoming visible across multiple interacting layers. Thoughts, emotions, body responses, behaviors, identity reactions, relationships, and context are not isolated events. They are different places where the same system becomes visible.



KEY POINT

The goal is not to memorize parts. The goal is to see one system more clearly.

The Ten Layers

Ten places where one Human System becomes visible

1



Biological

the organism's baseline state

6



Emotional

affective experience

2



Nervous System

regulation, activation, threat response

7



Perceptual

what stands out, what gets filtered

3



Somatic

body sensation, tension, release

8



Behavioral

action, avoidance, performance

4



Cognitive

thought, interpretation, narrative

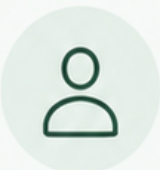
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Relational

how organization appears with others

5



Identity

self-position, roles, "who I am"

10



Contextual

the surrounding conditions



The Ten Layers do not describe ten separate systems.
They help break down how one Human System becomes visible.

How Experience Becomes Available

What happens before you consciously feel, think, or act

1



Input / Event

Something happens, either inside you or in your environment.



2



Existing Organization

The event is processed through the way your system is already organized.



3



What Registers

Certain aspects of the event become noticeable and available to the system.



4



What Becomes Significant

Some of what registers is treated as meaningful based on the current organization.



5



What Remains Available / Narrows

Information is either kept available or filtered out. The range of possible responses narrows.



6



Output

A response is produced — what you feel, think, say, or do.



7



Feedback

The outcome becomes part of your ongoing experience, influencing the existing organization.

By the time you consciously think, feel, or do something, the system has already processed the event through its existing organization.

The output is the visible end of a larger internal process.



KEY POINT

Thought is not the beginning.
Behavior is not the whole mechanism.

The Governing Equation

The hidden rule beneath repeating patterns

A governing equation is a regulatory rule.

It is the recurring logic a system uses to maintain stability, continuity, connection, safety, value, control, or another important condition. It is usually not consciously decided and is often visible through repetition.

It is not chosen. It is constructed from what worked to keep the system intact under real pressure. It forms like a path through a field, where enough repetition wears the ground down until that path becomes the only obvious way through.



KEY POINT

The equation is not who you are. It is organizing logic the system has learned to rely on.

WHAT A GOVERNING EQUATION CAN SOUND LIKE

IF

I stay agreeable, I maintain connection and avoid rupture.

IF

I perform well, I maintain value and avoid rejection.

IF

I anticipate instability, I maintain control and avoid being blindsided.

IF

I disappear, I maintain safety and avoid becoming a target.

If I _____, then I maintain _____ and avoid _____.

ONCE ESTABLISHED, IT RUNS IN THE BACKGROUND

1

Regulates the nervous system

The system stops assessing the environment independently and runs predictions based on the equation.

2

Anchors identity

Over time, the strategy hardens into what feels like personality: "I'm the strong one."

3

Filters perception

It narrows what the system notices, highlighting what confirms the equation.

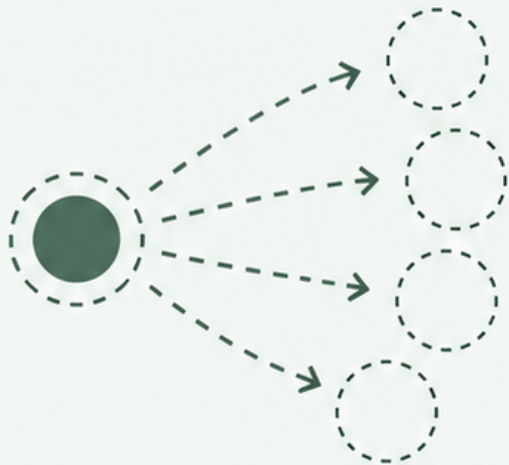


The equation loses invisibility before it loses influence.

Recognition makes the organization visible. It does not prove it has changed.

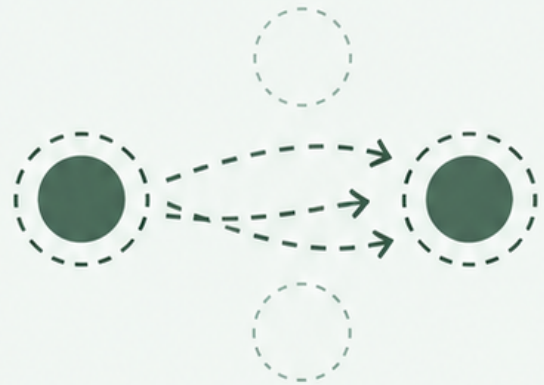
Pressure Changes What Remains Available

Why insight alone does not prove structural change



Lower Pressure

- ✓ Wider range of response
- ✓ More flexibility
- ✓ More reflection
- ✓ More differentiation



Higher Pressure

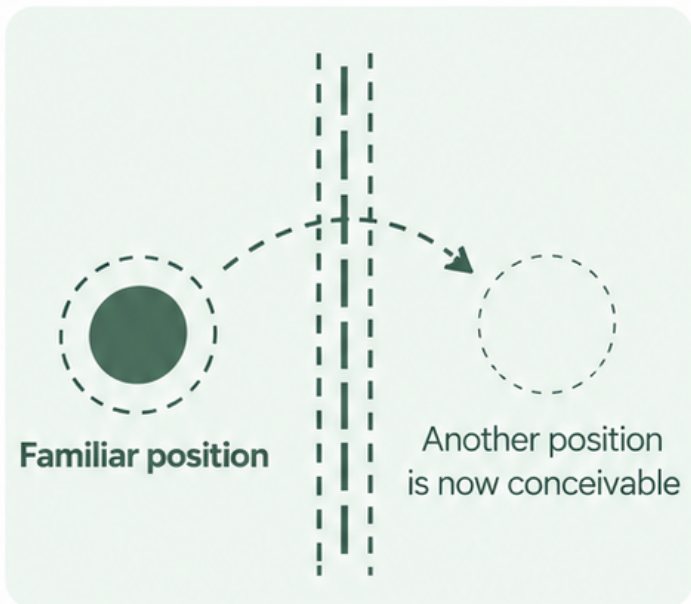
- ✓ Narrowing begins
- ✓ Familiar response takes over
- ✓ Less differentiation
- ✓ Automatic output becomes more likely

Real conditions show what remains available when pressure rises. A response you can access in calm conditions may disappear when the system is under demand.



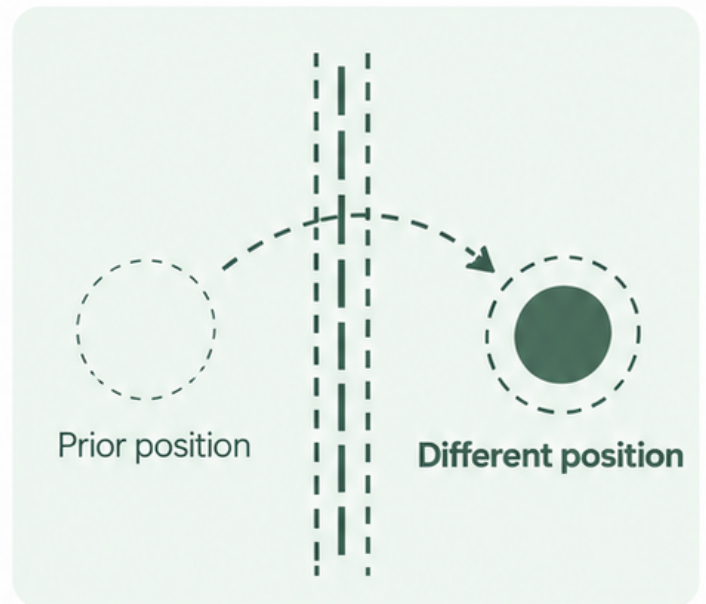
**Calm insight is not proof of change.
Real availability under pressure is.**

Seeing another position is not the same as occupying it



Recognizing the other side

Someone becomes able to distinguish their familiar organization from other possible ways of operating. Another position is now conceivable.



Operating from a different position

The change is expressed in what information and responses actually remain available when real situations occur.



Conceptual recognition is not the same as structural availability.

The ARC

When a governing equation can no longer regulate

AN EQUATION DOES NOT FAIL ALL AT ONCE

STRAIN

Micro-destabilization

The equation keeps running, but at a much higher energy cost. Irritation, exhaustion, a quiet dissonance without a clear target.



COLLAPSE

Structural exposure

The predictive model can no longer absorb reality. This is not character failure. It is model failure.

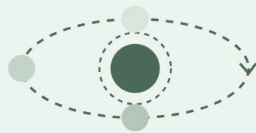


FORK

The decision point

Not a conscious decision. A structural one. The system must resolve the instability, and it does so in one of two ways.

TWO WAYS THE SYSTEM RESOLVES INSTABILITY



Model Preservation

Surface variables change. The governing equation underneath stays the same.

- Different partner. Same attachment logic.
- Different job. Same identity premise.
- Different belief system. Same external authority orientation.

Result: a well-renovated loop



Model Abandonment

The old governing rule is not defended. Instability is tolerated without rushing to resolve it or rebuild prematurely.

- Extraordinarily uncomfortable
- Goes against the impulse to restabilize quickly
- Allows the prediction model to begin rewriting itself

Result: the beginning of the ARC

THE FOUR PHASES OF THE ARC

1 Recognition

Friction without language. The system stops blindly agreeing with what it has been running.

2 Orientation

Old reference points lose their authority. New ones have not formed yet.

3 Reorganization

Explanation loses urgency. Structure changes. It often looks like stillness.

4 Integration

Consolidation. What has reorganized stabilizes and holds under familiar pressure.

The phases are sequential. They are not linear. Multiple phases can be active at the same time.



Understanding a phase does not complete it.

Only structural reorganization does.

Three Ways SCF Becomes Usable

The core functional capabilities

1

Structural Literacy

Making organization visible

The person learns that their familiar way of experiencing life is not the only conceivable way a human system can operate. They begin to distinguish the organization through which they experience events from the events themselves.



KEY CAPABILITY

Can distinguish the event from the organization producing the experience.

2

Structural Observation

Investigating how the system actually operates

Rather than assuming that new understanding has changed their organization, the person examines what happens in real situations: what becomes available, what narrows, what is produced, and what recurs.



KEY CAPABILITY

Observes actual operation: what remains available, what narrows, what is produced, and what recurs.

3

Structural Positioning

Locating where the system currently operates from

Using what becomes visible through observation, the current Structural Position is located: what remains available to the system, what becomes unavailable or difficult to sustain, and where its existing organization places it in relation to particular inputs and conditions.



KEY CAPABILITY

Locates the system's current position across repeated evidence and changing conditions.

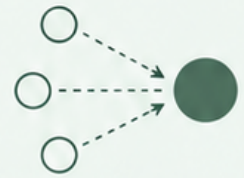
What Changes When the System Becomes Visible

What structural literacy makes possible

1

You stop treating each output like a separate problem.

You no longer get pulled into solving each visible issue in isolation. Instead, you look for the underlying organization that produces the pattern of outputs.



2

You stop confusing insight with change.

You can see that understanding what is happening is not the same as changing it. Insight helps you describe the system; change requires working with the organization that produces the outcome.



3

You can see what conditions narrow your available responses.

You become aware of what is available, what is constrained, and what is not currently possible. This helps you make more accurate choices about where to focus your effort.



4

You can recognize when the same organization is showing up in different forms.

You begin to see recurring patterns across situations, even when the surface details look different. This helps you avoid treating every new instance as a brand-new problem.



5

You can track whether the system is actually reorganizing over time.

You can observe what remains available, what becomes unavailable, what new possibilities emerge, and whether the underlying organization is changing.



**SCF does not begin by fixing the output.
It makes the producing organization observable.**

This is the starting point.



STRUCTURAL COHERENCE FRAMEWORK

Created by Katelyn LaFontaine

**Explore the framework, tools, and
direct work at**

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