The Triangle Model
-A brief explanation

The Triangle Model is a ground-breaking, holistic model for business. It charts the psychological evolution of individuals, teams and organisations.

On the left we recognise a phase of Dependence, where we rely on other people, the team or the organisation for our well-being and success. At the personal level, experiences of fear, usually originating early in life around unmet emotional needs, create feelings of failure, inadequacy and guilt.

We usually bury our negative feelings from our phase of dependence and create a new strategy based on Independence - where personal success becomes paramount and we reduce our reliance on other people. This can bring material and career success but is full of expectations about how we and others should behave. Consciously we want to succeed but subconsciously we want to avoid the emotional pain of failure. This creates controlling behaviours that bring us into power-struggles with other independent people. Our isolation eventually leads us into the dead zone where we live and work with rules and roles from a sense of duty. This creates deadness, stress and burnout and destroys creativity. Performance always suffers.

"Most individuals & organisations are stuck in the Independent phase - this ultimately leads to the dead zone where performance suffers and we face the failure that we have been trying so hard to avoid"

Few of us ever question our independence, and yet it ultimately limits not just our performance but also the sense of reward that comes from all our hard work. We do not feel successful because we have subdued our emotions in a belief that this will protect us from the unpleasant feelings that we associate with dependence and the pain of failure. Moving out of independence and into Partnership is the key challenge for individuals, teams, organisations and indeed, society. We have invested vast amounts of energy in our independence and there is usually a strong resistance to moving into Partnership - it involves ending the emotional separation that characterises independence. It is about gaining more emotional literacy, particularly around our unmet needs from dependency, learning how to communicate in emotionally meaningful ways, and genuinely working together with our colleagues for the common good.

Partnership is our natural state of being and involves a distinct change in consciousness and attitude to one of cooperation and sharing. In Partnership we move back into more wholehearted relationships with the people around us. In teams it is about a sense of connection and bonding. We respond as leaders to the needs of the people around us, and through the vision stage we increasingly use our intuition to release our natural stores of creativity & innovation. In partnership there is more fun, energy and ease. Stress is reduced and people begin to enjoy their work much more because it provides greater meaning, purpose and fulfilment. In the mastery stage we have let go of most of our fears and insecurities and live in and for the moment. It is here we release our full potential in life and work and enjoy extraordinary levels of personal and organisational success. For some people, the progression through Partnership can create an interest in finding more spiritual meaning in their work - the model can be extended to consider these issues.

Using the Model

The model is used to both understand how our personalities develop and to let go of any emotions or behaviours that we feel are holding us back at work or in life. The model allows us to become aware of process - the continual unfolding of our lives and the way that we are all intimately connected to the people and things that are happening around us. Instead of being at the mercy of other people and situations, we begin to see that by becoming accountable for our own emotional and behavioural state, that we can empower ourselves and our colleagues for mutual benefit.

At the core of this development approach is the improvement in the quality of our relationships. By learning how to form stronger and more communicative relationships with the people around us, we naturally move into partnership and release our skills, talents and gifts. Not only does this create much higher levels of performance, but it also brings joy and fulfillment to our work.

At the organisational level the model helps us to understand how cultures develop and how these can stifle individual and team performance as well as levels of creativity and innovation. Change and high performance happens in organisations when hearts as well as minds are aligned. This practical model and the powerful principles that go with it, show how this balance can be achieved.