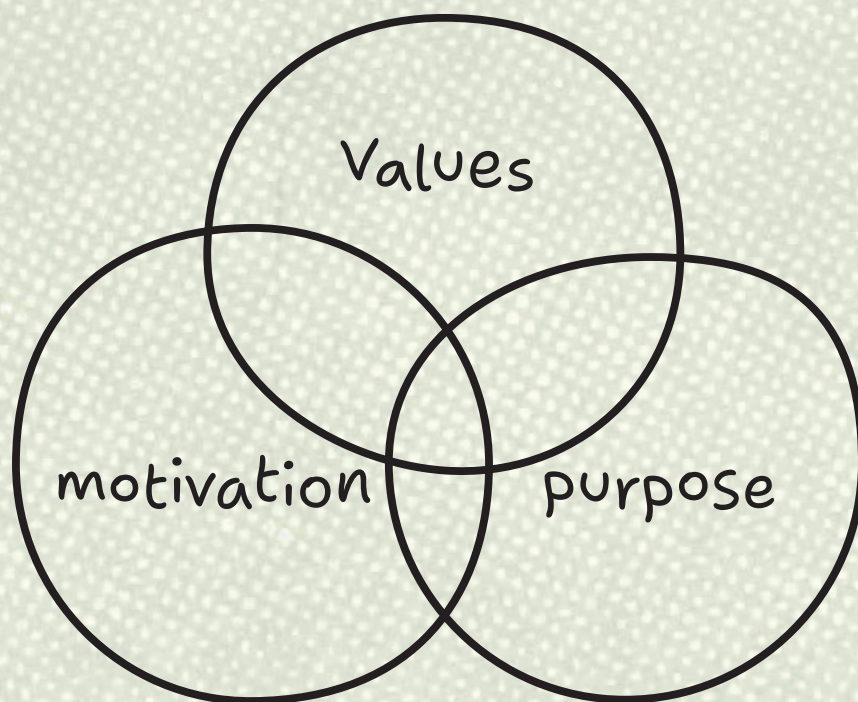


Master Storytelling

Professional training programme for changemakers



A new motivation model.

A new way of seeing.

A new approach to lasting change.

Training by Kieran O'Brien
Founder of the
Master Storytelling framework

Introduction to the training programme

Something is breaking down. And it is not a coincidence.

The environmental crisis. The collapse of social trust. The epidemic of meaninglessness. The fracturing of shared reality into a thousand competing stories, each more certain and more isolated than the last.

These are not separate problems. *They are symptoms of the same underlying condition.*

We are living inside a story that is no longer working for us. A story about what matters, what moves us, and what we are ultimately here for — a story so deeply embedded in how we think, communicate, and organise ourselves that most of us have never noticed it is there.

Why we need a new training programme.

We need to change this underlying master story.

The difficulty is that this story does not operate at the level of conscious belief. It runs deeper — in the implicit grammar of Value, Motivation, and Purpose that shapes how we think, what we care about, and how we act, before we are even aware it is doing so. This is the metanarrative. And because it operates beneath the reach of our current tools and techniques, those tools keep failing to produce the depth of change the situation demands.

Changing the metanarrative is not impossible. But it requires a fundamentally different approach — new theories, new practices, and a new framework for working at the level where culture is actually formed rather than merely expressed.

This is what the Master Storytelling training programme exists to provide.

The stakes are real. Other attempts at change — including some of the most well-resourced movements of our time — have stalled not because the people involved lacked commitment or intelligence, but because they were working at the wrong level. The information was right. The values were right. The grammar beneath it all was not.

Master Storytelling offers the tools to change the grammar. That is where the work begins.

What is a metanarrative?

A metanarrative is not to be confused with a grand narrative — the large-scale stories of Progress, Democracy, or Salvation. That confusion mistakes the meta (foundational and implicit) for the mega (large-scale and explicit).

A true metanarrative is made up of three primitives: Value, Motivation, and Purpose. These operate before conscious thought begins — shaping how we think, what we care about, and how we relate to the world, before we are aware they are doing so.

Different cultures, institutions, and historical moments configure these three primitives differently. That configuration is the metanarrative. And because it runs beneath the level of conscious belief, changing it requires more than persuasion, new information, or even a change of worldview.

It requires working at the level of the deep grammar itself — recalibrating the implicit code that generates everything above it.

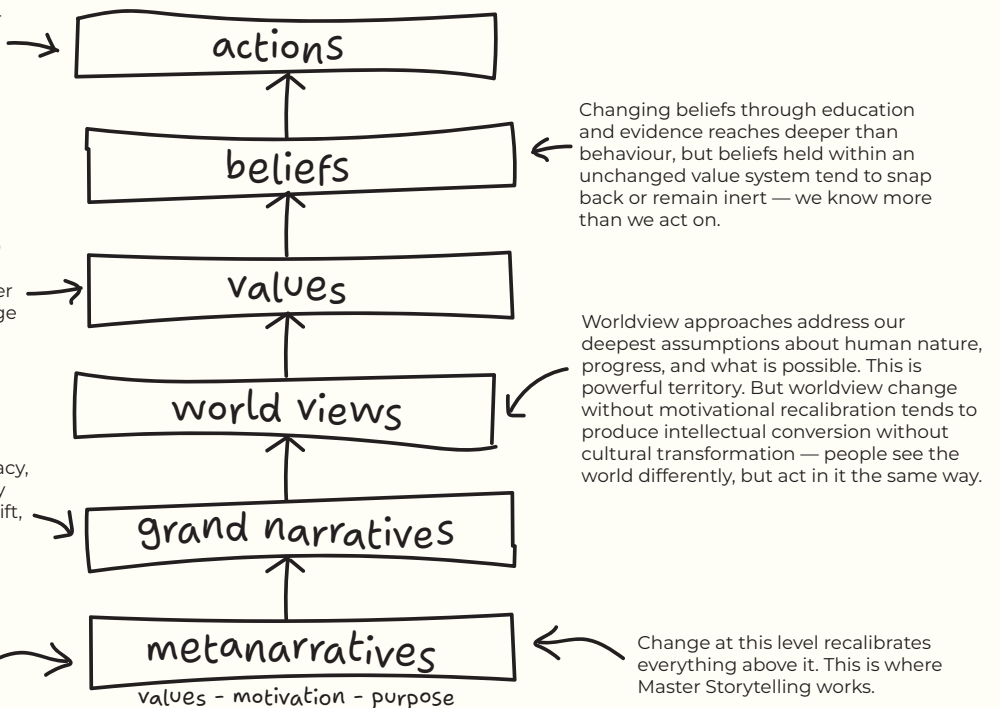
This is what Master Storytelling is designed to do.

Most campaigns intervene here — changing behaviour through incentives, information, or pressure. Results are real but short-lived. Remove the incentive, and the behaviour reverts.

Values frameworks reach deeper, but tend to remain aspirational. Without changing the motivational grammar that warms values over time, stated values and enacted values diverge — organisations know what they should care about but cannot sustain acting from it.

Grand narratives are the large-scale explicit stories a culture lives by — Progress, Democracy, Growth, Salvation. Rarely examined and rarely changed deliberately. But even when they shift, the implicit motivational grammar beneath them often remains intact, generating new versions of the same underlying story.

The metanarrative is the implicit grammar of Value, Motivation, and Purpose running beneath all communication and culture. It operates before conscious thought begins — shaping what we notice, what moves us, and what we believe is possible.



The big idea

Here is the remarkable thing: the answer is surprisingly simple.

Beneath every human interaction — every conversation, every campaign, every culture — three things are always present. They were there before you started reading this sentence. They shape what you notice, what moves you, and where you think any of this is heading.

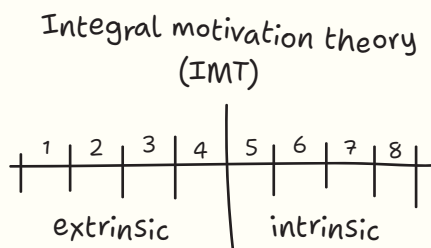
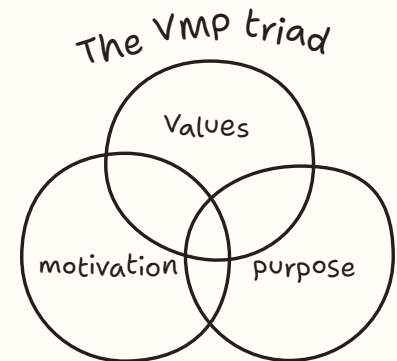
We call them the three primitives: Value, Motivation, and Purpose.

Think of primary colours. Red, blue, and yellow are not three colours among many — they are the foundations from which every other colour is mixed. You cannot reduce them further. Everything else comes from them. The VMP triad works the same way. Value, Motivation, and Purpose are not three useful categories among many.

They are the irreducible building blocks of all human meaning. Just as the RGB model generates over sixteen million distinct colours from three primaries, VMP generates the full spectrum of human motivational orientations — from the pressured urgency of fear-driven action to the quiet, sustained pull of something genuinely worth living for.

These three primitives form the deep grammar of culture itself. Learn to read them, and you begin to see what is actually running beneath the surface of any message, any organisation, any movement.

But seeing them is only the beginning.



Integral Motivation Theory (IMT) is a new framework — developed through two decades of applied research — built entirely on the VMP foundation.

Most motivation theory stops at the self: it explains how people move from external pressure toward internal satisfaction. IMT begins where those theories end.

It proposes that the deepest human motivation does not come from satisfying personal needs at all. It comes from alignment with value that exists beyond the self — value that is real, perceivable, and capable of drawing human beings toward it regardless of whether doing so is comfortable, convenient, or personally rewarding.

The pull of justice. The draw of beauty. The willingness to sacrifice for something that matters more than personal gain. These are not well-explained by existing motivation theory. IMT is built precisely to account for them.

IMT does not replace Self-Determination Theory or other existing frameworks. It completes them — extending the motivational continuum

beyond its current limit, into the territory where the most powerful and most sustained human motivation actually lives.

This is the intellectual foundation of Master Storytelling. And its practical implications reach into everything: how campaigns are designed, how organisations are led, how cultures are changed, and how the people doing this work sustain themselves over the long haul.

The big idea is not big at all. It is incredibly small. Three primitives that sit as the foundation of every communication and human interaction. Changing them is surprisingly simple. Getting others to change, however, is where the real work begins.

By understanding how Value, Motivation, and Purpose shape how we think, what we care about, and how we relate to the world around us, we can begin to see how they shape everything: the way we communicate, the political systems we build, the economies we run, the schools we design, the movements we sustain — and the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and what is possible.

Every one of these systems is currently configured around a predominantly extrinsic VMP code. Worth is measured. Action is driven by reward and pressure. Purpose is defined as a target to be hit. And the result — across all of these systems simultaneously — is the metacrisis: the world we are living in now.

Change the configuration, and everything changes with it. Not overnight, and not without effort. But systematically, cumulatively, and at the level that actually matters.

This is why the VMP triad is not simply a useful framework for changemakers. It is the missing key to understanding why our best efforts keep falling short — and what it would actually mean to succeed.

The training programme

What this training actually is.

There is no other training programme like this. Not because we have not looked — but because no training programme has ever been designed to work at the level of the deep code that shapes how a culture thinks, values, and acts. This is genuinely new territory.

Which means there are no magic solutions here. No top ten techniques you can simply apply to make your campaigns create deep change. If those existed, they would have been found by now. What this training offers instead is something more fundamental: a mode of attention that our culture has almost entirely lost — the capacity to see beneath the surface of things, to perceive the implicit grammar running beneath every communication, every institution, every norm.

Once you can see it, you cannot unsee it. And once you can see it, you can begin to change it.

What you will discover.

In this training you will learn why your current approaches are not creating the deep changes you are working toward — and why this is not a failure of effort or intelligence, but a consequence of working at the wrong level.

You will discover how you yourself are caught inside the same story you are trying to change — and why that matters for how you approach your work.

You will develop a meta-awareness: the capacity to see the currents that shape your culture before they shape you.

And you will learn practical tools for changing the underlying grammar of Value, Motivation, and Purpose that determines how people think, what they care about, and what feels possible.

This is not marketing, nor is it storytelling in the traditional sense. It is not about crafting better messages or grabbing attention. It is about understanding the pre-conscious drivers that shape how your audiences see and relate to the world — and learning how to work with them at that level.

What you will need to let go of.

This training comes at a cost. It is worth naming honestly.

To do this work, you will need to let go of the assumption that values are simply preferences we make up — and open yourself to the possibility that some values are genuinely real, perceivable, and worth aligning with.

You will need to let go of the idea that scientific materialism has the final word on what is true about human motivation and meaning — and embrace a broader, more plural understanding of how we know what we know.

You will need to let go of the comfortable illusion that we are largely in control of our own thinking — and reckon honestly with how much the dominant metanarrative of our culture shapes what we can even imagine.

And you will need to let go of the idea that you already have the answers. The price of wisdom, in this work, is a particular kind of informed unknowing — a willingness to sit with complexity before reaching for solutions.

This is not weakness. It is the necessary condition for seeing clearly — and in our experience, there is no shortcut around it.

What becomes possible.

If you are willing to undergo what this training calls a *metanoia* — a genuine turning around of how you see — then something remarkable opens up.

You will learn how to turn social movements for positive change into ones capable of shifting the underlying cultural conditions that determine whether change sticks or slips away.

You will learn how to transform working cultures that generate chronic burnout into ones that support genuine human flourishing.

You will learn how to bring this approach to bear on the largest systems we inhabit — the economy, academic institutions, politics, and more — not from the outside, but from within.

This is why this training is open to everyone. You do not need to be a senior leader or a communications professional. Whether you work at the top of an organisation or inside it in a quieter role, Master Storytelling offers the same thing: a way of seeing that can transform any culture from the inside out.

As this is an entirely new framework, everyone begins as a beginner. No prior knowledge is required. We build from the foundations up, and we apply every idea to real contexts so you can begin testing what you learn immediately.

Expect rigorous theory. Expect ideas that challenge what you thought you knew. And expect practical tools you can take away and use.

Because understanding the deep code is only the beginning. Learning to change it is the work.



The overview

Module 1 – Why good efforts fail

The hidden architecture of the change problem

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 2 – Two ways of attending to the world

The neuroscience of meaning and value

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 3 – The VMP triad

The hidden code beneath everything

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 4 – Integral Motivation Theory (IMT)

A new map of human motivation

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 5 – Values: discovered not invented

The ontological ground of motivation

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 6 – Purpose: target or source?

The directional dimension of motivation

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 7 – Amotivation and the meaning crisis

Why cultures stop caring and what to do about it

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 8 – The implicit grammar of culture

Understanding and reading metanarratives

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 9 – The Law of Value

The grain of reality and the rules we cannot break

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 10 – Practice: Learning to see the code

The Synaxis

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Module 11 – Practice: reading and calibrating

Applied Master Storytelling principles

1/2 day training – online workshop only

Module 12 – The Metamodern horizon

Building a culture aligned with the grain of reality

2hrs training – online workshop or self-directed

Each training input is set up for 1.5hrs of input and discussion, then the last 1/2 hr on group discussion and feedback. Times and dates are published on the website, we will accommodate both day-time training and evening training, as we understand some people struggle to do either daytime or evening. We offer a full 100% refund if you find this course is not for you. Please refer to the terms and conditions on the website.

Who this is for

The training is designed for anyone whose work involves trying to bring about genuine change — in organisations, communities, campaigns, or culture. This includes:

- Social and environmental campaigners and communications professionals
- HR professionals, organisational development practitioners, and people leaders
- Educators, community organisers, and civic leaders
- Researchers and academics working on culture, motivation, or social change
- Anyone who has found themselves asking why their best efforts keep falling short

No academic background is required. The framework is intellectually demanding but practically oriented — every module connects theory directly to application in your own context.

What you will be able to do

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Read the VMP configuration running beneath any message, campaign, organisational practice, or cultural norm
- Diagnose why specific efforts are producing dissonance, amotivation, or burnout — and identify the specific generative failure at work
- Design communications, campaigns, and organisational practices with full VMP coherence
- Evaluate initiatives not just by output metrics but by their alignment with the grain of reality
- Sustain their own motivation through the long timescales that genuine cultural change requires

The Master Storytelling framework draws on and engages with research across motivational psychology, cross-cultural values research, phenomenological philosophy, neuroscience, and anthropology. It is designed to be rigorous without being inaccessible, and practical without being superficial.

For those who want to go deeper, you can read our research and academic papers, including the main paper *Recalibrating the Deep Code: A Theory of Metanarrative Transformation for the Metacrisis* on our website as a free download.

Module 1 – Why good efforts fail

The hidden architecture of the change problem

This module exists to do one thing above all others: give us permission to stop blaming ourselves.

The reason our best efforts keep falling short is not a failure of commitment, intelligence, or skill. It is a structural problem — a mismatch between the level at which we are intervening and the level at which the problem actually lives.

In this module we explore the history of change up until now, and why our ways of thinking have failed us.

By the end of this module, you will have a profound insight as to why we have struggled to create real and meaningful change — and not to offer a spoiler — it has very little to do with you.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the black box paradox — why good information, strong values, and genuine effort consistently fail to produce the depth of change the situation demands, and why adding more of the same will not close the gap

- Identify the dominant paradigms that trap most changemakers without their awareness: the technocratic paradigm, which reduces all reality to what can be measured and managed; the Cartesian paradigm, which separates the knowing mind from the value-laden world it inhabits; and the marketing paradigm, which uses extrinsic motivational logic — fear, reward, pressure — to pursue intrinsically motivated ends, producing dissonance rather than transformation
- Recognise how these three paradigms operate not just in the organisations and campaigns we work within, but within our own thinking and practice — including the approaches we may have considered most progressive
- Understand the hierarchy of intervention — from actions and beliefs through values, worldviews, grand narratives, and metanarratives — and locate precisely why most change efforts intervene too high up the stack to produce lasting results
- Begin to develop the diagnostic eye: the ability to look at any campaign, initiative, or organisational practice and ask not just “is this working?” but “at what level is this actually operating, and is that the level where the problem lives?”
- Leave with a clear and grounded sense of where the real leverage point lies — not as an abstract concept, but as something we can already begin to see in our own work.

2hrs training - online or self-directed

The reason your best efforts keep falling short is not that you are doing the wrong things — it is that you are doing them at the wrong level. This module shows you exactly where that level is, and why everything changes once you can see it.

Module 2 – Two ways of attending to the world

The neuroscience of meaning and value

Before we can understand why motivation works the way it does, we need to understand something more fundamental: how we attend to the world in the first place.

This module introduces one of the most important insights in contemporary neuroscience and philosophy — that there are not one but two fundamentally different modes of attention available to us, and that our culture has become deeply dependent on one while systematically suppressing the other.

This is not an abstract observation. It has direct and practical consequences for how we communicate, how we lead, how we design campaigns, and how we sustain ourselves in long-term change work.

By the end of this module we will understand not just that something has gone wrong with how our culture attends to the world, but precisely what that something is — and why recovering the neglected mode of attention is the precondition for everything else in this training.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the distinction between two fundamentally

different modes of attending to the world: the narrow, analytical, goal-oriented mode that our culture has come to treat as the default, and the broad, contextual, relational mode that is the gateway to intrinsic value, genuine meaning, and sustained motivation

- Explore Iain McGilchrist's work on hemispheric lateralisation that accounts for two different ways of being in and relating to the world, each with its own priorities, its own blind spots, and its own relationship to value
- Recognise how the dominant mode of attention in contemporary culture — narrow, metric-driven, utility-focused — maps directly onto the extrinsic VMP configurations we identified in Module 1, and why this is not a coincidence but a self-reinforcing loop
- Understand why telic value — the kind of value that calls us beyond our own needs — is only accessible through the broader, more receptive mode of attention, and why a culture that has lost access to this mode has effectively lost access to its deepest motivational resources
- Develop the first practical foundation of the Synaxis: the capacity to shift deliberately between modes of attention, and to begin recognising which mode is running in any given situation.

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The crisis of motivation in our culture is also a crisis of attention. Before we can change what moves us, we need to recover the mode of attending that makes genuine movement possible — and this module shows us exactly what that means and how to begin.

Module 3 – The VMP triad

The hidden code beneath everything

Having understood in Module 1 why our efforts keep failing, and in Module 2 how our mode of attention has become impoverished, we are now ready to see what has been hidden in plain sight all along. Every human interaction — every conversation, every campaign, every institutional practice, every cultural norm — is shaped by the same three primitives: Value, Motivation, and Purpose.

These are not three useful categories among many. They are the irreducible building blocks of all human meaning, operating before conscious thought begins, configuring how we think, what we care about, and what feels possible — without our awareness.

This module introduces the VMP triad not as a theory to be believed but as a tool to be picked up and used immediately. By the time we finish, we will be reading the hidden code in real-world examples and beginning to see it everywhere we look.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand what a primitive is and why Value, Motivation, and Purpose qualify as genuine primitives — irreducible building blocks from which all motivational experience is generated, in the same way that primary colours generate the full spectrum of visible colour through their combination

- Grasp the VMP triad as an integrated system rather than three separate variables. By understanding how they work together offers incredible insights into human motivation
- Understand the intrinsic and extrinsic axis — the single most important distinction in the framework — and learn to identify where any VMP configuration sits on that axis: whether value is being perceived as inherently real or assigned instrumentally, whether motivation is flowing from genuine alignment or from pressure and reward, and whether purpose is drawing from a living source or pointing toward a separable target
- Begin to recognise the specific consequences of misaligned VMP configurations and how to diagnose a misaligned VMP configuration
- Apply the VMP diagnostic to real examples drawn from climate communication, organisational culture, and social movements — learning to read the hidden code in actual campaigns and practices rather than abstract scenarios
- Understand the warming model and how different VMP configurations can embed themselves into all aspects of culture. When they do so they present their logic as the only way to think, trapping us in a paradigm

2hrs training - online or self-directed

Once we can see the VMP code running beneath the surface of any interaction, we can never quite unsee it again — and that shift in perception is where the real work of cultural change begins.

Module 4 – Integral Motivation Theory (IMT)

A new map of human motivation

This is the module the whole course has been building toward. Having established why our efforts fail, how our attention has become impoverished, and what the hidden grammar of Value, Motivation, and Purpose actually is, we are now ready to encounter something genuinely new: a motivation theory built from the ground up on the VMP foundation.

Integral Motivation Theory does not simply refine what we already know about motivation. It opens territory that existing frameworks — however sophisticated — have never been able to map.

That territory is the experience most changemakers know intimately but have never had adequate language for: being called by something beyond their own needs, moved by something that exceeds personal gain, sustained by something that no reward system could manufacture and no pressure could produce.

By the end of this module we will have a precise, coherent, and practically useful account of how that experience works — and what it means for everything we do.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand why the dominant model in motivational psychology — Self-Determination Theory — is genuinely powerful within its domain but reaches a specific and identifiable limit: the self-referential boundary, beyond which motivation responsive to telic value cannot be adequately theorised within its current architecture
- Understand the three categories of value that IMT distinguishes — subjective valuation, normative value, and telic value — and grasp why the third category is both the most important for deep change work and the most systematically neglected by existing frameworks
- Learn the eight-stage motivational continuum: the four extrinsic stages SDT describes with great precision, and the four further intrinsic stages IMT introduces
- Understand the concept of telic resonance — the motivational state that arises when our awareness aligns with perceived intrinsic value — and recognise it as something we have almost certainly already experienced, even if we have never had language for it
- Begin to locate ourselves on the motivational continuum — not as a fixed position but as a dynamic orientation that shifts depending on the VMP configuration of the environments we inhabit — and develop the first practical tools for moving deliberately toward greater intrinsic alignment

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The deepest human motivation does not come from satisfying our needs or expressing our identity — it comes from aligning with something genuinely worth acting for. IMT gives us, for the first time, a precise and practical account of how that alignment works — and what becomes possible when we learn to cultivate it.

Module 5 – Values: discovered not invented

The ontological ground of motivation

Of all the ideas in this training, this one tends to produce the most significant shift.

We have been taught — by our education, our culture, and the dominant scientific paradigm — that values are things we choose, construct, or inherit. They are preferences we hold, principles we adopt, or norms our communities enforce.

On this account, there is no such thing as a value that is genuinely real independently of the people who hold it. IMT proposes something fundamentally different: that the values capable of generating the deepest and most sustained human motivation are not invented but discovered — encountered as genuine features of reality rather than projected onto it.

This is not a mystical claim. It is a carefully argued philosophical position with direct and practical motivational consequences. By the end of this module we will understand precisely what this means, why it matters, and how it changes the way we approach everything from campaign design to personal meaning-making.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the three categories of value that IMT distinguishes — subjective valuation (personal preference), normative value (moral and social obligation), and telic value (perceived intrinsic worth independent of the valuing subject) — and grasp why the third category is both the most motivationally powerful and the most systematically excluded from mainstream value frameworks
- Explore why the dominant scientific-materialist paradigm treats values as subjective projections onto an indifferent universe — and understand both why this position has been so influential and why it is, on careful examination, unable to account for the full range of human motivational experience
- Recognise the difference between intrinsic normativity — obligation that derives its authority from genuine responsiveness to telic value — and extrinsic normativity — obligation that derives its authority from social construction, institutional enforcement, or cultural convention — and understand why this distinction matters practically for how we design and communicate change initiatives
- Begin to develop valueception: the capacity to perceive telic value directly, through the calibrated attention of the Synaxis.

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The most powerful motivation available to us does not come from choosing the right values — it comes from learning to perceive values that are already real and already calling us. This module opens the door to that perception and shows us what becomes possible when we walk through it.

Module 6 – Purpose: target or source?

The directional dimension of motivation

Purpose is the most underestimated of the three primitives — and the one whose misunderstanding causes the most damage.

Most of us have been taught to think of purpose as a goal: something we aim at, work toward, and ideally achieve.

This module proposes something fundamentally different. Genuine purpose — the kind that sustains long-term engagement, survives setbacks, and deepens rather than depletes over time — is not a target we point toward but a source we draw from. It is a living orientation toward something of genuine worth, something that cannot be exhausted by any particular act of service and that renews rather than diminishes the more fully we inhabit it.

Understanding this distinction changes everything about how we approach our work, our organisations, and our own sustainability as changemakers. By the end of this module we will have a precise account of how purpose actually functions in the motivational system — and why getting this wrong is one of the primary generators of the burnout, disillusionment, and hollow success that are epidemic in change work today.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the fundamental distinction between extrinsic purpose — a separable target to be achieved — and intrinsic purpose — a living orientation toward something of genuine worth that is realised through participation rather than achievement, and that cannot be exhausted by any particular act of service
- Recognise how extrinsic purpose maps onto the left hemisphere's goal-oriented, outcome-focused mode of attention — and how intrinsic purpose maps onto the broader, more receptive mode that makes genuine value perception possible
- Map purpose across the eight-stage IMT continuum
- Understand burnout through the IMT lens
- Distinguish between the three forms of amotivation that IMT identifies — value occlusion, purpose collapse, and motivational incoherence — and understand the specific intervention that each requires, developing the diagnostic capacity to recognise which form is operating in any given individual, team, or organisational culture
- Begin to locate our own change work on the purpose spectrum — asking honestly not just what we are working toward but what we are drawing from, and developing the first practical tools for rebuilding purposive orientation from an intrinsic rather than extrinsic foundation

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The difference between the changemaker who burns out and the one who endures is rarely a difference in commitment or resilience — it is a difference in the quality of purpose they are drawing from. This module shows us exactly what that difference is and how to cultivate the kind that lasts.

Module 7 – Amotivation and the meaning crisis

Why cultures stop caring and what to do about it

Something is missing from almost every account of the crisis we are living through. We talk about burnout, disengagement, cynicism, and the collapse of shared meaning as though they are separate problems requiring separate solutions.

This module proposes a different diagnosis: they are all expressions of the same underlying condition — the systematic removal of the generative conditions that make motivation possible in the first place.

Amotivation, in IMT's account, is not simply the absence of motivation. It is the product of specific and identifiable failures in the VMP system.

By the end of this module we will have a precise diagnosis of how and why these failures occur at individual, organisational, and cultural scales — and, crucially, what intervention at each level actually looks like. This is the module where the theoretical framework begins to become a genuine toolkit for the world we are actually living in.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand amotivation not as a starting point on a motivational spectrum — a zero from which motivation grows — but as a generated condition
- Learn to distinguish the three distinct forms of amotivation that IMT identifies, each with its own cause, its own character, and its own required intervention
- Understand value occlusion as the specific mechanism behind the meaning crisis at cultural scale
- Understand purpose collapse as the specific mechanism behind burnout
- Understand motivational incoherence as the specific mechanism behind activist paralysis and organisational dysfunction
- Develop practical intervention frameworks for each form of amotivation: Synaxis recalibration for value occlusion, intrinsic purpose recovery for purpose collapse, and VMP realignment for motivational incoherence
- Begin to see the meaning crisis not as a cultural accident or an inevitable feature of modernity but as the direct and predictable consequence of a civilisational VMP configuration that has progressively removed the conditions under which telic value is perceptible

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The epidemic of burnout, disengagement, and meaninglessness in our culture is not a mystery and it is not inevitable — it is the predictable output of a specific motivational configuration. Once we can see the configuration clearly, we can begin to change it from the inside out.

Module 8 – The implicit grammar of culture

Understanding and reading metanarratives

We have now built the motivational foundation of the framework in full. We understand why efforts fail, how attention shapes what we can perceive, what the VMP primitives are, how motivation actually works, where values come from, how purpose functions, and what generates amotivation at individual and cultural scales.

Now we are ready to zoom out — from the individual motivational system to the cultural level at which that system is formed, configured, and reproduced.

This module introduces the metanarrative: not the large-scale explicit stories of Progress, Democracy, or Growth, but the implicit, pre-conscious grammar of Value, Motivation, and Purpose that operates beneath all of those stories and generates the cultural conditions within which any particular story becomes believable, compelling, or possible. This is the module where everything we have learned converges into a single diagnostic lens — one that, once developed, fundamentally changes how we read the world around us. By the end of this module we will be able to see what most people cannot: not just the stories a culture tells, but the deep grammar from which those stories are generated and to which they inevitably return.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the crucial distinction between metanarrative and grand narrative — between the meta (foundational, implicit, pre-conscious grammar) and the mega (large-scale, explicit, pre-consciously held story) — and grasp why conflating these two levels has left cultural theory unable to identify or address the real locus of cultural formation
- Understand why metanarratives cannot be rejected or eliminated — only replaced — and what this means for the limits of postmodern critique as a strategy for cultural change
- Learn to read the operative VMP configuration of any cultural system — not the values it claims to hold or the stories it tells about itself, but the implicit motivational grammar actually running beneath its practices, incentive structures, communicative norms, and institutional arrangements
- Understand the gap between stated and operative metanarratives
- Develop metanarrative literacy: the practical capacity to read any message, campaign, organisation, or cultural practice through the VMP lens
- Begin to understand the warming model at cultural scale and why changing individual beliefs or behaviours within an unchanged metanarrative consistently fails to produce durable cultural shift

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

A culture is not shaped by the stories it consciously tells — it is shaped by the grammar from which those stories are generated. Learning to read that grammar is the single most powerful perceptual shift available to anyone working for lasting change — and this module is where that shift begins.

Module 9 – The Law of Value

The grain of reality and the rules we cannot break

Every framework for change, however sophisticated, eventually faces the same question: what makes one VMP configuration genuinely better than another? Not more efficient, not more pleasant, not more popular — but genuinely better, in a way that is not simply a matter of preference or cultural consensus.

This module answers that question directly and without apology. The Law of Value proposes that telic value is an ontological reality. The universe has a grain: a directional pull toward coherence, relationship, complexity, and flourishing.

VMP configurations are more or less adequate to that grain. When we align with it, we generate genuine vitality, sustained motivation, and lasting change. When we work against it, we produce the predictable consequences we have been examining throughout this course — dissonance, burnout, hollow success, and cultural collapse.

By the end of this module we will have a principled framework for evaluating any initiative, campaign, or cultural practice — not just by whether it works in the short

term, but by whether it is aligned with the deep nature of reality itself. This is the module where the framework's full philosophical depth becomes visible — and where practical discernment acquires its most reliable compass.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the Law of Value as an ontological proposition rather than a motivational technique — this shifts our motivation model from psychology to ontology, and the implications for this are profound
- Learn the five dimensions of the Law of Value and understand each as both a philosophical principle and a practical diagnostic tool
- Understand the Law of Asymmetry as the most challenging and most countercultural dimension, and the one most systematically violated by the dominant cultural paradigm's promise of value without cost, change without transformation, and flourishing without sacrifice
- Apply the Law of Value diagnostically to real-world examples to see why good intention and internally coherent campaigns collapse when they violate this law
- Develop the practical capacity to evaluate any initiative or cultural practice using the Law of Value as a compass and to see what insight this diagnostic framework offers

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

The Law of Value is not a set of rules we impose on reality — it is a description of how reality already works. Once we understand its five dimensions, we have a compass that never lies: one that can tell us, with remarkable precision, whether what we are doing is genuinely aligned with the grain of things — or working against it.

Module 10. Practice: Learning to see the code

The Synaxis

Everything we have learned so far in this course has been preparing us for this module. We now have the theoretical architecture in full: we understand why efforts fail, how attention shapes perception, what the VMP primitives are, how motivation works at its deepest levels, where values come from, how purpose functions, what generates amotivation, and how metanarratives operate as the implicit grammar of culture.

But understanding all of this is not the same as being able to perceive it in the living moment — in the middle of a meeting, a campaign, a conversation, or a cultural shift. That perceptual capacity is what this module develops.

The Synaxis is not a technique or a method. It is a faculty — the meta-aware capacity of consciousness to perceive the VMP configuration running beneath any explicit content, in real time and from within lived experience. It has been suppressed by the extrinsic cultural environments most of us have spent our lives inhabiting. This module exists to restore it. By the end of this module we will not simply know about the hidden code — we will be developing the capacity to see it directly, and to begin working with it in our own contexts with genuine skill and confidence.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the Synaxis as a genuine perceptual faculty — a capacity of consciousness to apprehend telic value and to perceive the implicit VMP grammar of any situation directly
- Understand why the Synaxis has been suppressed rather than simply neglected
- Distinguish clearly between first-order experience — and second-order meta-awareness — the capacity to hold both the explicit content and the implicit VMP grammar in awareness simultaneously, perceiving the code while it is running rather than only after the fact
- Learn and practice core Synaxis exercises that form the practical foundation of the framework
- Understand the Synactic Council as the primary collective practice of the Master Storytelling framework — a deliberative space designed not for debate or problem-solving but for shared valueceptive perception
- Begin developing personal Synaxis practice
- Understand the relationship between Synaxis development and the broader project of cultural recalibration, seeing how we attend to the world shapes the world that we live in

2hrs training - online or self directed

Knowing about the hidden code and being able to see it are two entirely different things. The Synaxis is the perceptual capacity that closes that gap — and developing it is not just the most important practical skill this training offers, it is the foundation on which everything else we have learned becomes genuinely usable.

Module 11 – Practice: Reading and calibrating

Applied Master Storytelling principles

This is where we move from theory to practice. We have built the full architecture of the course: the motivational foundations, the value ontology, the metanarrative lens, the Law of Value, and the Synaxis as the perceptual faculty that makes all of it practically accessible. Now we bring it all to bear on the real world — on actual campaigns, organisations, movements, and cultural practices — and we learn to do the two things that define a Master Storyteller: read the deep code accurately, and know how to begin changing it.

This module is deliberately practical and deliberately demanding. It asks us to bring our own work into the room — to subject the initiatives, communications, and organisational cultures we are part of to the full VMP diagnostic — and to sit honestly with what we find.

The discomfort this sometimes produces is not a problem to be managed. It is, in the framework's own terms, the Asymmetry that genuine value requires: the cost of seeing clearly is the willingness to act on what we see, even when that means changing things we have invested in deeply.

Key learning and outcomes

- Develop fluency in the full VMP diagnostic — developing the capacity to read any message, campaign, organisational practice, or cultural norm and identify its operative VMP configuration quickly and reliably
- Understand the gap between stated and operative VMP configurations at the organisational and cultural level
- Work through the specific challenge of communicating across the intrinsic/extrinsic divide — learning how to speak a new language to audiences who may have previously been cold to your messaging
- Develop practical recalibration strategies for the three levels at which VMP configurations operate — individual, institutional, and cultural — understanding that genuine recalibration requires changes at all three levels
- Practice the Synactic Council as a practical facilitation method — learn to see how it works through practical participation in a council
- Apply the full framework diagnostically to your own change work — bringing a real initiative, campaign, or organisational challenge into the module's practical exercises and receiving structured feedback through the VMP lens, leaving with a concrete recalibration strategy you can begin implementing immediately

1/2 day training - workshop only

Understanding the deep code is necessary. Being able to read it in real time and knowing how to begin changing it is what makes the difference between a new way of thinking and a genuinely new way of working — and this module is where that transition happens.

Module 12 – The Metamodern horizon

Building a culture aligned with the grain of reality

We have arrived at the end of the course — and the beginning of the work. Every module has been preparing us for this moment: not the conclusion of a training programme but the threshold of a genuinely different way of engaging with the world. This final module zooms out to the largest possible scale and asks the question the whole course has been building toward: what would a culture look like that was genuinely aligned with the grain of reality — one in which intrinsic VMP configurations were institutionally supported, telic value was recognised as a legitimate and primary epistemological category, and the Synaxis was cultivated as a core cultural competency rather than an atrophied faculty?

We call this the metamodern horizon — not a utopian destination but a directional orientation, a commitment to building toward something genuinely worth building toward. By the end of this module we will have a clear and grounded sense of what that direction means in practice, what it asks of us personally, and how the work we do in our own particular corner of culture connects to the larger project of civilisational recalibration that this moment in history requires.

Key learning and outcomes

- Understand the era we are entering: metamodernism. Not as an aesthetic oscillation between irony and sincerity — the most common popular account — but as a genuine second-order attentiveness to the conditions of meaning-making
- Understand how metamodernism, properly understood, is the cultural sensibility most adequate to the framework we have been developing throughout this course — characterised by an incredulity toward scientism as a totalising epistemology, an incredulity toward the postmodern claim that we can live without metanarratives, and a wise and committed embrace of the value-grounded orientations that the Law of Value describes
- Understand what it means to work as a Master Storyteller in practice
- Understand the relationship between personal metanoia and cultural recalibration at the civilisational scale, seeing that these are not separate projects but the same project operating at different levels
- Leave with a clear, grounded, and energised sense of what the next steps look like — not as an abstract commitment to change but as a concrete orientation toward the specific contexts, communities, and practices in which each of us is best placed to begin the work of metanarrative recalibration from the inside out.

2hrs training - live workshop or online self-directed

This is not the end of the training — it is the beginning of the work. What we have built together across these twelve modules is not a new set of techniques but a new way of seeing, a new way of understanding what moves us, and a new sense of what becomes possible when we learn to work at the level where culture is actually formed. The world needs Master Storytellers. And the work begins now.

Master Storytelling

FURTHER RESOURCES

Recalibrating the deep code



A deep dive into the Master Storytelling framework, with practical insights and new ways of thinking about motivation, purpose and values.

AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY AND OUR WEBSITE



Insights

FREE Insight papers and research that provide the foundation for the Master Storytelling framework.

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