

**TWELVE  
TRADITIONS  
FOR A MAD, MAD  
WORLD.  
AA AS A  
“CHAORDIC”  
ORGANIZATION**

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Rebellion Dogs Publishing

# JULY 21 AGENDA

- Chaordic organizations, such as AA
- Dee Hock founder/CEO Visa Inc.
- The Twelve Traditions: A chaordic system
- Carry the message (mentoring service)
- Stewardship: our group, fellowship,  
carrying the message in all of our affairs.



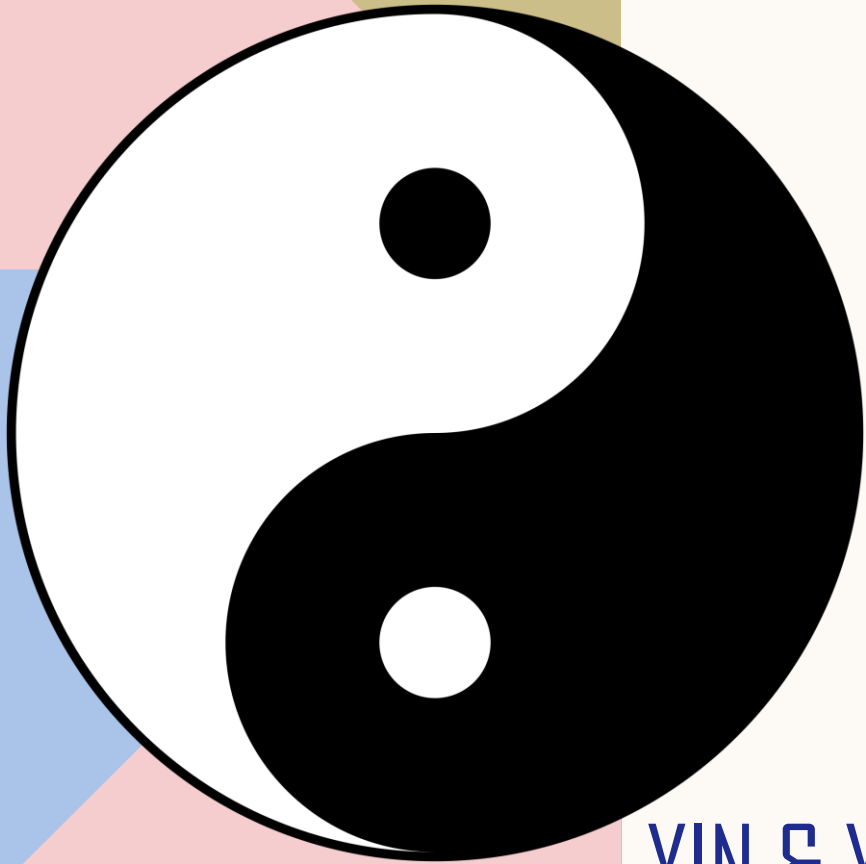
What do you see?

ANGELES  
OR  
DEVILS?  
OR BOTH?



# CIRCLE LIMIT IV (Heaven and Hell)

M.C. Escher. 1960



YIN & YANG, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE



# CHORDIC SYSTEM

Dee Hock (1929-2022), founder and CEO of Visa Finance Inc., employed an organizational system—akin to how AA functions—that he called, a **chaordic organizational style**.

“Chaordic” is a **portmanteau** combining both meaning and sound from two words to create a new compound word (like biopic, anklet, breathalyzer, brainiac).

**Chaordic systems recognize the need and contributions of both chaos and order to thrive.** Delegating broadly, chaotic systems run counter to the top-down command-and-control management style.

JULY 9<sup>th</sup> - *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life*

“ IT IS NOT A SIGN OF GOOD  
HEALTH TO BE WELL  
ADJUSTED TO A SICK  
SOCIETY. ”

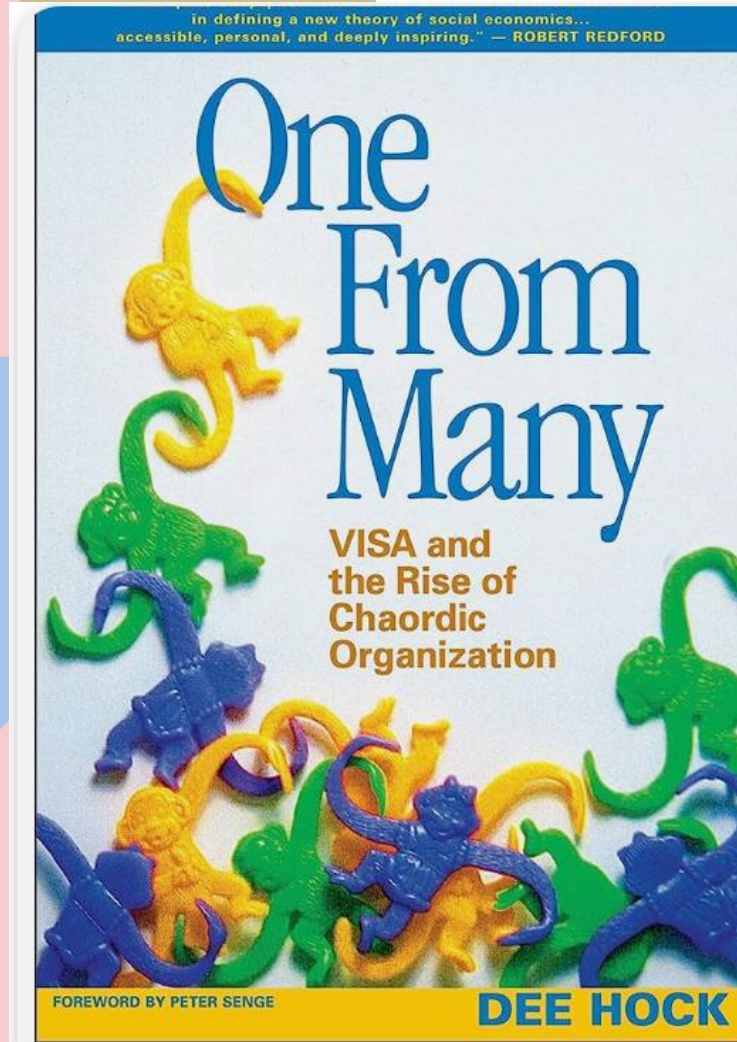
Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986)

## LIKE AA, ALL CHAORDIC STRUCTURES EXHIBIT THESE CHARACTERISTICS:

*Traditions  
& Concepts*

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Based on clarity of shared purpose and principles                | T: 1, 12, C: XII    |
| 2. Self-organizing and self-governing in whole and in part          | T: 2, C: II         |
| 3. Exist primarily to enable their constituent parts                | T: 8, C: I          |
| 4. Powered from the periphery, unified from the core                | T: 4, C: X          |
| 5. Durable in purpose and principle, malleable in form and function | T: 5, C: III        |
| 6. Equitably distribute power, rights, responsibility, and rewards  | T: 9, C: IV         |
| 7. Harmoniously combine cooperation and competition                 | T: 7, C: V          |
| 8. Compatible with and foster diversity, complexity, and change     | T: 3, C: XI         |
| 9. Constructively utilize and harmonize conflict and paradox.       | T: 6, 10, 11, C: VI |

# **(2005) *ONE FROM MANY***



Dee W Hock (1929-2022)  
founder and CEO of  
Visa Finance Inc.

<https://www.deewhock.com/>

*Birth of the Chaordic Age* (1999)



# AS DEE SEES IT...

- “Simple, clear purpose and principles give rise to complex intelligent behavior. Complex rules and regulations give rise to simple stupid behavior.”
- “Heaven is purpose, principles, and people. Purgatory is policies and procedure. Hell is rules and regulations.”
- “An organization’s success has more to do with clarity of shared purpose, common principles and strength of belief in them than to assets, expertise, operating ability or management competency, important as they may be.”
- “Far better than a precise plan is a clear sense of direction and compelling beliefs. And that lies within you. The question is, how do you evoke it?”
- “The most abundant, least used, and most abused resource in the world is human spirit and ingenuity.”
- “Desire to command and control is a death wish. Absolute control is a coffin ... Control requires denial of life. Life is uncertainty, surprise, hate, wonder, speculation, love, joy, pity, pain, mystery and a thousand other things we can imagine.”

# AS DEE SEES IT...

- “Life is not about control; it is not about getting; it is not about having or knowing. It is not even about being. **Life is eternal, perpetual becoming, or it is nothing.** Becoming is not a thing to be known, commanded, or controlled. It is a magnificent, mysterious odyssey to be experienced.”
- “People deprived of self organization and self-governance are inherently ungovernable.”
- “The person who fights for a dying cause is admired, supported, and honored. But the person who fights for a new cause struggling to be born is misunderstood, reviled, and attacked. Nothing is more difficult than taking the lead in a new order of things.”
- “Success follows those adept at **preserving the substance of the past** by clothing it **in the forms of the future.**”
- “People deprived of self organization and self-governance are inherently ungovernable.”

# AS DEE SEES IT...

- “We are at that very point in time when a 400-year-old is rattling in its death bed, and another is struggling to be born.”
- “Do not get angry, stubborn, and imperious. Get curious.”
- “Life will never surrender its secrets to a yardstick.”
- “The prudent course is to make an investment in learning, testing and understanding, determine how the new concepts compare to how you now operate and thoughtfully determine how they apply to what you want to achieve in the future.”
- “What will become compellingly important is absolute clarity of shared purpose and a set of principles of conduct—sort of institutional genetic code—that every member of the organization understands in a common way, and with deep conviction.”
- “It is far too late, and things are far too bad for pessimism.”

# SO WHAT?

HOW CAN KNOWLEDGE OF CHAORDIC ORGANIZATIONS  
INFORM 12 & 12 FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS?

- ENCOURAGING OUR PEERS TO GET ACTIVE IN SERVICE WILL FOSTER GROWTH FOR THEM & WELBEING FOR OUR WHOLE FELLOWSHIP
- WHAT DOES “Practice these principles in all of our affairs” MEAN IF NOT TO BRING OUR 12 TRADITION KNOW-HOW TO BUSINESS, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND OUR OVERALL CITIZENRY?
- MILLIONS OF 12&12 FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS ARE AVAILABLE TO APPLY WHAT WE KNOW IN THE COMMUNITY—WE ALREADY KNOW HOW IT WORKS.



# CHORDIC SYSTEMS INFO

79.4% of **UK Life in Recovery Survey (2015)** respondents reported volunteering in community or civic groups since the start of their recovery journey. This compares to 42% of the general public – let's bring our 12 Tradition know how to communities we serve.

Look at existing leaderless (chaordic systems) structures we currently use: The Internet, Wikipedia,

Google: "The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens." This is why the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) work that enhances citizens, and their associations is critical to the future of democracy." (The *Learnings of John McNight*), "When attacked, centralized organizations tend to become even more centralized. ... The harder you fight a decentralized opponent, the stronger it gets." *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations*,

"The more we insist on conformity, the more resistance we create,...We become rigid, and at that point begin to die."

3<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference (1953) *Our Great Responsibility: A selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks, 1951 – 1970*

"Nobody invented AA; it grew. Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience, first as policy and then as traditions. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. May we never stifle progress like that!"

*Living the 12 Traditions in Today's World*, Mel B & Michael Fitzpatrick

# STAY IN TOUCH...

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