

**THE SANDPILE MODEL
AND THE PARADOXICAL
IMPACT OF STRESS**

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**THE "SANDPILE MODEL" OF CHAOS THEORY
SPEAKS TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT
OVER TIME
OF ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS
ON AN OPEN SYSTEM**

**MORE SPECIFICALLY
THIS SIMULATION MODEL OFFERS
AN ELEGANT VISUAL REPRESENTATION
OF HOW ALL OF US
ARE CONTINUOUSLY REFASHIONING OURSELVES
AT EVER-HIGHER LEVELS OF
COMPLEXITY AND INTEGRATION ...**

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**NOT JUST
“IN SPITE OF”
STRESSFUL INPUT
FROM THE OUTSIDE
BUT
“BY WAY OF”
THAT INPUT 😊**

4

**AMAZINGLY ENOUGH
THE GRAINS OF SAND BEING STEADILY ADDED
TO A GRADUALLY EVOLVING SANDPILE
ARE THE OCCASION FOR BOTH
ITS DISRUPTION AND ITS REPAIR**

**NOT ONLY DO THE GRAINS OF SAND BEING ADDED
PRECIPITATE PARTIAL COLLAPSE OF THE SANDPILE
BUT ALSO THEY BECOME THE MEANS
BY WHICH THE SANDPILE WILL BE ABLE
TO BUILD ITSELF BACK UP
AGAIN AND AGAIN
EVERY TIME AT A NEW LEVEL OF HOMEOSTASIS**

**THE SYSTEM WILL THEREFORE HAVE BEEN ABLE
NOT ONLY TO “MANAGE” THE IMPACT
OF THE STRESSFUL INPUT
BUT ALSO TO “BENEFIT FROM” THAT IMPACT**

5

**... AND AS THE SANDPILE EVOLVES
AN UNDERLYING PATTERN
WILL BEGIN TO EMERGE,
CHARACTERIZED BY
ITERATIVE CYCLES OF
DISRUPTION AND REPAIR,
DESTABILIZATION AND RESTABILIZATION,
DEFENSIVE COLLAPSE
AND ADAPTIVE RECONSTITUTION ...**

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... AT EVER – HIGHER LEVELS OF
INTEGRATION,
BALANCE,
AND HARMONY

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AGAIN AND MORE SPECIFICALLY
AT EVER HIGHER LEVELS OF

AWARENESS
MODEL 1

ACCEPTANCE
MODEL 2

ACCOUNTABILITY
MODEL 3

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