

Jacob Feldman

# *Films and Levels*

Human Being Theory applied



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**Films and Levels. Human  
Being Theory applied**

«Издательские решения»

**Feldman J.**

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Every serious course contains a textbook and a problem-solving book. This is a solving-problems book after textbook named “Human Being Theory (for Dummies)”. Author analyzes 15 selected films (1994—2016) using concepts of levels and temperaments from the textbook.

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# **Films and Levels Human Being Theory applied Jacob Feldman**

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## Preface

### Storytelling versus problem solving

This book, named Films and Levels (**FLS**), is a sequel after my previous book, named «[битая ссылка] Human Being Theory (for Dummies)” (**HBT**)

**HBT** contains *many* ideas and a *few* examples.

**FLS** contains *many* examples and retells briefly relevant pieces of HBT.

It is *easy* to describe a problem briefly *after* it is formalized. But it is *impossible* to describe it briefly *before* good formalizing.

So what?

I have found a *tricky* solution. I use *films* as a raw material. I use only modern popular films. They are easy to find. Watching the film usually takes less time than reading the book with the same plot.

While watching the film in a theater you cannot stop the moment, but when you watch it at home with computer, you can. You can watch it at home as many times as you need. When discussing such films I could be sure that we both discuss the same raw material.

## Films

What is a film? It is a *message* from authors to a viewer. Suppose you are the viewer. Did you understand the message completely? Did you understand it correct?

Some part of the message targets to your *subconscious*, other – to your *consciousness*. Would you like to open all information of the message to your *consciousness*?

If yes, this book could help you. Some people just enjoy films. Other want *to understand* the message.

*To understand* is the key.

## Levels

Imagine broadcasting. To catch certain broadcast the receiver must be tuned to a specific frequency. The same thing happens in human communication.

My idea is that there are *only eight allowed frequencies* for human communication. I call them *levels*.

For the first time these levels were described by Clare W. Graves in the middle of XX century. He called them *levels of existence*. Graves died in 1986. In 1989 me, Jacob Feldman, though never knew about Graves and his levels of existence, described the same levels as *levels of attention* or *levels of abstract intelligence*.

Levels of Graves and levels of Feldman work in different models and it makes their meanings different. But they describe the same reality. From this moment, levels are levels by Feldman.

In 1996, *Don Beck* and *Christopher Cowan* published a book called *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change (Exploring the New Science of Memetics)*. In this book, Graves' model was retold briefly. And new strange *scale of colors* was added to the model.

After this book was published, Wilber (holder of Integral Approach brand) got acquainted to the model, appreciated it and included it into his own *Pantheon of Models about Human*.

If you want to know in a few words what is the difference between Levels-by-Feldman and Levels-byGraves-Beck-Wilber, the answer is as follows.



## **By Feldman**

- (1) There are eight levels of attention.
- (2) For every level, there are tasks with the certain structure.
- (3) Every task has its best level
- (4) Every adult person has four favorite levels; they are immutable and form his/her profile.
- (5) Nobody never changes his/her profile by plan, wish, or work. Sometimes people change their profiles after personal disaster.
- (6) There are strong conclusions about age-of-child and epoch-of-history

## **By Graves-Beck-Wilber**

- (1) No new ideas about attention.
- (2) Nothing about tasks.
- (3) An axiom: higher level is better for every task.
- (4) An axiom: every person or group has one and only one current level.
- (5) An axiom: to change the level you need to good your own work in good envirenment. Hire couch to get it!
- (6) No clear suggestions about age-of-child and epoch-of-history

## **Film Analysis**

For every film in the book, we will try things as follows.

*First*, we define levels of broadcasting of the message (from author to viewer).

*Second*, we analyze characters of the film; we define their levels of communication, thinking, and acting.

*Third*, we analyze features of characters beyond levels, like warming-up curves. It refers to the personality model described in the HBT book. If you did not read the book, you can find basic definitions [here](#).

## Levels: Model and Interpretation

Imagine a person. Imagine a list of *eight states-of-mind* = *levels* – *from 1 to 8*. Imagine that the person in every moment *is* in one specific state-of-mind from the list (= on specific level).

Every level has specific *field of attention*, which in turn determines specific worldview, specific set of features of thinking and behavior etc. Every field of attention can hold some specific structure.

Complexity of the *structure* depends on *number* of level. The structures are as follows:

- (1) One object
- (2) Many object
- (3) One process
- (4) Many processes
- (5) One map
- (6) Many maps
- (7) One system
- (8) Many systems

If you never have seen the list before don't give up. Just write in in a piece of paper, hang over your working place and try to memorize it *as a poem*.

For every level, we will see an episode or episodes where the level demonstrates itself clear. Read the book and understand the model and how to see it in real life.

I will use phrases

*person #X*

or

*attention #X*

instead of

*person on level #X.*

## Deepwater Horizon (2016)

### Good guys and bad guys

Now we will focus on level 4 and level 3.

Level 4 holds in attention many processes. Person #4 sees the world as a role system where he has his own role. To save the world everybody must *play* his/her own *role*, follow the *rules*, do the job, *duties*, *obligations* and keep *promises*. Good guys follow the rules, bad guys do not.

*Role, rules, duties, obligations, promises* are keywords of the level #4.

Sometimes level #4 uses the word *mission*. But *mission* is wider than that; it *includes* some *ideas* or *values* – these words belong to higher levels (6, 7, 8)

## **The Film**

The key conflict of the story is between the company, which operates the oil rig (*Transocean Ltd* in our case), and the company that pays (*British Petroleum* or *BP* in our case).

We see first sign of the conflict when Jimmy Harrell, captain of the rig (starring Kurt Russell) learns that PB ordered to geologists omit the procedure of ground checking around the rig. This order breaks the rules!

But the work at the rig is behind of schedule by 43 days and BP-specialists break rules to speed it up. Now some more theory

## Time is money

According the model, attention #3 holds one process. It means that the person sees the world as a *directed line*, with the *target* at the endpoint. Time is the measure of *how close* we are to the target. Thing helping to get the target are important. Other things are ignored including all kinds of rules.

Only rules with immediate punishment when broken are counted but only if the punishment could stop the movement. *Time, target, goal, achievements, success, winner, champion, ideal, the best, the force* – are keywords of the level #3.

Problems should be solved, difficulties overcome, wins taken – by any means, even by brute force, if necessary. If you hear from somebody things like “*the force is the only justice*” be sure this is a person #3 who hates rules and people #4.

In the film, BP-company and its representative (John Malkovich as Donald Vidrine) stand at level #3 while captain (Kurt Russell as Jimmy Harrell) holds level #4). Another sign of BP holding #3 is austerity mode: there is a long list of devices broken which must be repaired by BP-specialists, but they refuse.

In the case, BP-specialists have higher status than oil rig team – and they just do not listen. Usually status is a keyword of level #4. But in pure #4 system the actors with different status meet according rules and rituals. Here rules are broken and system goes to level #3 – stronger side make decisions on its own.

## Goals and Means

Every time when many levels work together, we should ask ourselves: *Where is the goal and where is the mean?* The action works for the goal. The goal controls and directs means.

In the film levels #3 and #4 work together but for BP level #3 is the goal. They (BP) want to be the best, the richest, the winners – level #3 detected.



## **Risky decision**

If the situation could be completely solved by following rules (levels #4) or by brute force (level #3) there is no place for decision-making. Decision-making situation supposes more complicated worldview – with attention #5.

Imagine you are a commander-in-chief inside the big battle of a big war. And the map of the battle is in front of you. You have to choose the plan. Nobody instead of you. Now or never.

Don't wait for more information, you have no time for this. You have nobody to report to and nobody to share responsibility. You are the One. *This is* the situation of level #5.

*Map, decision-making, risk, responsibility, uncertainty* are keywords of the level #5. Here are some episodes of the film with situations #5.

## **Episode One**

Captain decides to run additional testing. Results are strange. It could be understood as “everything is OK” or – from deeper point of view – it could be understood as “something strange happens and we do not know precisely what, where, and why”.

Captain hesitates. But Donald Vidrine (BP) pushes the decision by brute force – “go on as usual”. From this moment, catastrophe could not be avoided.

## **Episode Two**

The moment comes when all power system must be shut down. Young woman-engineer (Gina Rodriguez as Andrea Fleytas) is ready to take responsibility. But she has no legal rights to do it.

Teammates keep her from doing that. They bring wounded half-blind captain to cut off the system by his hand. Such solution allows Andrea to avoid long judicial investigation afterwards. In this case level #4 (rules) helps to level #5 (decision-making). Five is the goal here, and four is the mean.

## Episode Three

Mike (Mark Wahlberg as Mike Williams) and Andrea stand on the upper deck. The only way to salvation is to jump down into the water. Andrea refuses to jump. Then Mike distracts her attention, grabs Andrea in his arms and jumps from the deck with her.

In this episode decision-making is a mean and goal is saving some other's life. It is not about duty. It is about values. To value some other's life as high as his own life – belongs to level #8 – holding many systems (lives) in attention.

But because Mike not only *sees everything (as it should be at level #8)* – he manages to operate the only way possible – and does it successfully – it is something more than level #8 — *I call the way of thinking-and-acting so —level #9.*

## Children's theme

Mike's daughter (probably 7 years old) (Stella Allen as Sydney Williams) acts in a few important episodes

### Episode One

*I have not come into because I want a little brother*

When parents came out from the bedroom Sydney said: *I have not come into because I want a little brother.*

It means "I follow rules!" (level #4). But it means also "I have a target" (level #3) and "I understand causes and effects". This last element belongs to level #6 as we will see later. What level is the goal here? Level #3 I suppose. Is it bad? It could be bad if Sydney would be an adult person. But she is only seven!

### Levels and ages

In the HBT book, we suggested that during the childhood a person goes through all levels step by step. Here is the age-to-level mapping.

- (1) 0—3 years old
- (2) 3—6 years old
- (3) 6—9 years old
- (4) 9—12 years old
- (5) 12—15 years old
- (6) 15—18 years old
- (7) 18—21 years old
- (8) 21+

Sydney is seven years old and in this age, the level #3 is the main level for all children. By the way, the phrase "*I have not...*" Sydney took from her parents, no doubt. And this is good phrase, because it packs level #3 together with levels #4 and #6.

Good parents and teachers always link the current level of the child with higher levels, and this helps child to grow up.

### Episode Two

*The tooth of a dinosaur.*

In class of Sydney, each student must bring and show something special, related to parents' work. The last time, a classmate brought to class a young penguin – because his father works in a zoo. Is it possible to bring to class something more interesting? Yes it is.

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