



Indra's Net and Distributed Intelligence

“In each jewel of Indra’s Net are reflected all the other jewels, infinitely.”

— *Avatamsaka Sutra*

A Vision Unfolding

The vision I’m articulating here has not arrived as an idea or a proposal. It is something that has been forming over time.

I first noticed it while writing my book, as I found myself wondering how the work of a small, intimate group might expand beyond its initial container and enter the wider world without losing its integrity. Even then, Indra’s Net offered itself as a guiding image — not as a strategy, but as a way of sensing how coherence might travel without centralisation.



As the Between-Us groups begin to take shape, and as my co-creator Anne and I continue to dialogue and write into what we’ve come to call *relational intelligence* — how it arises, what catalyses it, and what allows it to be sustained — something further is clarifying. There comes a point where the relational field no longer feels like something we are supporting, but something that is beginning, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, to support and orient us.

Alongside this, a recognition is growing of the cultural potential carried by such fields of coherence — not as movements or ideologies, but as forces capable of reshaping how people meet, think, and act together. Real cultural change does not come from rearranging surface structures; it begins when the building blocks themselves are reimagined.

When we build from separate units, we reinforce separation as the dominant model — something static and fixed, shaped by the drives that arise when individuals lose their sense of responsibility to the whole. When we build from connection, the emergent structure becomes dynamic, holistic, and flexible — capable of holding complexity because intelligence is carried in relationship rather than isolated in silos.

More recently, in dialogue with others, this pattern has begun to articulate itself with unusual clarity. As I write, the words arrive already formed. There is no sense of assembling an argument or thinking through a position. The vision seems to be revealing itself directly, line by line, as though it is finding language rather than being given it.

Many Fields, One Intelligence

What is becoming visible now is not the emergence of a single coherent field, but the forming of many such fields — some already carrying momentum, others still embryonic, all beginning to sense one another across difference.

These are small, intimate constellations of people. Some are operating within particular fields of human endeavour; others are still in the process of forming. Even before groups formally begin, coherence is already present in

preparatory conversations, exchanges, and shared inquiry — tentative, responsive, alive.

What stands out is that this coherence does not arise from shared conclusions or agreed language. It arises from the quality of attention brought into relationship: from listening that is not strategic, from dialogue that is not performative, from a willingness to remain with not-knowing long enough for something more subtle to make itself felt.

Each emerging group carries its own flavour, shaped by the particular lives, histories, and sensibilities of those involved. And yet, across these differences, a recognisable resonance is beginning to be sensed — as though each group is touching the same underlying intelligence from a different angle.

It is here that Indra's Net offers itself again — not as a structure to be assembled or imposed from above, but as a living pattern revealing itself from within what is already happening.

In the image of Indra's Net, each jewel hangs freely, complete in itself, reflecting all others without losing its own clarity. There is no centre, no hierarchy, no master node. Remove one jewel and the net does not collapse; the reflections simply rearrange. Intelligence is not stored or transmitted — it arises relationally, everywhere at once.

Something like this is forming now, in real time.

It operates at multiple scales. The coherence within a single group resembles a small network — each person reflecting and recognising the others. As groups begin to interact, this becomes a network of groups, each carrying its own coherence. Resonance moves between them. Dialogue carries currents of exchange, like electricity flowing through a circuit, illuminating connections as it travels.

Distributed Intelligence

What distinguishes this from familiar ideas of networks or decentralisation is subtle but crucial. These emerging groups are not nodes awaiting instruction, nor expressions of a shared vision radiating outward from a source. They are not held together by ideology, identity, or even agreement. Their coherence is local, situational, and renewed each time people meet — or even begin to sense into meeting.

In fact, it is the very diversity and specificity of each group that allows for genuine exchange. In real meeting, all involved must be willing to allow transformation to be part of the currency — not persuasion or alignment, but mutual change.

Because of this, the intelligence that arises between groups cannot be owned, directed, or consolidated. It is not a collective mind, and it does not require consensus. It moves instead by correspondence — by the way coherence recognises coherence across difference. It is continually emergent: fresh expressions of something universal manifesting in particular forms, responsive to what each moment asks.

This is what might be called *distributed intelligence* — not intelligence spread thinly across a system, but intelligence that becomes available wherever relational coherence is present. It does not travel from one group to another, nor does it need to be preserved. Each coherent group becomes, in its own way, a place where the whole can momentarily appear.

This is why attempts to “scale” such work often feel premature or controlling. Scale, in the conventional sense, seeks replication of form. What appears to be emerging here is replication of capacity — the capacity to host relational intelligence wherever conditions are ripe, amplified through connection and interaction. The forms this takes are necessarily provisional, responsive to place, people, and moment.

Resilience, Not Stability

Another distinction is clarifying alongside this.

The task is not to stabilise these fields, as though they were fragile or in need of protection. Stability seeks preservation. What is being asked for now is resilience — the capacity for coherence to arise, dissolve, and re-arise without losing integrity.

Resilient systems do not fear collapse. They do not depend on continuity of structure or leadership. They trust that what matters can be regenerated wherever conditions allow. In this sense, pauses, dissolutions, and false starts are not failures; they are part of the intelligence of the field.

What emerges through this process are not dogmas or fixed truths, but living responses — lessons integrated through experience, challenge, and synchronicity. Creativity unfolds not through acquisition, but through allowance, the way a flower opens: complete in each moment yet held within a larger arc of becoming.

From this vantage point, distortion no longer appears as the primary concern. Fields of genuine coherence seem increasingly sensitive — almost allergic — to manipulation or personalisation. When instrumentalised, they lose vitality; when trusted, they organise themselves.

Still Unfolding...

So, what is forming here is not a movement with a manifesto, not an architecture with a plan, not even an organised set of groups.

It is a recognition — still unfolding — that intelligence, when allowed to remain relational and unowned, prefers to move this way: through many small, coherent circles; through difference without fragmentation; through connection without capture.

Nothing here needs to be directed. Nothing needs to be held together. Wherever conditions are present, coherence arises. Wherever coherence arises, intelligence becomes available.

Indra's Net is not something to be built.

It is something that begins to show itself when conditions are right — and once visible, it moves with a life of its own.

“Life is not made up of discrete things. It is relational through and through.”
— Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life*