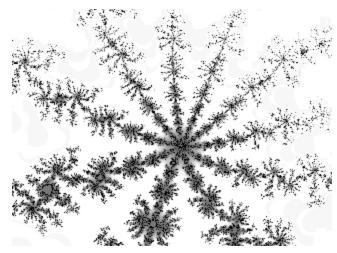# Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough by Mark Friedman
Available from www.trafford.com
Excerpt

EPILOGUE: Out on the Edge…

My early training and career interests involved mathematics and physics. I wandered into government largely because, in the late 1960's, matters of social justice seemed to be more interesting and important than finding the next smallest subatomic particle. But I have had a lifelong interest in the advancement of scientific thought that helps explain how the physical universe works. I believe that there is a small way in which Results Accountability makes a contribution to understanding how the social

universe works.

A Fractal Snowflake
Figure 7.6

The distinction between population and performance accountability reflects an underlying truth about the way societies and processes of social change are structured. Results Accountability is a framework that clearly and completely explains the differences and connections between these two forms of accountability. While public and private organizations bear responsibility for their own performance, no organization can claim ownership of the well-being of a whole population. Population accountability is not an extension of performance accountability but a separate, and perpetually unfinished, collective enterprise.

The Results Accountability progression of thought from results to experience, measures, baselines, story, partners, what works and action can be applied to any population challenge from the highest level consideration of world peace to the economic prosperity of nations and states to the safety of children in a particular community. The same thought progression can be applied to any performance accountability challenge from the management of whole governments to large public and private sector agencies to the smallest program and finally to our personal lives. Results accountability may be the only planning framework of this scope.

The Results Accountability thinking process is arguably an underlying archetype that connects and unifies business planning models, public health planning models and other data-driven decision making models. When Results Accountability is used for public health planning it looks and feels like traditional public health planning. When it is used for business planning it looks and feels like business planning. The components of these

other models can be mapped back to the components of Results Accountability. This suggests that Results Accountability is a simpler, more generic form of decision making reflective of what these models have in common.

Finally, one of the greatest mathematical, and in some respects philosophical, advances of our time has been the discovery of Chaos and Complexity Theory. It is possible to view social structures through this lens and see government bureaucracies and social networks as fractal entities with similar characteristics and structures at progressively larger and smaller levels of magnification. The world order in this view is not one of clockwork mechanics, but rather overlapping chaotic systems where cause and effect relationships are often impossible to understand. In a chaotic world, planning processes based on mechanical notions of cause and effect – this input leads to that output leads to that community change - don't work very well. Planning processes that are difficult to understand and implement make matters worse. If the planning process is complex and the content of the process is also complex, then the difficulty of the work grows exponentially. What is needed is a simple process, not dependent on rigid notions of causality, that can adapt to the fractal world, and contain the complex content of organizational and social change. Results Accountability is such a process.