

Stage Climbing

**How to Achieve
Personal Greatness
In Any Area of Your Life**

In the Shortest Time Possible

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TO THE READER

“What lies before us and what lies behind us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

This book is primarily about you and your life. Secondly, it is about everyone who has ever crossed your path or who ever will. It is also about how and why you think and act as you do, how you once were and how you could be. My first mission in writing it is to present to you a concept that is so powerful that it can enable you to understand, accept, or change virtually any area of your life. Then you can be heading in the direction of whatever you define for yourself as personal greatness and attain that standard in the shortest time possible. I see my secondary mission as being equally important: that this concept I call *Stage Climbing* be an extremely simple one to grasp, very easy to use and one that even puts many things that you might already be familiar with into a new perspective. That way, it is possible that you will find countless ways to use it to enrich your life and the lives of those you care about— or at the very least, to enhance and clarify the way you view yourself and others. *Stage Climbing* transforms a holistic overview of how you operate into easy to understand action steps you can use anytime you choose. It also bridges the often hard to understand gaps between self-help, psychology, religion and spirituality.

So let me begin by asking you a few questions. What part of your life could be better? Where could you feel happier? Feel more at peace? More on target, satisfied or fulfilled? Where you wish your contribution to those around you—your family and friends, your community, your profession or the world could be greater? Where you could be or at least feel more successful? Take note of anything that may come to mind as you ponder these questions. *Stage Climbing* is a brand new way of thinking about yourself and others that can help you to do many things, if you let it. Think of it as simple system for understanding how complex you are. In addition, it is a formula to give you insight as to where and how you could be stuck in a specific aspect of your life (e.g. relationships, career, self-esteem, or your life calling/ mission/ purpose). It will also give you powerful strategies for moving forward in those areas, not only to find the fulfillment you want, but to go even beyond that level of fulfillment and onward to a new plateau that until

now you perhaps may not even have realized exists. You need only pursue and make optimal use of the ideas and strategies in this book that speak to you.

This book will give you a user-friendly system that can explain practically any issue, dilemma or personal conflict involving you or someone else in your life that you are trying to understand. It is then up to you to choose either to change or accept certain things that may have been a source of difficulty up until now.

If you compare yourself to others, this book will help you to stop doing that and instead to make the only comparison that is truly valid: which is between *your life now* (in one or more areas) and *what it could be*, which is your true or optimal potential. Then, by using only the resources that exist within you and are therefore readily available to you at this moment just waiting to be activated, you are free to get as close to that potential as you are willing to go. I have used evolving versions of this concept as a clinical tool in my practice to help bring about change with thousands of clients who have represented almost every population or walk of life there is, for over thirty years.

One of the great mysteries of the mind is something I call *psychological farsightedness*. So often, we cannot see that to which we are too close. Therefore, this book will offer you a set of psychological “reading glasses,” by providing you seven distinct and ascending views that you can apply to any facet of your life. You then have the power to choose to stay where you are or move on to another stage. In the process, you may even find yourself raising the bar as to how you define your optimal life.

Since as humans we each are a unique work in progress, not only will this book have a different meaning for each person who reads it, but it will also offer you benchmarks to help you clearly see how you have advanced through this process, each time you reread it. The kaleidoscope is a wonderful metaphor for how the human mind works — the components of a kaleidoscope remain indisputably constant, yet what you see never looks the same way twice. *Stage Climbing* unleashes this phenomenon with the components of your life.

The topic of how we each develop to become the unique individuals we are, is something I have always found to be extremely fascinating. My life's work has been to help people identify their potential in one or more areas of their lives and then do what it takes to make the life changes that are necessary to get there as rapidly and effectively as possible.

It was in the very earliest part of my training and career as a psychologist that I first became interested in answering for myself the questions *Stage Climbing* addresses. In graduate school, I studied virtually everything I could find on the subject of human development, especially top theorists such as Sigmund Freud (Strachey, E. and Freud, A.1953) , Erik Erikson (1963), Lawrence Kohlberg (1987), Abraham Maslow (1987) and many others who in one way or another attempted to explain adult behavior and our potential based on how we develop. The problem was that as brilliant and groundbreaking as these concepts were—especially in their heyday— there were many gaps and missing pieces of the puzzle that for me left major questions unanswered. In the end, I was disappointed as to how dry developmental psychology could be and how unrelated it generally seemed to my interest in mastering the most effective clinical techniques to bring about lasting change with adults. In addition, the field of human psychological development seemed to be much too problem oriented while not being focused or oriented nearly enough toward the *solution* to problems.

An early mentor of mine, the late Dr. William Swartley, introduced me to an obscure article written in 1958 by Clyde Sullivan, Marguerite Q. Grant and J. Douglas Grant, "The Development of Interpersonal Maturity (1957). Their model was to become part of the seed from which *Stage Climbing* grew. However, like all the others, it had gaps that left major questions unanswered. Another early mentor, Dr Albert Ellis, the originator of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy--- the original and still a leading cognitive behavioral approach---filled in some of the gaps with his empirically based emphasis on finding solutions by changing beliefs. Once again, however, many new gaps became evident. (Ellis 1962). So my mission became twofold: to take as long as necessary to fill in those gaps; and then to keep refining my own model, *Stage Climbing*, until it could be as useful a tool for you, the reader, to bring about rapid and lasting change as it has been to me and all of those I have helped with it thus far.

Before writing this book, I also needed to satisfy myself that I could explain just about any aspect of my own life by using the *Stage Climbing* model. My life has been one of glorious twists and turns. Indeed *Stage Climbing* meets this challenge and continues to help me understand and navigate my own life as nothing else ever has; and once you learn the premise, it will do the same for you.

In my very early career, I started as an accountant. Within a few short years and in my early twenties, I began my own accounting firm, which quickly became successful and lucrative. Around the same time, I also got married, became a father and seemed to have it all. However, by my mid twenties, I actually became very bored with my career. There was no more passion or challenge in it. Our marriage wasn't working either. So after a lot of contemplation, one-by-one I wound up making a series of major changes in all areas of my life. Over a period of several years, I sold the firm, got divorced, went to graduate school, got a master's degree and doctorate and began to change my career to psychology—the field I loved as a hobby, but heretofore had never even thought of as a career.

My two careers have very little in common. In fact, that they could not be more different. As an accountant, I often became frustrated by the fact that there seemed to be only one view and acceptable protocol at a time for doing most things. To me, there was little room or incentive for innovation and creativity. At least that was my experience. As a psychologist, I found that the climate was the exact opposite. I quickly discovered that the psychology profession had much to offer to fulfill what up until then had been missing career wise. It was impossible for me not to be challenged and fascinated by the complexity of each individual I worked with as well as the vast and continuously expanding body of knowledge there was to both learn and contribute.

In a sense, the practice of psychology is really about teaching people to help themselves; and I have been fortunate enough to have had the privilege to do this with an extraordinarily wide range of people and settings. I have had contracts to work with both criminals and police. I have treated those with severe mental impairments, upscale clients in my private practice and students. Additionally, I have consulted

with business, government and educational executives; written popular books (as well as many audio programs) for couples, singles and people in relationship transitions. My audio self-help programs on numerous personal and relationship topics are also used around the world by both lay people and mental health professionals. I have taught graduate students, and trained mental health professionals extensively and at all levels; and have run an internationally acclaimed training institute. I have hosted my own radio programs both locally and nationally, done *Oprah*, *The Today Show* and scores of other print and electronic media. Most of all, I have enjoyed practically every minute of it! All the while, I have been working behind the scenes to put together the concept of *Stage Climbing*. I decided a long time ago that I would not write this book until I can definitively say that the theory and practice I espouse holds up to virtually any segment of the population or application to which it is applied. For me, this also includes my roles as a husband, father and grandfather as well as every other type of relationship in which I am personally involved.

As a strong proponent and author of self-help books and tapes, I am sadly aware that many people discount self-help psychology as irrelevant. One reason for this is that it is so often contradictory. Do you deal with life circumstances in the “here and now” (or your life as it presently is)? Or do you go back to childhood? Is the answer to be found by shedding light on a problem or by going further into your darkness? When is psychotherapy the best approach versus medication, meditation, yoga or other spiritual practices, for example? In *Stage Climbing*, we honor it all and believe that just about any approach to understanding human behavior and making your life work better for you has its indications and contraindications. Thus, *Stage Climbing* will offer you a very handy and non-dogmatic model to understand and choose the best path for you with any given issue. The good news is that everything you have been exposed to has its place. For that reason, don't throw away any of your favorite self help books or audios that may not have yet produced lasting results, as you may find a new level of meaning and application with them once you understand the principles of *Stage Climbing*. So if you have been overwhelmed or confused up until now by the sheer number of approaches out there to changing your life or some aspect of it, please read on....

Because the concept of *Stage Climbing* is so simple (as opposed, of course, to simplistic), you may find yourself challenging it. I both welcome and honor that. I was so concerned that its simplicity was too good to be true that I consulted many of my friends and mental health professional colleagues. I asked them to look at outlines and early drafts of this book in an effort to get their views of the validity of *Stage Climbing* from their perspective and to help me spot any inconsistencies with the principles of it. Their feedback continues to be extremely important to me. I am now able to say that regardless of your lifestyle, gender, race, ethnicity demographics or life experiences, once you see how *Stage Climbing* works; to the extent that you put it to work for you, it will become an invaluable tool not only for you personally, but also for helping or understanding all of those around you, and without labels or blame. There has never been any one approach that flawlessly provides the answer to every possible question or dilemma you may have (despite the claims that so many of the originators and promoters of various approaches make); and *Stage Climbing* does not claim to achieve that impossible standard either. However, it does fill in many glaring gaps that been left unaddressed up until now.

In addition, this book will give you a fresh perspective on some issues that may touch every important aspect of your life:

- Why are we so often conflicted about the things that make us feel happy, successful, and fulfilled? (Short answer: The seven stages present us with seven levels of happiness, fulfillment, success and spirituality from which to choose. Each comes with a different vision; but often they clash. After understanding them, you will see them as an enormous and wonderful set of choices, rather than conflicts.)
- What do the most successful, accomplished, happiest, most fulfilled, and the truly great men and women who have managed most to change the world have that you do not —not only our contemporaries, but throughout history? (Short answer: Very little that you cannot also choose to develop and learn to access in *your* own unique way, just as they do or did. One mission of this book is to teach you many of the strategies and ways of thinking that can help

you integrate the highest qualities of self-perception into your life that you associate with those icons, along with action steps you can apply to your life immediately.)

- What keeps us in unfulfilling relationships, jobs or lifestyles? (Short answer: Hooks to our lower stages that you can learn how to resolve.)

- How do I know my mission or purpose in life, and what is the role of spirituality in making that determination? (Short answer: Purpose and spirituality are different at each stage. This is what can make it all seem so confusing! *Stage Climbing* sorts this all out. It is a tool with which to learn your options and then use the numerous strategies and action steps you choose, to fine tune and navigate them. Along the way, you will access your inner resources that contain the blueprint. Then, simply commit yourself to honor and pursue the choices you make.)

Whether you are sitting high atop the pinnacle of success and affluence or in a jail cell where you believe you have little or no control over your life, the principles of *Stage Climbing* apply. I believe that boundless fulfillment, exceptional happiness and even greatness are within everyone's reach. *Stage Climbing* will define those virtues, give you a formula to apply as you see fit along with action steps you can take to make what you may now define as your best even better and better.

What Is In It For Me To Stage Climb?

Henry David Thoreau said well over a century ago, "*Most men lead lives of quiet desperation.*"

That statement could not be truer today! It is a fact that chronic low-grade unhappiness is all around us in epidemic proportions. The good news: I believe you can make your life exactly as fulfilling, as you want it to be— and very soon.

If there is one universal desire that cuts across practically all cultural, socioeconomic, religious, gender and racial lines; it is to achieve a degree of happiness and well-being necessary for what you consider a fulfilling life. Yet the concepts of happiness, well-being and fulfillment are extremely nebulous. That is because so often they are defined by such things as success in one's career, having a healthy family, a strong marriage or love relationship, material wealth, lack of conflict with the people around you, a certain social standing, power, being taken care of, defeating your opponents, having a balanced life, having a cause, being better or being better off than someone else. Unfortunately, most of these examples, to the extent that they exist, are external or outside of yourself and subject to change— sometimes without even a moment's notice. To the degree that they define our happiness, serenity, bliss, inner freedom, identity, maturity, spirituality, enlightenment or well-being, we have in essence surrendered control of our ongoing ability to maintain a truly fulfilling life.

Consider this unsettling reality: There is high probability that you are hurting in at least one major area of your life. Surveys consistently report that an overwhelming majority of us either dislikes our work, or at the very least feels dispassionate about it.

Almost two-thirds of us are dissatisfied with our lives in the area of love relationships. A similar majority feel isolated and disconnected from any sense of true community. In addition, as most mental health professionals will tell you, low self-esteem is epidemic.

Most people have an imagined endpoint that they believe will bring them complete happiness: "if I get married," "if I have a baby," "if I get out of this lousy relationship," when "the kids are out of the house," "I quit my job," "I win the lottery" or "retire," etc., etc.. (If this is you, please feel free to fill in the blanks_____.) In this endpoint fantasy, your whole life comes together and everything becomes wonderful. You will be able to do just about everything you ever wanted to do and life will not be a struggle again. Yet when I ask people if they can name someone *real* whose situation they know firsthand (not a movie star or someone else they know about only second hand or through their public image or press releases) who has achieved that result, there is usually a long pause followed by the

realization that their fantasy may in fact be just that. At the very least, there is a realization that you are probably making that classically erroneous and invalid comparison between your insides and someone else's outsides (through the lens of your perception).

Perhaps old passions no longer turn you on. For example, you used to feel much more motivated and challenged in a career that now bores or overwhelms you; or your marriage has slowly become unfulfilling to the point where those delicious feelings you once experienced together never or rarely show up anymore. Often, a low-grade feeling of depression becomes like a "squeaky wheel." When it finally squeaks long and loud enough, it screams, "Attention must be paid!" The type of depression I refer to can also be like a dull ache that you may not be able to classify in everyday terms—a state of mind that silently drains away your joy, satisfaction with life, and even your hopes and dreams. You may even experience it as an *existential crisis*, or a chronic inability to get or stay on the path toward what you sense is best for you, even if you have not yet consciously identified or pursued it.

When working with patients, I have often observed that a lot of the depression thought to be endogenous (as a medical problem or chemical imbalance) actually fits into this existential category of seeing some vision of your potential, but not reaching or even be pursuing it. In my experience, this brand of "silent unhappiness" is also an epidemic, especially among those who to outside observers appear to lead blessed lives. Norman Cousins captured it best in his observation, "The greatest death is what dies inside of us *while we live*." It might even manifest itself like this: By every *objective* measure in one or more aspects of your life, you are a winner; except you *feel* like anything but one. If that sounds even somewhat familiar to you as it has felt to me at times, both personally and professionally, what do you believe would make the difference for you? Luck? More hard work or determination? Your cleverness? A promotion? A windfall or an inheritance? The right idea at the right time? Knowing the right people? Perhaps you have had all of these things occur in your life at one time or another—or even all at once as I have—and for moments in time felt on top of the world, yet still find yourself identifying with the old Peggy Lee song, "Is That All There Is." As you commit to the process of *Stage Climbing*, that question will become more and more obsolete.

How Good Can Life Be?

It was Vince Lombardi who said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." But what constitutes a *true* winner? This is what I define as *personal greatness*. Any success, victory or windfall can *trigger* feelings of greatness in you— *temporarily*. However, a frame of mind that is generated by external factors does not last, since you are always subject to the next life event or occurrence, and then the next one, and the one after that. The good news: as humans, personal greatness is in fact a big part of our *natural state of being*. In other words, you have inside of you all you will ever need to live a gloriously fulfilling life right now... No batteries are required. That is the destination; and *Stage Climbing* can be your roadmap to it.

So, what's in it for you to stage climb? *To the extent* that you choose to climb to the highest stages you will soon read about in the *Stage Climbing* process and relentlessly commit yourself to stay on the path you have chosen toward personal greatness, the following could soon define *your* state of mind:

- Your self-confidence/self-esteem and your achievements are two parallel lines that do not meet and are never dependent on each other. That is, your successes and failures no longer influence your opinion of yourself in any way.
- You have a strong and certain sense of self that allows you to overcome (and not be governed by) your confusion, self-doubts, fears, anxiety about the approval of others, depression and frustrations. Your own judgment and sense of what is right is no longer undermined or overpowered by the judgments of others. You no longer fear the future or death and you have a layer of emotional muscle that insulates you from the pain of feeling the negativity of others, even when it is aimed directly at you. You accept and never berate yourself. You are at peace and free of inner conflicts. Thus, self-defeating behavior is a thing of the past. It simply no longer serves a purpose.
- You no longer *blame* your parents, former relationships, bosses, work associates or anyone else, including yourself, for the state of your life.
- You no longer are troubled by the past or expect things from people that are not forthcoming.

- You are aware of the infinite number of life choices available to you and feel empowered to make them. You have an almost childlike openness to new experience.
- Your passions, desires, purpose and strong determination to live by them along with the will of your inner wisdom are the forces or engines that drive and motivate your life. You are passionate about your chosen activities. Work and play can be equally joyous. Your motivation comes from within. External rewards are still nice, but secondary.
- Life feels easier, not like a struggle. With much less effort than you may ever have imagined, you are able to find a way to manifest almost anything you truly need.
- You understand just how to relate to almost anyone you encounter, no matter how wise or wisdom free they may be. In addition, you automatically and effortlessly discontinue or emotionally downgrade relationships with other people that are not harmonious and fulfilling. You can attract the love and/or support you need from those who matter most in practically any situation.
- You have a deep and cherished internal commitment to use your natural gifts to the fullest. You know what your assets are and how to maximize them. You also understand your areas of weakness accept them and no longer allow them to lead you in the direction of failure. Thus, you can make the most of all you have.
- Your potential keeps rising higher and higher; and your best keeps getting better and better with only you determining the limits.
- On a spiritual level: purpose and gratitude are your guiding forces providing direction whenever you need it.
- Finally, you are uniquely your own person.

If these characteristics seem farfetched or grandiose, remember that they all have one thing in common. They are each traits that you are free to develop all by yourself, *internally* (within yourself)— regardless of your status or station in life, how others see or approve of you, your standing in the community, your annual income, who you know, your educational status or anything else external to your existence

(outside of yourself) at this moment. That is how good your life *can be*. You can choose to own any or all of these traits— and keep them forever, beginning now.

So how do you get there? As you will see, it is a *natural phenomenon* to have that very state of mind. Thus, as you read on, you will notice how you have already stage climbed effortlessly or with the help of those around you in certain— perhaps even most areas of your life. However, in other life areas, the process needs to be helped along by simply clearing the path of those obstacles that are in your way. While you are doing that, you will learn a brand new tool for understanding yourself and others, making life changes, managing your emotions, motivating people and a lot more.

These are hefty tasks for a pithy little book, but read on. We have all had to rise to some occasion, even if simply to deal with a crisis or help someone who depends on you. This book will show you how to access those inner resources to do it practically every time, as it introduces to you this model of seven-stages or visions of yourself that span from infancy to perhaps even beyond what you imagine could be your best possible existence.

As Emerson said, “We are wiser than we know.” To tap into that wisdom and end all forms of self-sabotage is the essence of *Stage Climbing*. Then watch miracles happen!

Sidebar 1

What Is Stage Climbing?

Here is a Glossary of the Basic Terms.

I put this glossary at the beginning in order to familiarize you with the language of *Stage Climbing* that you will need to know as you read on:

Stage	A plateau of evolvment or maturity specific to any area of your personality, behavior, motives, purpose or life. There are seven possible stages: <i>Stage 1</i> to <i>Stage 7</i> : Most adults will identify parts of themselves in each stage. You could be operating at different stages with respect to your career, love relationship(s), as a parent, socially, spiritually, sexually, etc. and all at the same time. Your stages become the <i>lenses</i> through which you see life and all of its challenges.
Principle Operating Stage (POS)	The stage that normally (but <i>with rare exceptions</i> , not always) defines how you function with respect to one or more aspects of your life. Consider this as your <i>default position</i> in a life area.
Hook	A belief, feeling, behavior or any other part of you that is <i>uncharacteristically</i> in a stage higher <i>or</i> lower than your POS would indicate. Some hooks can be beneficial, while others can be extremely counterproductive. Thus, hooks can propel you forward or hold you back.
Stage Climbing	<i>A simple system for understanding just how complex you are, using deliberate strategies and new attitudes to move you forward to a higher stage, which you have chosen in one or more aspect(s) of your life. It is also the art of allowing and helping a higher level of your true potential to kick in.</i>
Calibration	A customized breakdown of the seven stages for a specific issue or aspect of life to help you pinpoint such things as <i>where you are now, versus where you want to be.</i>

Sidebar 2**The Seven Stages**

Stage 1 - Being Taken Care Of .	Normal at infancy; later can potentially render one profoundly dependent upon others with feelings of inadequacy.
Stage 2- The World is Your Oyster	Normal for toddlers; thereafter, a life without limits can result in extreme self- centeredness and/or acting out.
Stage 3 - Where Rules Rule .	Normal through late childhood; thereafter can morph into authoritarian personality with extreme rigidity about rules.
Stage 4 - The Quest For Validation .	Normal during adolescence; as an adult, can result in anxiety, depression, self-doubt, alienation and a wide variety of neurotic and approval seeking behavior.
Stage 5 - Balancing Your Roles	Normal adult in our society, where the definition of self (who you are) becomes the sum of all your life roles. Your view of life at this stage is most neutral. This stage offers the ideal attitudes and frame of mind to function best while doing what is merely necessary in order to live your life in the higher stages.
Stage 6 - When Passion takes Over	Mature adult with strong sense of self that rises above your roles. You operate according to your own intrinsic values and passions. This is the first of two target stages that most people experience as personal greatness and thus aspire to.
Stage 7 - Beyond Self Gratification .	The highest stage attainable. You are beyond needing self-gratification; fulfillment is achieved by your unique contribution to others, to the world and to how you can change it. At this stage, your purpose outside of yourself has more importance to you than what is purely in your own self-interest.

Part I

The Seven Stages: What They Are and How to Climb Them

“One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.”

-- Helen Keller

Introduction to the Seven Stages

In my psychology practice, couples and adults have always been my specialty. My previous books, *The Art Of Living Single* (Broder, 1988), *The Art Of Staying Together* (Broder, 1993), *Can Your Relationship Be Saved*, (Broder, 2002), and *The Secrets Of Sexual Ecstasy*, (Broder and Goldman 2004) in addition to my many articles and audio programs on such topics as anger, anxiety, depression, stress management, self-confidence and making major life changes strongly reflect that. Thus, whenever someone would ask me if I see children in treatment, I would politely decline and offer to refer the child elsewhere to a colleague with that specialty. However, the landscape of *Stage Climbing* prompts my response to that question to be a bit more tongue-in-cheek: *I treat children, but only those in adult bodies*. The serious side of that statement reflects a reality of why people seek help from someone in my field.

Many come to see me, because they cannot seem to find a suitable love relationship—yet I am not a matchmaker; or because their marriages are breaking up—yet I am not a divorce lawyer. I dispense no medication for people who are anxious or depressed; and I have no magical answers for those who consult me about their self-confidence issues that undermine their ability to pursue a dream or maximize whatever is most important in their lives. What I do have to offer them is help in consciously and mindfully seeing their problems through the eyes of the adult they are, and adopting the attitudes and beliefs that empower them to cope with and handle their lives optimally. Almost without exception, what brings people to my office is what turns out to be the inability to call up those well developed, yet seemingly out of reach inner resources they often seem to have no difficulty using in other situations. Instead, they are in some

way sending in a child to do the work of an adult (.e.g. becoming too dependent on non-empathetic people while going through a divorce or being too passive and approval seeking rather than assertive with a boss, etc.). The principles of *Stage Climbing* teach you how to choose and then consciously send in the best part of yourself handle any given situation. In my field, the closest thing we have to a “cure” is simply to be in charge of all your choices. To the extent that you are the master of your choices, you can take action that’s in your best interest when possible and appropriate as well as find peace within yourself when accepting a situation you don’t like is your only real option.

Think of each of the seven stages that I am about to describe as distinct views of life, then realize how each of us is a unique blend of up to all seven of them in every different aspect of our lives. When you keep this in mind, you will appreciate just how complex you and I (as well as each person you have ever met or ever will) really are. Your challenge is to understand each stage and then choose the stage(s) from which you want to operate in any given situation or part of your life. The strategies in Part III this book are designed to help you optimize those choices.

It is never the purpose of *Stage Climbing* to judge you, your values, or whatever stage with which you identify (although I will emphatically present the downside and well as the upside of all the stages). As you read about the stages, be aware of what is possible for you. Then honor where you are in a given area of your life. Once you do that, you are free to recognize and then climb to the stage where you most want to be.

To stage climb is natural. You have been doing it since you were an infant. However, if the world is a classroom, as I believe it is, and living in that classroom is how you learn about life, you may sometimes need a bit of tutoring to help you when your *natural process* becomes stuck or you are trying to make a change. I have yet to meet the person that— in at least one area of life and to some extent— does not have to help their *Stage Climbing* process along in some way. Virtually everyone has difficulty with something that *to them* may seem so easy for everybody else. For example, some people are generally happy and fulfilled career-wise, while leaving much to be desired with respect to their love relationships or

self-confidence. Perhaps in your case, those things are okay, but you often find yourself worried or bored. If there are people you *look up to* for what you perceive as their ability to master an aspect of life, chances are you merely perceive them (whether or not with accuracy) as operating from a higher stage than you are. The same can be said for those you may *look down upon* as being representative of a lower stage in some life area or issue(s).

Why is it that most of us have experienced the notions of success, happiness, fulfillment and even spirituality as paradoxical and confusing? One major reason is that our capacity for those things develops within us or matures in stages, very much the way we physically mature in stages. Newborn babies weighing eight pounds or less possess the seeds of everything that they need to become full-grown adults. As babies grow, genetic predisposition will play a major role in their physical development and health. Of course, environmental factors, as well as simply how they choose to live their lives and care for themselves physically will additionally become crucial long-term factors in physical health. The same is true of the ingredients for *maturity and mental* health. Each of us is born with certain seeds that give us an innately unique potential, along with talents and such things as emotional, spiritual and even creative parameters. As we evolve through our interaction with the world, it becomes our nature to find and then manifest all of our distinct preferences. This process is what Erik Erickson called “finding ourselves”; and it is the essence of maturity. (Erickson 1963)

Just as optimal body maintenance — barring death, disease or accident — will insure physical maturity, and learning will promote intellectual maturity, the psyche has definite needs in order to mature as well. However, as we grow, certain parts of us are slower to develop than are others. *Stage Climbing* is about recognizing those parts of you while optimizing your natural process so that you can fully reach your potential in any and every life area that you choose to pursue. In a sense, it is like going from some form of repression in your life to freedom, where you no longer blame anyone, including yourself for whatever you perceive in your life as not what it “*should be*”. Instead, you own the awesome power over your destiny. This is true freedom; and each time you experience it with something new, you are changed forever.

In the pages ahead, you will read about each of the stages. To get the most out of the *Stage*

***Climbing* process:**

- Remember that each stage pertains to every one of us (in the past and/or at present). As you read about them, be mindful of how the characteristics of all seven stages can explain a part or even many parts of yourself (as well as all the other people in your world). *I strongly suggest that you reread this section after you have read about the first few stages, so that you can get the clearest possible perspective regarding how to apply the material to yourself and those around you in the most beneficial way.*

- Be especially mindful of how you (or someone else in your life that you are close to or concerned about) respond to conflict.

- Notice any aspects of your life that you would like to change. The first step is to identify the parts of yourself that you will read about in the lower stages (we are or were all there). As you do this, *be aware that many of your best choices and goals will become clearer to you as you read ahead to the higher stages.* The seeds for those higher stages reside in each of us, just waiting for us to make them flourish.

Your Principal Operating Stage (POS)

Most of us have a tendency to identify with a particular stage in each of the different aspects of our lives (e.g. your relationships, parenting skills, career, and your approach to spirituality, etc.). I refer to this as your *Principal Operating Stage* or POS. Consider this to be the starting point in your *Stage Climbing* process. Once you recognize and know where you are, you can then clearly determine where you want to be.

You can choose to have your POS in any stage you want for any area of your life. In certain areas, you may find that you are already at your target stage, while other areas cry out to you for change. This book will show you the many choices you have and how to bring them to fruition.

For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I will speak of Ones, Twos, Threes, Fours, Fives, Sixes and Sevens when referring to someone with a POS in a given stage. However, please always keep in mind that it is highly unusual for even a single aspect of someone's life to be characterized *solely* by one stage or to possess *all* of the traits associated with any given stage. Your POS is simply in a sense your "default position" or the stage that now comes most easily to you, most of the time in a given life area. It is *never* meant to infer that your POS is always how you operate or can operate.

Your Hooks

As you stage climb you'll invariably encounter obstacles that stand in your way of enjoying life at your chosen or target stage. I call these obstacles *hooks*. These are simply your thoughts, feelings and/or behaviors that are characteristic of stages other than your POS in a given life area.

Sometimes a hook to a lower stage is like a "fly in the ointment", explaining why you have difficulty enjoying life or some important aspect of it. The question you need to ask yourself regarding a hook that holds you back is whether you are willing to do what it takes to eliminate it. These lower stage hooks (which to some extent literally *hook* you to a lower stage) are often what you recognize as your hang-ups.

However, not all hooks are bad. We also have hooks to the *higher* stages, which give us a peek or taste of what life can be like as we climb to our higher stages. Those hooks help us to propel ourselves higher (literally as would a hook at the end of the rope, you are using to pull yourself up). So think of a hook as merely a part of you that is uncharacteristically in a higher or lower stage— or as an departure—from your present POS.

Your POS together with your hooks are the prime factors that determine how you *internally* live your life. The effect that different hooks have on you can vary greatly. As you recognize and become the master of your hooks, they simply become more choices. However, the range of the effect of your hooks can be from minimal to all consuming. Thus, a hook can also be analogous to a drop of dark ink in a glass of water- coloring your life greatly. On the other hand, a hook might simply be an occasional thought that does not affect the quality of your life at all.

As you read about all seven stages, reflect carefully on yourself at each stage. Think of the part of you with hooks now in each stage or that used to see life that way. The more you are able to relate this material to your own life and realize that at any given time we are all doing the best we can, the better you will navigate your *Stage Climbing* process.

In reading about the stages, make it a point to recognize where you now are--- honestly and introspectively. As you will see, each stage has its benefits as well as drawbacks. So never berate yourself regarding your POS or lower stage hooks. They are what they are for a reason.

Acknowledge, understand, and honor them. Then you are free to begin to make choices by asking yourself, "Is this where I want to be or is there something better?" You will see what the alternatives and the strategies are as you begin to identify with each of the seven stages. You may even choose later to re-read about all or some of the stages, keeping in mind only one aspect of your life (or someone in your life) that is of particular interest or concern.

The choice is yours as to whether this book will become a life-changing event for you or merely a good read. All of my work has taught me that teaching powerful theory and state-of-the-art techniques not quite enough. The action steps and your execution of them are the ingredients this process needs most to work its magic for you. Start with the crucial assumption *that with the right strategies and the will, there is very little we cannot overcome or achieve*. This will help you to begin to maximize the material and its impact on your life instantly, successfully and powerfully. I will provide the strategies; what you need to bring is the will and motivation. Then be relentless until you succeed!.

In this dialog between you and me, I provide many real life examples, but purposely avoid lengthy case studies. This is my way of helping you to keep the focus on yourself as you read about the stages.

CHAPTER 1

Stage One

Being Taken Care Of

*“There’s a somebody I’m longing to see
I hope that he, turns out to be
someone who’ll watch over me ...”*

—George and Ira Gershwin

Picture yourself on a paradise island with people waiting on you hand and foot. You don’t have a care or need in the world that is not being satisfied by someone else. People pay a lot of money for that feeling on a vacation. Kings have conquered countries to provide it for their families and a privileged few. Having all your needs taken care by others can also be thought of as the definition of ideal infant care.

These are but a few examples of Stage One at its very best. Even though it is a great fantasy and sometimes when life gets overwhelming or stressful we wish for it, the fact is that few adults can or would consciously choose to remain in that state indefinitely.

Stage One begins at birth and is the normal stage of development during infancy. In other words, it is optimal to pass through this stage during the first year or two of life. This is the only *possible* Principle Operating Stage (POS) for infants who are totally dependent on others for just about every need. So in the Stage One world, oneself and those who play the role of caretaker and wish granter are truly all there is. Early on, infants perceive others as extensions of themselves who exist merely to satisfy their needs.

Recently, I observed two excellent illustrations of typical Stage One behavior while walking through New York City’s Central Park. The first was an infant sitting on its mother’s lap on a park bench, cooing and smiling at passersby who responded warmly. Just a few feet away, a disheveled street person sat on another bench making virtually identical gestures as the baby to the people who walked past him. Those passersby who had any response at all to this man reacted with disgust. The fact that the same people

reacted to the same behavior in completely opposite ways was based only and obviously on one thing — the appropriateness of the ages of the man and the baby to what they were doing. This extreme, yet obvious example illustrates one important aspect of *Stage Climbing*: what works at one stage of life, can be quite odd at another! Examples of this phenomenon exist at every stage.

“Ideal” parents and caretakers (to the extent that such a thing as ideal actually exists) provide something akin to unconditional love and nurturing during the first years of life, without expecting much in return, other than perhaps an occasional smile or some other cute form of acknowledgement. However, beyond infancy and most certainly, to the extent that adults become stuck emotionally in Stage One (for the sake of brevity, I refer to them as Ones even though this may only characterize a single aspect of their lives), they will generally continue to operate as though they and those in their line of vision were essentially the whole world. This is darkest side of Stage One and obviously such a distortion of reality that it could even result in symptoms as severe as those of the most severe forms of mental disorders.

As a result of being stuck in this stage, Ones can become any of the following: chronically needy and dependent, severely narcissistic and self-centered, highly addicted and/ or dependent on harmful substances or even to an extent all of those things together. In addition, they will often live life in a state of extreme dependency— perhaps even spending an entire lifetime seeking that “mother” that was not there or perhaps was perceived as not having been there. For some Ones, the only relationships possible are those with which they are overly enmeshed or where they can get away with remaining overly needy and self-involved.

Many Ones are experienced by those around them as bottomless pits— being almost impossible to please in relationships. Quite often, Ones also characteristically feel entitled to anything they want. Thus, it is not hard to see how the relationships they form become the basis for those feelings of “entitlement”. Moreover, many Ones marry their spouses in the first place—at least partially — because they were attracted to them not as people, but to their ability to be a “good provider” or caretaker. It’s not uncommon for some men to marry women who they perceive as extensions of their mother: someone to cook for

them, clean up after them, and take care of all life's annoyances, leaving them free to pursue their careers and hobbies. And, of course, there are the women who marry "up" — stereotypically younger women who marry older, wealthy men. Such Ones sometimes used to be referred to as "gold diggers". These types of relationships (and many other variations of them) are far from uncommon.

In the simplest terms possible, happiness at Stage One can be defined as having all of your needs met by others with no effort on your part (except perhaps that "smile" or another variation of it)— very much the way an infant relates to its mother. As an adult, "mother" can have many aliases, such as a pathologically enabling spouse who preempts any attempt at self-sufficiency, a "sugar daddy;" a sheltered work environment or one that inadvertently condones or encourages laziness and non-productivity, such as many non-demanding civil service jobs; and in some cases even a shelter or mental hospital, which could be metaphorically thought of as one giant mother.

For some, it's relying on the government, a charity or some other body or institution to take care of you, with no thought about giving anything back or planning to regain self-sufficiency. (In many cases, of course, such as with profound mental illness, self--sufficiency truly is impossible.) To the extent you are stuck in Stage One, here are some of the beliefs about yourself that may govern you:

"I am inadequate."

"I can't take care of myself." (And thus, "I must be taken care of")

"I must have someone else to satisfy me and care for my every need."

"I am incapable of making my own choices or carrying out any significant change to make my life better."

Government programs, such as long-term unemployment and welfare, are also godsend to many with a POS in Stage One with respect to work ethic. Many people believe that one of the reasons the 1960s "war on poverty" was actually "won" by *poverty* is simple. By taking away the incentive to rise out of poverty, discovering whatever you have uniquely to contribute to the world often gets put on the back

burner. Many have found this to be true with alimony and other types of “conditional” entitlements, as well. However, when the incentive to underachieve is taken away, then many will rise to the occasion and connect with their unique purpose and sense of passion (as we will discuss in the later stages). When that happens, the drive to overcome poverty seems to become second nature.

Some Ones are actually at their best emotionally when they are sick and people cheerfully take care of them. Others at Stage One choose to stay in highly dependent and in abusive relationships that meet their most basic economic and fear-based emotional needs. Drug and alcohol addictions are common with Stage One adults who sometimes discover that by taking certain substances, they can easily feel glimpses of how life could be if only they knew how to get there. In this situation, substance abuse and other forms of self-medication act as anesthesia for the inevitable pain of feeling powerless.

Psychologists have long recognized that there is little, if any, correlation between maturity and intelligence. As you will see, it is possible to be significantly fixated at this or any other stage of development — for various reasons of nature or nurture — yet still appear to function remarkably well in many or most areas as an adult. Thus, you will see as we go through all the stages that most of us retain some hooks at each stage — including Stage One — even though our POS may be solidly into higher stages.

It's important to remember that sometimes we go to lower stages during periods of extreme stress or illness, when particular situations occur or at other times even by choice. Our positive or negative hooks also serve to help us interact with or even to understand others with a POS in that lower stage. Therefore, when we use our hooks or insight learned through them for those purposes, they serve us well. It is only when we believe that we are *unable to choose* to function at the higher stages (as opposed to when a hook is activated by choice like booking that great vacation), that our hooks become hang-ups and get in the way of our relationships and attitudes, for example.

Ones cannot tolerate conflict and ambivalence. A typical Stage One reaction to conflict is to become absorbed in self-pity and feelings of helplessness. They don't see or even attempt to think about long-term solutions for the underlying issues that have led to them being a victim and in pain. When someone disagrees with them, they typically experience it as abandonment, which Ones cannot tolerate. They then become frightened and sometimes combative. In order to survive, Ones can become most proficient at seeking even more pity and/or some type of rescue from others (for example, listening only to fellow victims who support their myopic point of view or rebounding from one bad marriage to another). Yet paradoxically, this kind of intense dependency usually breeds some degree of resentment in Ones toward the rescuer. Thus, relationships with Ones often consist of many double binds. If this situation speaks to you, fortunately it can be turned around; but the first step is to recognize what is happening and why, then to commit to change.

Success at Stage One is generally defined as collecting or taking what is thrown your way without being called to task or challenged to pull your own weight. Asking, "what's in it for me?" without the awareness or desire even to consider giving anything back to a person or any aspect of the larger world outside of oneself- is an attitudinal staple of Stage One.

Any of us who are parents can attest that one of the most difficult things to do is to give your children all you can without enabling them to feel entitled to it. As Warren Buffet wisely said of leaving a fortune to his children, *"I want to give them enough to do everything, but not enough to do nothing."* When parents are unable to perform this often-difficult balancing act, the result can be a sense of entitlement. For example, a parent who repeatedly throws money at an adult child who is having financial problems is providing a Stage One solution that may be helpful in the short term at best. It will not do as much to change the pattern; however, as insisting that he or she resolves the issue without that level of parental help.

Sometimes the seeds for becoming those bottomless pits (unable to take responsibility and become adequately self-sufficient) are inadvertently planted and reinforced early on. It then becomes the child's challenge somehow to outgrow this. The best parenting, of course, uses guidance that is age appropriate. This means both accepting and tolerating (while certainly tweaking) behavior that is typical of the stage

that a child is in. However, immature behavior (that is clearly typical of a lower stage) warrants corrective measures that will help a child (of any age) to understand how “growing up” with respect to that behavior (or attitude) is to his or her advantage. Throughout the book, there will be many illustrations of this.

The archetype of the princess (or “mama’s boy”) who is raised to have her every need served by others — rarely even eating or dressing by herself, although quite able-bodied and able-minded — is an example of normal Stage One behavior for an era of time when a climb out of it would be rarely even thought of, let alone attempted. The problem is that feelings of helplessness, which stem from the underlying belief “I am inadequate”, become the predictable byproduct of not taking that initiative. As time goes on, this can become more and more a reinforced part of the character of a One, where dependency is the natural order of things and eventually can appear to be the only option.

Spirituality is either non-existent at Stage One or takes the form of the attitude that “God takes care of me and all of my needs; there’s nothing I need to do in return.” And indeed, whoever does take care of those with a POS at Stage One (e.g.; parents, spouses, the government, a sheltered work or living environment of some type, etc.) may even be perceived as “God.” It is certainly typical for Ones to give a great deal of power to spouses and other caretakers, who sometimes can even be extremely abusive without fearing the loss of the relationship.

Play at Stage One is a very self-involved process. Infants enjoy discovering and exploring their bodies and the sensations self-exploration gives them. In a similar way, Stage One play for adults is any type of self-pampering: letting yourself be totally taken care of on that vacation at an all-inclusive resort, pampered at a spa or even laying on a hammock in your backyard with a cold beer on a hot day. I mention this because it is a particular Stage One hook that is probably something you would never choose to change. As long as you are operating out of choice, that’s certainly a valid, healthy and desirable option. These are delightful examples of exercising a Stage One hook by choice. (If I ever opened a travel agency that specialized in great pampering vacations, I would consider calling it “Stage One Travels.” On page 158 of Part II, I include a breakdown of vacations by all seven stages.)

Thus, fun activities and self pampering where pure self-indulgence is the norm and spending your free time doing whatever you envision members of the “leisure class” do are not only okay, but also very nice and rewarding diversions. Many couples find that a custom blend of Stage One like activities---where one partner pampers or nurtures the other without expecting anything in return (or they take turns doing it in their own unique way)---to be an important and positive part of their relationship.

Some Ones are actually envied by others! This is because they are seen to have a blessed and easy life free of conflict and hassle, where someone else provides for their every desire. However, the question as to whether or not that life is a blessed or a very troubled one lies in whether their life and lifestyle is what they want, or one they are stuck in because of chronic feelings of inadequacy, which are a constant byproduct of the belief that no other choice is possible.

Many of the “lived happily ever” stories in folklore have as an archetypal “happy ending,” moving from “slavery” to freedom and experiencing the joy of discovering how different things can be when you take charge of your destiny. However, many other stories with romantic themes that appear to end “happily” may — upon follow up — have the exact opposite conclusion when they result in such things as extreme dependency.

Finally, some people, regardless of how evolved they might have been in life, revert back to Stage One late in life as part of age related mental or physical decline, or even by choice in retirement. For example, being your own “caretaker” by providing well for your retirement later on is arguably one of the best things you can do for yourself. The vision and possibility of living a very easy and carefree “Stage One-like” existence in later years is often a great motivator for saving money long before retirement is an issue.

Nursing homes are often strikingly similar to nurseries when it comes to the normal behavior of both the residents and the caretakers. I observed this many times when my mother was in a nursing home. Stage One (in infancy) is the stage where trust begins to develop (Erikson,1963) This is a crucial ingredient for all of our relationships; and no matter how independent we may have been throughout life, it is possible

that there will come a time when we will have to trust others once again to take care of us. Thus, hooks in Stage One may be what help many to make this sometimes difficult adjustment at the end of their lives. So never let them define you, but honor your Stage One hooks, as you may need them some day should it be necessary to give up your independence due to a medical, psychological or economic reality.

Making the Climb: What You Need to Know

First and foremost, it bears repeating: blaming your parents or anyone else for what you perceive as your predicament will only keep you stuck there. So step one to pass through Stage One (or as you will soon see, certain other stages, as well) is to acknowledge and take responsibility for your hooks there without berating yourself any further for having them. In return for refusing to blame yourself or others, here is the good news: Any initiative at all that you decide to take on your own is a step in the right direction to climbing to the higher stages.

Becoming proactive and self sufficient in any area of your life where you may have previously defined yourself as being powerless is the core of what it takes to dramatically begin the *Stage Climbing* process out of Stage One. You just have to remember to do it (or help Ones in your circle who want to grow to take initiative). Although this statement more or less could apply to removing your hooks at any stage, the act of taking initiative is generally less of an issue in higher stages. In Stage One it is the greatest challenge, since that very lack of initiative along with the belief (which often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy) that, “no amount of effort I expend will make things better for me”, is what chronically holds Ones back.

For many, dependency can be extremely addicting and hard to give up — especially if someone enables you to stay dependent and/or serves as an ongoing obstacle to change (such as in a controlling or abusive relationship). Realizing how important it is to commit and follow through on any step out of your comfort zone is more than half the battle. Freedom and perhaps worlds you would otherwise never know exist are waiting for your discovery and lie on the other side of whatever wall keeps you stuck at Stage One.

I have known many people for whom necessity or some form of adversity forced them to climb out of Stage One. The death of or divorce from someone on whom they heavily depended may have forced them to take on tasks and missions they would have characteristically avoided if they could have somehow chosen to remain dependent. Many I have seen in my practice have been shocked at what they could accomplish if only they gave it a try. For me this has often been an extremely inspiring phenomenon to watch. However, you do not have to wait for crisis or necessity to make this choice. The climb from Stage One is available to you any time you want to make it.

Remember that you will retain hooks, however small, to whatever stage from which you climb. For instance, you may have climbed to Stage Six in your career and you work in a job you feel passionate about doing the work you love. But still, you are still overly dependent on your spouse for financial matters. Sometimes your hooks to the lower stages are there for no other reason than to help you remember that period of your life, to empathize with others who are still there or simply to use them whenever it is your choice. *Just be sure that your hooks are there to serve you, never to rule you.* This is always the healthiest reason for us to retain and use our hooks to the lower stages.

If you have one or more Stage One hooks you would like to understand better, accept or change the impact to your life; page 161 in Part III contains specific strategies to address them. You may choose to go there now or continue to Stage Two and consider the strategies later or after you have read about all the stages.

Sidebar 3

Why Do We Retain Stage One Hooks?

When hooks are not by choice, they can hinder your climb and pull you back down. For example:

- The inability to see how life could be better (many Ones---as well as Twos and Threes do not realize that anything better for them exists.)
- The perceived ease of some aspects of life at Stage One,
- Fear of success, which would be you telling yourself things such as, “If I take initiative and fail...I wouldn’t be able to stand it” or “If I see myself as inadequate, I won’t have to take responsibility for my failures,
- No real motivation, ambition and/or energy to leave your comfort zone, regardless of how much you tell yourself you “should” want to.
- Medical issues such as depression and/or anxiety as well as other conditions caused by a chemical imbalance. Please note that these may first need to be treated medically. In many cases, until these underlying medical conditions are resolved, trying to remove certain Stage One hooks might be experienced as only amounting to added frustration.

On the other hand, there are times or circumstances in which having certain hooks in Stage One can be desirable. Here are a few Stage One hooks that serve can you in a positive way and when they might come in handy:

- When laziness or being as carefree as a child in one or more areas of you life is your choice.
- The simple experience of the pleasure of being taken care of sometimes without the need to give back on a *quid pro quo* basis (which is a often a nice win-win aspect of the best friendships and love relationships).
- Coping skills for being dependent or taken care of when that is necessary, such as when you are sick or incapacitated.

CHAPTER 2

Stage Two

The World Is Your Oyster

“I did not have sexual relations with that woman...”

-Bill Clinton

That quote by Bill Clinton is the one that may perhaps be remembered more than anything else he said during his eight-year presidency. It is merely an illustration of how strongly Stage Two behavior by those public figures from whom we tend to expect and look to for much more, can resonate.

Imagine yourself once again the center of the universe---not unlike Stage One. Only this time, you have the impetus and momentum to get up off your chair and take anything you want. Imagine everybody else in your line of vision and beyond, having no feelings---like expendable toys. There are no rules to follow, so no consequences for either taking whatever you want or breaking anything that stands in your way. Have a tantrum and the world satisfies you by delivering whatever it is you are screaming for. Then everything is just fine until you want something else; and when you do, no problem, just find a way to demand or take that too. It's all yours for the asking or taking. That is essentially the world or mindset of the toddler; and if our species required no other rules or discipline, that would be humankind in a nutshell. Perhaps in very primitive times it was. Life would be good until some stronger or smarter “toddler” preyed upon you. We were all there once, and most of us on occasion revisit this part of our life at times, by virtue of our Stage Two hooks.

It is normal for Stage Two to begin somewhere between the ages of 1 and 2 years old and optimally last about two years, passing through this stage by about the fourth year of life. This is the stage of development where as toddlers, we first began to discover our environment and to shift our focus toward what is going on *outside* of ourselves. Toddlers, if given the opportunity and are ready to take it, can now become aware of others in addition to those who act as caretakers. They also the ability (for the first time they are mobile) and a natural tendency to begin to test the limits. Parents who are

unprepared for this sudden change sometimes become extremely frustrated in their attempts to deal with their child's budding autonomy.

Now, imagine a toddler with the physical and intellectual capabilities of an adult, and you have the somewhat unvarnished profile of a POS at Stage Two. What a life!

To begin to teach the basic rules of living in a civilized society is one of the most important (and often quite challenging) tasks for parents of a child at Stage Two. Ideally, this is done in such a way that when children predictably begin to rebel against those rules, they also learn about the impact and consequences of their behavior as well as the realities and demands of living in the world with other people. A parent needs to be watchful, while letting go just enough to allow the toddler to explore. Being mindful of safety while setting limits and encouraging exploration can be a daunting task for parents. This is the beginning of will development, and thus the first sense of power that a child feels. They certainly call it the "terrible twos" for a reason. In addition, it is at this stage where the very first and rudimentary roots of conscience normally start developing, which will bring along with it the first installment of learning respect for authority. To the extent that parents can successfully teach toddlers to learn and accept reasonable limits, a healthy sense of autonomy can begin to surface. This is an important aspect of every youngster's developmental process. Some additional things that children need to learn at Stage Two include the awareness that other people also have feelings (and are not merely extensions of them) and to accept the "sad" fact that *nobody gets everything they want all of the time*.

There are two possible consequences of insufficiently passing through this stage as a very young child. One is the danger of developing a deep sense of shame and self-doubt — a common result of being deprived the opportunity to develop will. When this happens, the child may grow up to be an adult who is chronically afraid to exercise practically any kind of initiative at all, which is the result of that emotional detour back to Stage One, along with the development of multiple Stage One hooks and problems.

On the other hand and more commonly, inadequate guidance at Stage Two can become a huge factor in a (varying) degree of disregard for rules and limits altogether. For toddlers, play normally involves

learning about the world outside of themselves, *their* way. Toddlers love to explore. They are not yet concerned with the consequences of their behavior. In addition, they are easily bored; they tend to do and take whatever appeals to them in whatever way it feels best in that moment. With this in mind, it's easy to see how extreme risk taking and rebellious behavior as an adult--- without regard to the consequences--- is often the manifestation of hooks at this stage.

Adults fixated here may become sociopathic or extremely self centered and narcissistic (with some similarities to those at Stage One), only narcissism that is grounded in Stage Two does not usually come with helplessness and inaction. Instead, there is an exaggerated sense of entitlement and power--- believing they can and “must” have anything they want and are entitled to act out in any way that suits them regardless of how their desires and actions affect other people or what others think about them. Unlike those with a POS or hooks in Stage One, Twos will typically do whatever it takes (lie, steal, distort, etc.) to get what they want, believe they are “entitled to” or that their immediate and short-term desires crave.

Sometimes Stage Two hooks can be extremely self-defeating to someone with a POS in the higher stages. For example, excessive gambling can wreak havoc on every area of your life, except for the part of you which gets the temporary adrenalin rush that the action triggers. The same can be said for drug and alcohol abuse as well as any other form of acting out that ignores the long-term cost of short-term gratification. Whenever you do things you later regret as part of an addiction, look for the Stage Two hook if you want to understand that behavior logically. Like toddlers, twos believe they must constantly have their boredom amused, as boredom is a type of discomfort they characteristically have the most difficulty tolerating.

Indeed, Stage Two can be a very dark stage at which to have your POS. With little or no regard for the feelings or rights of others, criminal behavior is common — to the degree there are hooks in Stage Two. Embezzlers, con artists and other types of thieves and predators as well as even pre-meditated murderers (if there is also a tendency toward violence) have the extreme hooks in Stage Two, which

permit them to pursue that type of behavior. The ultimate Two could be a serial killer who, for example, makes an equivalency between a minute of their own sexual pleasure and a human life they choose to take in order to get it. This is arguably humankind at its worst and would be considered the result of a rock solid Stage Two POS.

When adults with a Stage Two POS focus much of their entire existence on self-survival and adopt one of the lifestyles just discussed, one obvious intervention is the criminal justice system. Prison is an institution that at its best — and not necessarily on purpose — is designed to promote an adult version of the kind of remedial discipline the offender may not have had during this early toddler developmental stage. At Stage One, “mother” is the critical other; at Stage Two it is “father”. Moreover, in one sense, a prison is one big and harsh “father”. O. J. Simpson has often been cited as a person who while extremely functional in many aspects of his life, is quite dysfunctional and sociopathic in others. What we know of O. J. Simpson is an excellent example of someone with the superb skills of a winner in his chosen field (football), yet emotionally and behaviorally driven by major Stage Two hooks. The complexity and contradictions he displays, is the very reason so many people find him so absorbing.

Some mental health professionals most familiar with this population have described Twos as the “true free souls” – free of the need for self-discipline and where instant gratification and avoiding any pain of the moment is all there is. To accomplish this, Twos can often be whatever they *have to be* at a given moment to get the result they need or want. Like Ones, Twos are very focused on (and preoccupied with) their basic survival needs. This is one reason why those at Stage Two function well in prison. A Stage Two reaction to conflict is generally one of fight or flight, or a combination. That is, to lash out or run away. Thinking that the other person could have a valid point of view (particularly if it conflicts with theirs) is not within their realm.

Since conscience is largely undeveloped, happiness at Stage Two is simply getting what you want regardless of the effect your actions have on others. So many Twos live by the attitude, “the world is my oyster” –where being able to manipulate, control, get around, and overpower people without any concept

of a win-win situation is the only way to go. Most of us have a killer instinct that we use very rarely as well as reserve it for times such as when a mosquito is buzzing around our ears on a hot summer night, while we are trying to sleep. However, some Twos do not particularly care to differentiate between an annoying mosquito and a human adversary. The behavior of long-time Stage Two icons like Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, Al Capone, John Dillinger, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow (and their fictional counterparts such as Tony Soprano) continue to fascinate us and are only a few vivid examples of the way Twos can be capable of interacting with the world.

Success at Stage Two can simply be defined as getting away with something, whether it is a scam of some type or merely putting something over on someone. Because there is so little sense of positive purpose, hard work is something that is often avoided at all costs. In fact, just about all “for profit” *criminal* behavior generally has one thing in common— that there is very little time spent actually doing any work. As long as short-term, immediate needs are met (whether or not at someone else’s expense); a hook in Stage Two can become a pass to feel perfectly free to act out. Lying, cheating and conning to deceive is often second nature. In some cases, deception becomes the most comfortable way of life. Even when success is obtained, Twos ultimately and characteristically are almost certain to find a way to sabotage themselves-often unwittingly. This is because Twos have so much difficulty learning from their mistakes. When they are caught, they typically consider the punishment or other adverse consequences they may receive to be the problem, as opposed to a result of their behavior that prompted it. This lack of insight makes it probable that their behavior will continue to repeat itself. Eventually — even if they are able to succeed temporarily by virtue of their intelligence — they will usually fail. Therefore, in addition to being a very dark stage, Stage Two is also quite a self-destructive one.

Stage Two characters you may meet in the workplace include all of those who grab credit for successes they have little or nothing to do with, while dodging the blame for other things for which they may have been completely responsible. This happens typically with little regard for the impact their behavior has on colleagues (no matter how loyal or undeserving those colleagues may have been). Sometimes Twos

even morph into unsavory executives whose practices are characterized by bullying subordinates, illegal financial schemes, and other types of predatory behavior that can affect anyone at all in their orbit.

Showman P.T. Barnum famously said, "There's a sucker born every minute." By all accounts, his own POS was in much higher than Stage Two. Yet Barnum's philosophy of why masses will come to be entertained through illusion, remains part of the "mission statement" of many Twos who are business people, politicians and others whose success depends on the ability to exploit others.

A Stage Two politician, for example, is out for whatever he or she can take or steal in the way of money and/or power with little or no consideration for their constituencies or the needs of anyone else other than their own. Like most Twos, they know just how to exploit, by imitating the desired emotions or image and projecting such traits as warmth — without possibly having a warm bone in their body — toward individuals, groups or crowds that give them money, power and acclaim. However, like Twos in any occupation, they can be highly abusive in private, when the cameras are turned off. Although most politicians probably rely on Stage Two hooks at times, successful politicians are likely to be much more complex as we will see as we explore the higher stages

Stage Two relationships typically tend to be formed mainly with those who are weaker, emotionally dependent and who will tolerate much while getting little in return. They are generally one-sided and non-empathetic, emotionally. (That is, until a partner of the Two somehow wises up and leaves the relationship.) Twos usually view friends and lovers as resources for money, sex, power, cover and position or simply objects from which to suck energy that are easily discarded when no longer needed, something or someone better comes along, or when staying would require some type of sacrifice. Being able to attach to another person as more than simply an object is unusual.

In my practice, I have heard many who have been involved with Twos describe them as empty suits or hollow with little real interest in anything other than leaching--emotionally, sexually or materially-- off of those who tried to be close to them. This was usually not obvious at the beginning, since Twos can be so

charming and mimic virtually every emotion there is to get what they want. When someone they still want in their lives has had enough and is threatening to leave, Twos can often act contrite and quite conciliatory until that fed up person is back in the camp. However, as soon as the threat is over, a Two can be expected to return to that same old way of being until the next crisis. For this reason, it is not hard to see why there are many love relationships between Ones (who can often be easily manipulated through their severe dependency) and Twos (who are all too happy to use and exploit them and their vulnerability in any way they can).

Spirituality in the internal sense is not yet present at Stage Two. Twos do not believe that God or a higher power of any type exists. (It's not that they are atheists per se, they just have not yet gotten around to thinking about or developing any spiritual principles at all.) Thus, there are no consequences (beyond the obvious and so long as you are not caught). In the case of Charles Manson (who his cult members have described as extremely charming and capable of presenting himself as either normal or even profoundly evolved spiritually, until his true motives and intentions were exposed) and others of his ilk, they are capable of projecting outwardly that they *are* God! That can be extremely deceptive, since many Twos use religion as a means to an end, and can mimic religiosity and "spirituality" (just as they can other things) as their way of manipulation to deceive others. Acting piously or observing religious traditions for no reason except to make an impressive impact on someone else, is never to be confused with true spiritual intentions (which do not manifest until the higher stages). Those who have managed to break away from some of the most repressive cults have often described "charismatic" cult leaders in that manner.

However, just as having hooks in Stage One does not make you a "helpless person", having Stage Two hooks do not mean you are a "bad person". Never forget that since most of us have some hooks in all of the stages, it is quite normal for most to display minor variations of Stage Two from time to time. You may occasionally cheat at cards or throw the kind of tantrum for no good reason or when you did not get what you wanted, that may even have been "cute" if you were a toddler. Perhaps you sometimes lie or exaggerate to achieve an end or to protect yourself from some unwanted consequence, purposely run a

red light or evade a tollbooth (and maybe even blame the cop if you get caught), take some undeserved credit, are unfaithful to your spouse or run an aspect of your business in a dubious manner. These are choices you may or may not regret. Only you can decide your own comfort level with your behavior; and only you in your heart of hearts know the reality of your limits when it comes to acting on your Stage Two hooks. What would make Stage Two your POS is the *inability* to recognize that there is another way to be that will ultimately provide you with a better life.

To the extent that an adult has not progressed beyond this stage, the bottom line is that he or she is at best capable—emotionally-- of self-survival. The end of Stage Two is first signaled by the beginning of conscience, where long-term consequences start becoming a factor when choosing behavior.

Climbing Out of Stage Two: What You Need to Know

It is somewhat unusual for people with a Stage Two POS to seek help on their own accord. Typically, they have little or no anxiety or remorse, so unfortunately there often is little motivation to change. Twos are characteristically so comfortable blaming others for their problems that their lack of insight repeatedly tricks them into giving themselves a pass. At one point in my career, I spent part of my week doing evaluations and treatment for federal offenders. They rarely took the initiative to seek treatment on their own. Instead, treatment was usually mandated either by the court or in some cases by someone with whom they were involved-- such as a spouse--who was tiring of their Stage Two behavior.

In my experience, Twos who thrive in treatment do so only when they can be shown how treatment benefits *them*, rather than those who stipulated or requested they get treatment. If they had been incarcerated, they sometimes valued treatment as part of a way to achieve their desire never again to be in that predicament. Many people whose POS is higher than Stage Two (but with strong hooks in Stage Two) are well aware of how those hooks prompted behavior that was self defeating. There is often a history of failing relationships, losing jobs and other opportunities that they wish to correct. Therefore, to

change embedded Stage Two hooks that are not benefiting you, begin by making the decision and commitment to model some of the people those who follow the rules you may have fought up until now.

Sometimes part of the process is actually to learn guilt and shame in order to help install or strengthen conscience. This is the only stage where guilt and shame are seen as a good and insightful thing (in other stages we consider them quite the opposite and work hard to overcome guilt and shame). Learning about and looking ahead to the long-term consequences of your Stage Two behavior is the most important step toward motivating your climb out of Stage Two. This means learning from your mistakes.

Consciously resolve to develop faith in somebody other than yourself. Get involved in something larger than yourself. Allow people to help you without exploiting them or jumping to the conclusion that they have an ulterior motive to con *you* in some way. These are the attitudes that will help you to begin developing empathy, which is an awareness of how other people feel and how you would feel if you were the object of the same kind of actions you may be inflicting on others. You undoubtedly were taught the golden rule in early childhood; reconsider it as you work on Stage Two hooks (especially the “as you would have others do unto you” part). You will find many rewarding alternatives to consider throughout this book as well as strategies to work on your Stage Two hooks. If you would like to work on them now, go to page 163. Otherwise read on to Stage Three, where your view of the world becomes radically different.

Sidebar 4

Why Do We Retain Stage Two Hooks?

Like Stage One, Stage Two is meant to be a temporary stage to pass through early in life. In addition, as with Stage One, there is often little motivation, awareness and/or confidence that better alternatives exist.

This is the most common reason Twos are so resistant to change. However, your Stage Two hooks still come in handy when:

- Survival and taking care of yourself first under unique circumstances is job one — such as a neighborhood environment where Stage Two behavior is the norm, prison or a POW setting. (Or any place where you determine and believe that in order to survive, being whatever you have to be in whatever way that moment dictates, is necessary.)
- You are unwilling to believe you have other means of economic survival.
- You need to fend off guilt or shame at times when you actually have done something wrong or shameful and perhaps are under fire for it. (Twos can be quite good at mentally “closing a door” when necessary, by simply refusing to look back or at themselves. Aligning yourself with the present moment is generally a good, healthy and highly desirable thing. However, most of us have an exceptionally difficult time doing that when something very glaring, immediate or painful is on our minds.) Compartmentalization of painful feelings can be a healthy endeavor and a good skill to learn. Twos seem to be able to do this quite naturally.
- It is your choice to manipulate or con someone. (Good poker players depend on Stage Two hooks to win, as an important part of the sport.)
- You are willing to accept the consequences — should they occur, but are betting they will not.
- You believe —as did “Robin Hood” — that you are acting for the “higher good”.
- The energy, drive and cleverness that often comes so natural in Stage Two can certainly be put to use for noble and decent things in the higher stages, so feel free to honor that possibility. For some, the seeds of their passion that lead to good things can even be traced to Stage Two.

- Your rewards from Stage Two behavior outweigh any consequences. Thus, you do not see your hooks as problematic. In other words, you just plain do not want to change. Again, this is probably the most common reason people choose not to dismantle their Stage Two hooks.

CHAPTER 3

Stage Three

Where Rules Rule

“Always let your conscience be your guide.”

-Jiminy Cricket

Now imagine living in a world where everything is just exactly as it "should be". In this world, all rules are effortlessly obeyed, all authority figures are placated, all norms are satisfied and you can easily stand up to the toughest scrutiny in any area of your life. There are no demands whatsoever being put upon you by any of the powers that be, which you are not fully meeting. That same standard is also being met with respect to everyone who looks up to you. Thus, all rules you are in a position to impose on others are being followed as well. To the extent that you can visualize this "perfect" and seemingly flawless world, you are seeing Stage Three at its very best. To fit in, you simply need to do and perhaps believe whatever is expected of you by the authority (or authorities) you support or fear. As a Three, that ability and willingness to fit in and obey the rules means life is good.

The rest of childhood up until early adolescence is when it is most normal for Stage Three to occur. This is the best time to learn, understand, integrate and even fine-tune the many basic, yet complex rules of living in a civilized society that were first set in motion for us during Stage Two. At Stage Three, children rarely see themselves as unique individuals yet; but are optimally moving in that direction. They seek and are most comfortable with solid structure. Although at times they can still be as self-centered and egocentric as children in Stage Two, Stage Three is characterized by the ongoing development of conscience and the desire to fit in and connect with as well as relate to peers. You are now capable of some empathy toward others— at least with respect to your impact on them.

During Stage Three, people outside the home become important resources for the first time. Giving can now be a pleasurable experience. Peer friendships can now be chosen. A child's imagination also begins

to develop richly during Stage Three. If the products of imagination are encouraged and stimulated, then the best possible scenario for creativity to expand and flourish throughout life will be set in motion. In addition, there is no better time for children to begin to discover that it is highly desirable to listen to their inner voices, which will become their lifelong source of and channel to their uniqueness and motivation to take the initiative in all areas of life.

Primarily, Stage Three is about learning and accepting certain rules that protect our world, save lives and teach about long-term consequences. Some are no-brainers, like to not break things, injure ourselves, maim, murder or rob people. It is our willingness to adhere to these and many similar rules that makes our species unique and gets us out of Stage Two. However, the other side of the *lifelong* Stage Three challenge is not only to learn and understand the rules that apply to us and our world at various times, but also to challenge them when they no longer makes sense. (A hammer is a very useful instrument, but one you can hurt yourself with, the mind is also a tool; and just like a hammer has its down side. One of them is to create many rules that simply do not continue to work, and then to manufacture even more rules that come in the form of reasons why we and others must follow them. At Stage Three, the mechanism to question and dispute rules is not yet developed.)

In addition to parents and peers, critical others at Stage Three are teachers. Sadly, however, many teachers do not fully rise to this crucial occasion. I refer to those who may be able to teach such things as reading, writing and arithmetic quite well, but are out of their league when it comes to teaching and encouraging creativity, critical thinking and the benefits of becoming an individual. At the extreme, overly punitive elementary school teachers can unwittingly instill a hatred of school and even learning; as well as a fear of daring to be different. (This happened to me early in elementary school. I remember once watching a prison movie as a child in second grade and actually envying the prisoners because they did not have to go to school. I was actually in college before I was able to completely change my adversarial view of teachers!)

Threes rarely believe the old adage that, “rules are made to be broken”. To a Three, a rule is a rule— simple as that. However, circumstances do not always support that black and white Stage Three notion; and threes characteristically cannot accept or tolerate exceptions to rules.

Thus, adult Threes—to the degree that Stage Three is their POS— will generally tend to become something of an excessive conformist, a rigid rule abider and/or authoritarian personality; letting the fear of punishment, authority and retribution dictate any or at the extreme, even every aspect of life.

Challenging rules or authority is out of the question. Threes are often in a box – closed to new ideas that question their deeply embedded rules, they seek people and situations that reinforce their conformity in beliefs, lifestyle and behavior. When Threes find more comfort in the rigidities they have adopted than the pain of being stifled by them, there is usually little motivation to climb out of Stage Three. Our comfort zone is what I have long referred to in previous books as a *comfortable state of discomfort* (Broder, 1988), , which is an internal force to be reckoned with when deciding to climb any stage.

Extreme right-wingers and left-wingers in politics- who instead of thinking the individual issues through before taking a stand, conform to the strict dictums of an ideology, are usually operating out of Stage Three. By contrast, choosing to be politically liberal, conservative or moderate because you have thoughtfully considered the alternatives and complexities on an issue would be indicative of higher stages. Stage Three politicians typically see themselves as ruling (or at best, herding) rather than serving their constituencies. They often rely on toady-like followers to succeed. (This certainly is still a step up from Stage Two politicians who are merely there to exploit, deceive or defraud for personal gain.)

The type of environment that Threes are usually most comfortable in are those that are highly structured, such as the military, where few personal decisions need to be made that require more than adherence to one rule or another. Moreover, if the typical inmate in the criminal justice system were a Two, the typical prison guard would probably be a Three.

Like most Stage Three attitudes; beliefs about gender roles, sex, making a living and certain stereotypes tend to be quite rigid and often defended with self-righteous anger. Prejudice and bigotry are also

associated with Stage Three. The television character “Archie Bunker”, of course, was a Stage Three icon. For Threes, living without set rules about almost anything can be extremely frightening and therefore unacceptable. Thus, they will typically look for and adopt—usually without question—a rule for everything; how to dress, what to eat, who stays home with the children versus who makes a living, whom to associate with and even what is acceptable to enjoy.

Most marriages and love relationships grounded in Stage Three that work well are governed by dictums that neither partner challenges. In fact, I have observed when working on difficult issues with many couples over the years, that there is often an unspoken agreement that the partners be “clones” of each other. This means that they have the exact same or at best highly similar ideas and values with respect to family, finances, religion, sex, fidelity, the roles of each partner, child rearing and virtually all of the major issues that are staples of most relationships. Usually these are not rules they have chosen, but those they adopted uncritically— usually passed on from generation to generation. It is the degree to which your POS is at Stage Three in a given area of life that determines how much disagreement about things you can tolerate— whether from a spouse or anyone else. When one partner begins to climb out of Stage Three and the other partner does not (and remains attached to his or her rigidities), the relationship will usually not survive. Partners with a POS at any stage can and certainly do grow apart; but when they do it for this reason, I look for the active Stage Three hook in one or both partners.

It is at Stage Three that spiritual development begins. However, just like most other things at Stage Three, spirituality is usually another set of rules to follow without question. Most often, they are the rules of an organized religion- the belief that God will take care of you, but only if you obey his commandments and/or the dictums of the religious branch or organization to which you belong. If not, you incur God’s wrath. Fundamentalist-type religious beliefs often appeal to Threes, as they leave little or nothing to question or chance. Those, as well as cult-type philosophies, which are mainly grounded in guilt and fear on the one hand and fitting in on the other, tend to give not-to-be-questioned solutions to virtually all inner conflicts.

Religion and spirituality are two entirely different things, although obviously they can be (and probably for most people are) highly related. I see true spirituality as something personal and distinctive that is internal and within each of us. It is connected to our higher self, sense of purpose and uniqueness. (When religion is a choice that helps ground you at the deepest levels, spirituality has kicked in. This is indicative of higher stages.) On the other hand, religion by itself is an externally organized set of beliefs that define spiritual things. Thus, the church and references to predetermined beliefs as explained by the bible and clergy are probably the most common intervention Threes turn to when trying to resolve inner conflicts (e.g., anxiety, depression or guilt) or relationship/marital issues (such as ambivalence about staying together or questions about sex) that they do experience.

In authoritarian and totalitarian societies (which speak to the Stage Three hooks of those who live in them), it is the rules and dictums of the government, its dictator or other rulers that play the same role as the beliefs of a church or cult. What connects all these things to Stage Three is the absence of choice that one feels *internally* with regard to them. (Merely obeying out of the fear of retribution as opposed to your belief in the authorities is not necessarily indicative of Stage Three, as the survivors of Nazi Germany and other extreme totalitarian regimes have taught us.)

In Stage Three oriented extended families and social circles, age and position (e.g., being a patriarch or matriarch) grants authority automatically; as opposed to authority being earned. (Interestingly, across all stages the best predictor of a person's career choice is the field of his or her most influential parent.) Sometimes not joining the family business or entering a certain career is considered as an affront to the elders in the family who might even declare such "rebels" as family "black sheep". Never forget that as embedded as these attitudes may be, it is never too late to give a fresh look to those that no longer serve you.

Threes will generally choose to resist change to their *status quo* when it is at all possible. They would most likely define happiness as the familiarity and the safety of *fitting in with those most like them*, in addition to the absence of conflict. Threes typically remain content by consistently choosing to be what

they “*should be*” (as opposed to what they *could be*) and by not making waves or in any way challenging rules (or authority figures, in their world, who make or enforce those rules).

Many Threes either are content with their lives, simply because they believe there is no other alternative or become programmed over time to automatically give in to their anxiety and thus refuse to leave that all too familiar comfort zone. In my practice, I have observed that those who seek treatment for Stage Three related issues, normally do so when the “book of rules” they have been living by no longer seems to provide them with solace, the answers or solutions they are seeking to a haunting problem. For example, an illness, severe loss or need to learn how to cope with some other involuntary change of circumstances (such as a spouse leaving or the rebellion of a child) can be quite a wake-up call. Sometimes as a first step in helping them work through these issues, the therapist guides them to find an exception or contradiction in their own rulebook that they can grasp, to begin the climb out of Stage Three in this area of life.

A definition of success at Stage Three is the ability to remain on the good side of anyone in a position of authority. Authoritarianism is the Stage Three definition of authority. A respected authority figure needs not have earned the authoritative quality required by those in the higher stages. For Threes, the authoritarian quality is what counts— where someone or something holds a “hammer over you”. Fear is the motivator. Threes often confuse fear with respect. For example, Fascist and dictatorial societies (e.g. Mussolini as well as communism as espoused by Marx, Lenin and Stalin) could not succeed if the citizens did not fear the ruler and look at their societal way of life through Stage Three eyes (or at least act as if they did) in order to survive. The genuine dictator *demand*s respect, rather than *command*s it, whether or not it is earned. Mob behavior where groupthink supersedes individual morals is also indicative of Stage Three. Likewise, bosses who operate from Stage Three generally use fear and intimidation to manage their subordinates. Quite often in authoritarian organizations, Stage Three bosses experience their own superiors in the same way— never questioning someone of a higher rank. For many organizations (e.g., military, police and fire departments and large factory type operations), this

form of “by the book” management is consciously perceived (and often rightly so) as the only way to accomplish the mission.

Threes have the most fun when doing the “*right*” activities exactly as they “*should*” be doing them. That is, fitting in by being like those in your peer group and feeling the support of whatever authority you (correctly or incorrectly) perceive as looking over your shoulder. An environment for fun and play is one that is safe, has a clear structure and unambiguous rules. Threes have a definite awareness of other people; and can usually relate well to members of their “tribe” who conform, have lots in common with them, similar beliefs and attitudes and follow the same rules. In fact, if there were an easy definition of those who are most content at Stage Three (either as normal children or adults by virtue of their Stage Three hooks); it would be *happy conformists* who live their lives by “Hoyle”.

Climbing Out of Stage Three: What You Need to Know

The good news is that as much as you choose to, it is a simple process (though not always an easy one) to move beyond this stage. The main challenge is to become aware that you are here and that there is something better for you. Then take a risk or two that challenges those stifling rules and beliefs that you realize you would be better off without. Often, just the awareness of a Stage Three hook (that undermines you) is all that is necessary to quickly move beyond it. That is the *simple* part. However, what may not be easy is the realization that you no longer fit in as well with certain friends, associates and family members.

As you climb, look for alternative ways to both see and resolve conflicts. Thus, if the way you have always done something is not getting you the result you want, be open to new ideas. Dare to be different. Go out of your way to accept others who are different from you. Work very hard at understanding their point of view and accept that other views exist and may be just as valid for someone else as yours are for you, even though you might not necessarily ever agree with them. This principle also applies to those with whom you used to have much more in common than you do now.

If living a fulfilling life is the product of the choices you make, then the more choices you have, the better. This is the greatest benefit to undoing your Stage Three hooks. Thus, for the same reason, do not insist on acceptance of your higher stage behavior from those who are operating at lower stages. They may not ever understand you. However, you can certainly choose to understand them. Allow that you sometimes will forget that old friends and family members cannot relate to certain things about you. Preserving valuable relationships often necessitates your giving those people a pass and accepting the reality that they are doing the best they can.

Make a special effort to look more to what people do than to what they say or *who* they are. If you tend to judge people by the groups to which they belong (e.g., ethnic, racial, political parties, economic status, age, religion, sex and sexual orientation, or some other ideology, etc.) make a special effort to look beyond those factors and to the individual, instead. Whenever you do that, you are climbing beyond Stage Three.

Go to page 165 for Stage Three strategies to use now, or read on and do the strategies later. At Stage Four, our unique identities unfold.

Sidebar 5**Why Do We Retain Stage Three Hooks?**

- You may prefer to operate out of Stage Three in certain areas of your life where that norm prevails. For example, if you were doing a stint in the military or any place where the decisions are made for you, Stage Three could be your chosen POS— even if temporarily.
- When helping your children develop conscience; teaching them —without question — to learn the basic rules of behavior for living in a civilized society and how to thrive in their school environment;
- In order to relate at times to certain family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers and others who may not even be in your life by choice;
- When you must follow someone else’s rules (e.g., on an plane or in an airport, in the hospital, with certain aspects of your job, when doing your income tax, etc.), regardless of whether or not you like or agree with them, a hook in Stage Three could be the godsend that helps you handle it all well until you can go back to living life your way —by your own POS;
- When you believe you must be in control; and others had better follow your rules —regardless of any “control freak” image you may exude.

CHAPTER 4

Stage Four

The Quest for Validation

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”

-Franklin Delano Roosevelt

FDR’s most recognized quote is actually a paraphrase of something that has been said by many notables in numerous ways throughout history. It is also the most important mantra that you need to remember about virtually all of your Stage Four hooks.

First, let’s first look at Stage Four at its best: Imagine yourself being as famous as you could ever want to be, and being wildly admired and applauded— perhaps even routinely receiving standing ovations! This admiration might come from those who are closest or most important to you (family, friends, neighbors, and others around you), merely by crowds of adoring strangers (as celebrities experience) or anything in between. The idea of *being* attractive to others, *being* a celebrity or a *being* a highly popular luminary in your field or social circles are just a few examples of the many possible versions of the ultimate reward (or perceived reward) for a Stage Four POS. These are highly appealing feelings and experiences, for sure. However, whether they are possible as well as the amount of energy you expend toward achieving them are choices only you can make. While these feelings are always open to you for experiencing on the level of fantasy (and you certainly don’t have to be Walter Mitty to have them), what is it that you do in your life to get all of that admiration and recognition you tell yourself you need?

Here is the other major Stage Four challenge: Never judge yourself negatively about these Stage Four hooks. Just know what you are doing and consciously notice whether the reward is worth the effort. Either way, I encourage you to resolve to accept *yourself* at least as much as you want those others to accept you.

At Stage Three, you naturally and tightly attach yourself to rules and “shoulds”, by which you live your life, in exchange for feelings of security. At Stage Four, many of those rules no longer deliver you that emotional security, so the natural tendency changes, prompting you to start questioning things and exploring new directions. While “breaking out of the pack” is highly desirable and often feels liberating, it also brings new challenges right to the surface--- such as anxieties about *being* accepted that were not major issues when you “blended in” at Stage Three. This self-consciousness triggers fear of such things as rejection, looking foolish, failure, and isolation; along with all of our most common insecurities. These become the core anxieties that both constitute and underlie our Stage Four hooks (e.g., the preoccupation with love and approval from others and the drive to be “perfect”, etc.).

What other people think of you is in fact none of your business. Furthermore somebody else’s opinion of you is one of those things you can least control. Some people will like you because they see you as docile or in their eyes inferior to them in some way. Others could hate you, because they believe you are more successful or attractive than they are. Thus, how much of your life you wish to invest in what others think of you; pleasing and impressing others; being recognized, honored and /or accepted become important questions to ask yourself. For Fours, these things can be all consuming.

Stage Four is the normal stage of development during adolescence and up until early adulthood— from the ages of approximately 11 or 12 to 21. The psychological task of adolescence is to become secure enough within yourself, to establish a solid identity as a *unique* individual. That uniqueness is a major ingredient of your foundation as a mature adult, that under the best of circumstances you will build upon for the rest of your life. Typical adolescents are often obsessed with peer approval, fitting in to groups they select, learning how to make themselves attractive to those they wish to attract and most importantly gaining acceptance. These things provide a ready-made conflict between being a unique individual versus being like everyone else. Much of the Stage Four conflict, like adolescence itself, is about determining whether to go with what is expected of you (which is typical of Stage Three) or to go your own way. The latter will sometimes work for you and lead you to good things. Other times it will not (and perhaps back to familiar and deeply embedded rules or other directions/consequences).

Early love relationships are an important part of the adolescent ritual. In fact, it's been said that a perfectly sane human being goes through something akin to insanity under only two circumstances in life: during adolescence and when *falling in love*. Ironically, both of these are Stage Four challenges.

Parenting your adolescent child through Stage Four still involves setting limits while dutifully enforcing them. However, the Stage Four balancing act that most challenges *parents* is then to step back and watchfully allow your adolescent to make his or her own mistakes, while still being available as their most valuable resource. Many parents of adolescents find this to be a quite difficult paradox. Kids will actually come to you as a resource for support, guidance and information; but only to the extent that you let go a bit and give them the space and freedom to choose to do that.

At the same time, however, it's important for parents to administer effective discipline that focuses on addressing any behavior that crosses the line. This is in contrast to Stage Two where setting limits and consistently enforcing them are certainly crucial; but the "letting go" part, of course, is not yet age appropriate. Those whose POS as a parent is at Stage Three, where they rule in a highly authoritarian, but not authoritative manner (of course, there are degrees of this) have the most trouble with their adolescents who may have outgrown and thus reject that parenting style. In other words, parents who relate to their adolescents from Stage Three can find dealing with their Stage Four kids akin to pure hell! A typical adolescent response to such parenting is either to withdraw or act out; seeking whomever they can find outside the house to provide that much-desired modeling and validation. Depending on such factors as the degree of alienation from the home as well as the often-random resources available to the adolescent seeker, this can either be quite a growth inducing experience, an extremely destructive one or anything in between.

I have frequently been asked about the main consequences for teenagers smoking marijuana. Aside from the obvious effects of the drug itself, it is important to note that marijuana often takes away the opportunity for them to resolve conflict by anesthetizing the anxieties that are developmentally normal. This allows teens to escape from facing or dealing with them. Adolescence is the ideal time to learn how

to handle conflict, since making mistakes then is normally far less consequential than it will be later in life. Perhaps that is why conflict *is* the natural order of things at Stage Four.

A good example of handling conflict is public speaking. This usually turns up high on the list (often in first place) when surveys are done of “what people fear the most”. Public speaking anxiety is really a Stage Four hook. Your fear of and self-consciousness about rejection, ridicule or negative judgment by those who hear you speak, at worst could convince you to avoid those situations at the expense of a higher goal. The same is also true for other varieties of performance anxieties, as well — whether manifested by taking a job interview or even with sex.

To the extent that you act on your Stage Four hooks or Stage Four becomes your POS as an adult: anxiety, self-doubt and other forms of insecurity could unfortunately become your biggest life challenges as well as your principal (and generally negative) motivators. On the other hand, you could become as highly conceited and braggadocios as for example, Donald Trump, is about all the many things he owns and has accomplished. For some Fours, life can be about others admiring them. Stage Four hooks might have the power to torment you to crave being loved and approved of by others---no matter how insignificant or inappropriate those people may actually be. (That expedition for approval usually begins with parents and teachers. It can then move to peers at all levels---friends, co-workers, neighbors, eventually your children and virtually anyone else on your radar screen.) There is no limit as to how much of your life, to the exclusion of everything else, you can devote to what virtually anyone you know of or who knows of you — either personally or by reputation — may think of you. (For instance, a gay person who fears “coming out” might choose an opposite sex partner to spend his or her life with merely to blend in or as an alternative to perceived rejection from family or friends.)

Fours also tend to obsess about such things as being ostracized by a group (or even society) and what they can do to be seen by others as successful. At Stage Four, anxieties about failing can cut very deeply into how you see yourself. For example; an ended marriage, a financial setback, a lost job or inability to reach an important goal can cause you to overreact by labeling yourself as “a complete failure”. Berating

yourself globally may then begin a vicious cycle that affects not just your self-image, but also your ability and willingness to get back into the ring and try again. In extreme cases, the harsh setbacks in the struggles at Stage Four can even trigger a tendency to give up on self esteem altogether and revert back to a POS at Stage Two (e.g., extreme risk taking , profoundly rebellious behavior and/or not caring what anyone at all thinks, etc.).

Self-esteem issues are generally little more than Stage Four hooks. In the best of all worlds, you would establish a foundation of self-confidence to build upon by early adolescence. It is during those years that you would both learn and understand (whether or not consciously) that the “self” is much too vast, complex and full of strengths, weaknesses, contradictions and hooks to all seven stages to ever be able to evaluate as though it were merely one thing. In addition to anxiety, symptoms such as depression (when not of the medical variety) are generally Stage Four hooks as well. Stress is that “*what if*” fear. *What if* whatever I dread (e.g., lose my status, job or relationship, fail at something important, etc.) did occur? We popularly call it stress, but anxiety, depression and self-doubt are really the labels that are more appropriate.

At Stage Four, how you perceive what others think of you has a strong influence on your own self-perception (or what you think of yourself). If the assumption is that others will think less of you, then it is likely that you will have a tendency to think less of yourself. In the extreme, your hooks in Stage Four can even cause self-doubt to become a way of life and negatively color *every* aspect of it.

Thus, peers and peer validation are perceived as overly important at Stage Four. Fours (much like Threes, but for different reasons) still have difficulty truly in tolerating those who are different. So you will tend to *select* friends who are most like you and then often do whatever is necessary to please them, even at the cost of your own integrity.(In addition, at Stage Three, those around you are less likely to be people you have actually or consciously chosen.) Acceptance by the group you choose to be a part of is often what you consider an essential goal, until you reach it. Then a clique mentality can develop, where you might become quite enmeshed with Stage Three like groupthink. Since feeling loved and approved of

by others can become so strongly tied to your own self-acceptance, shame and embarrassment can feel especially devastating and trigger even stronger feelings of inferiority with regard to others.

One typical Stage Four reaction to someone with whom you are in conflict is to mount a global and personal attack on that person rather than focusing on the problem that is at the center of the conflict. Another is to act rather unassertively and rush to compliance or avoid the situation altogether. In either case, the real issue would be glossed over and remain unresolved. Fours often find that the act of confronting someone assertively--- or worse yet, the prospect of being rejected or berated by them can ignite a level of anxiety that transcends most other conflicts.

During adolescents, there is often a tendency to act in a cruel manner by berating others as a means of artificially pumping up your own self-esteem (or sometimes to be part of a group). To have self-acceptance without having to berate anyone else is to say that you have passed through Stage Four in this aspect of life. If you are part of a family or group that operates in Stage Three, be aware of how you may sometimes have (or had) to *put yourself down* to Stage Three from the higher stages in order to blend in. This same phenomenon can also apply to old friendships, sibling relationships, people you work with or a peer group that you have outgrown emotionally.

Happiness at Stage Four is belonging and feeling loved, honored or at least recognized and accepted by those whom you value the most. (For many celebrities, that even includes the general public!) Since your unique identity is still a work in progress at Stage Four, anything that triggers feelings of insecurity can feel especially painful. So in a way similar to Twos, Fours will often “be whatever they have to be” to gain acceptance or respect. When Fours lie or mislead, they characteristically do it to impress others, unlike Twos who lie to deceive and for personal gain. Many Fours live to go out of their way to seek prestige and fame; and love to feel popular and superior, even if they actually realize deep down that they are merely seeking a temporary state of mind.

Wanting to *be* an actor in order to *be* famous (an ultimate Stage Four fantasy), as opposed to wanting to act (because it is your talent, art and passion) is an example of Stage Four thinking. The same can be said for the Stage Four attitude toward love and work. Fours are much more concerned with *being loved*, than with *loving another*. A teacher, for example, at Stage Four would characteristically be less interested in teaching than in *being* a teacher (for the stature and position it provides). A Stage Four politician is more interested in *being admired* and having high popularity than doing something meaningful for the people who elected him or her to power. Thus, the most gratifying part of the job is the prestige and admiration by constituents and others who are impressed by the office. I have seen many doctors and lawyers, for example, in my practice that disliked the work they did but were hooked on the prestige factor of their professions or even the degree of acceptance from their parents that they perceived for doing a certain type of work (i.e., *being* something rather than *doing* something). I once coined the lighthearted term *beaholic* to describe this all too common Stage Four trait.

In the workplace, Fours tend to pay far more attention to how their contributions affect their own self-esteem, than the impact those contributions might have to the larger world outside of themselves. Gaining praise is often a top priority. Wise bosses who recognize the Fours among their subordinates use extra praise and validation as a major motivator. Fours work best *either for or as* a “benevolent dictator” type who motivates by setting up an environment characterized by warmth, affection and the feeling of “family” as opposed to the climate of fear that is the prime motivator in Stage Three type organizations. Likewise, Fours who follow charismatic leaders are often unrealistically idealistic and do so as a way to belong and feel cared for, rather than out of the fear of whatever may be the consequences of leaving “the reservation” (as in Stage Three).

As it is in Stage Three, religion is sometimes a remedy for conflict and insecurity. However, unlike it often is at Stage Three, the purpose of religion is not to avoid “punishment”, but to get something positive. Many Fours find such things as prayer and meditation to be excellent anecdotes for their anxiety. This might be merely the result of the relaxation that meditation and prayer provide or there can now be a deeper purpose achieved by handing your problems over to a loving God or higher power. In addition,

religious communities and houses of worship often provide that much needed community where acceptance is a given. Fours may also experience a rift between their own developing values and those of an organized religion. At Stage Four, it feels natural to start what for some is a life long quest of questioning the values that have been instilled in you that you would not have previously dared to question.

Stage Four hooks can trigger illusion. For example, you may see things you are anxious about as being far bigger and more threatening than they really are. Things you are depressed about can feel far more catastrophic, things that challenge your self-confidence far more difficult than they need to be, and things that put you under stress as being far more consequential than the reality of the situation.

At Stage Four, you are still not yet in command of your life. You are still a passenger, not yet the driver. You may find yourself having at least as much difficulty tolerating certain quirks in others as you have tolerating things about yourself. Fours often suffer a great deal. Examples of this include; worry over appearances, feeling badly about things that are hardly important in the grand scheme of things and even turning your own anger toward something or someone else around and toward yourself. Thus, Stage Four hooks can sometimes even trigger your tendencies to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.

To the extent that a marriage or love relationship is hooked in Stage Four, its foundation is insecurity. Issues such as jealousy, the constant questioning of how much your partner loves you, and sexual performance anxiety can sadly overpower the positives. Sometimes these relationships amount to little more than an alternative to loneliness or the insecurities of being single, rather than genuine expressions of desire for the other person. In other words, the relationship may not be very fulfilling; but there is sometimes too much insecurity to leave or possibly even think of broaching the issues head---on that could “upset the apple cart”. Sometimes there is that tendency to be a chronic “pleaser” who is filled with resentment at a partner who doesn’t seem to reciprocate, yet unable to broach the situation in a way that could go toward resolving it.

Paradoxically, many relationships between Fours also thrive, when both partners' issues are complimentary, making them able to thrive together. Most romance novels as well as just about every MGM musical contain at least one Stage Four story line (e.g., jealousy or unrequited love). Fortunately, when both partners are at Stage Four and one begins to climb, the other may also be open to trying new attitudes, behaviors and lifestyle changes that could facilitate growth to the higher stages together — both individually and as a couple. This degree of flexibility is rarely possible at the lower stages.

As you will see as we get to the higher stages, it is much more than merely common to be quite evolved in all aspects of life, yet still have major Stage Four hooks. In fact, an adult without Stage Four hooks could be the rarest human specimen there is.

Climbing Out of Stage Four: What You Need to Know

The very definition of climbing out of Stage Four is to learn how to face down and let go of your fears, anxieties and insecurities. Make a commitment to dismantle each hook that in any way diminishes the quality of your life. The main apparatuses for your climb to highest stages are the self-*confidence* to succeed as well as self-*acceptance* that does not diminish, even when you are not successful.

Rising above or mastering anxious/dreaded situations not only feels great---once you do it, but also constitutes success in conquering the lions share of your Stage Four hooks. It is here where we learn that taking risks which at the very most could result in rejection, for example, is indeed a “no lose” situation. Suppose the idea of asking someone out on a date produces anxiety for you? If you do it anyway and they accept, taking that risk the next time would be a bit easier. That’s a no-brainer. However, each time your risk results in that “dreaded” rejection, you also win! In this case, you win by learning that you really *can* handle rejection; and *unpleasant as it may be, you will survive it*. Soon, you will no longer fear it very much. Taking prudent risks and asserting yourself can very quickly bring about a major transformation for you in important areas of life; but never taking the risk is the only *guarantee* there is that you will *not* get

what you want. As Mark Twain said, “At the end of your life you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did”.

Often we fear what we simply do not understand. It is therefore important to learn about every one of your hooks, and how others---who may once have been in your shoes, have successfully handled them. There is no shortage of reading and audio material for virtually every issue in existence. Some highly effective self-help resources are included in the Appendix section.

Many families and peer groups unwittingly provide a breeding ground for low self-confidence and avoidance. When this happens, the consequences of your hooks can continue to get steeper. Thus, getting the help you need outside of your familiar circles is often an important first step. Psychotherapy, personal coaching and group peer support along with self-help are the best interventions to help adults with their Stage Four climb.

Anxiety, sometimes *feels* too intense to permit the kind of risk-taking and self-assertion that the climb often requires. Therefore, strategies designed to zero in on the anxiety (as well as depression resulting from such feelings as helplessness) directly, are most effective; and can have wide ripple effects that positively influence every aspect of your life. In the case of anxiety, hooks to Stage Four will be removed by confronting each and every situation that makes you anxious, as well as the beliefs and attitudes you harbor that keep your anxieties in place. Even conditions such as agoraphobia (the literal definition of which is “fear of the marketplace”) in actuality is the fear of leaving a safe environment, due to the irrational belief that some vague misfortune will occur that you will be unable to handle.

Discomfort anxiety is the tendency to become angry, anxious, depressed or otherwise stressed out when things are difficult or frustrating (such as the tendency to berate and undermine yourself). These, like all Stage Four struggles can be effectively overcome with the right strategies (see Part III, page 167 for starters) and a commitment to use them..

It should be noted that if you are unable to remove your hooks, despite getting the help you need and committing yourself to using self-help strategies to make the climb (such as those in this book), there could be a medical reason such as chemical depression or anxiety or a thought disorder that needs to be *treated* medically. Psychotropic drugs, such as anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications, can be invaluable for endogenous or chemically related symptoms. Depression and anxiety can feel quite similarly, whether or not they are rooted in a chemical imbalance. This needs to be diagnosed by a professional. However, medication alone will not resolve your underlying conflicts, beliefs or attitudes themselves. Once the medical issues are evaluated and treated, you can once again expect the strategies for working on your hooks to deliver results.

If the world is a classroom, psychotherapy is tutoring. There are many excellent and well-proven types of therapeutic interventions for feelings of anxiety, anger, depression, isolation and other fears (such as of disease or death) or even phobias. So never, hesitate to get professional help to learn skills that you have not been able to master in that classroom of life. This includes some basic skills in conflict resolution, coping with anxiety, and assertiveness training. Life is full of conflicts. Thus, to the extent that you routinely allow conflicts to defeat you, life could always feel like a struggle.

Remember, Stage Four fantasies can be quite compelling. If you crave adoration from others, your challenge is to determine consciously just how much of your life you are willing to devote toward manifesting it. (Furthermore, that approval may or may not even be possible to get, no matter what you do.) However, what definitely is possible from now on is to give *yourself* at least as much of that acceptance. Then, what others think of you will not be nearly as important.

Stage, 4 strategies beginning on page 167 can be done now or later on at your convenience.

At Stage Five, the balance of our life roles becomes center stage.

Sidebar 6**Why We Retain Stage Four Hooks (and when they might come in handy):**

- A certain small degree of anxiety may be good for you in that it could help keep you on your toes in certain situations. Many professional performers will say that *some* anxiety gives them a positive edge with their performance. You may have noticed, that same phenomena when taking a job interview, for example.
- Do not confuse anxiety with fear, even though they might feel the same way. Fear can navigate you through what you perceive as a truly dangerous situation. Fear can be a life saving emotion when it is used to help insure your survival as opposed to stifling you. When there is an actual danger, fear can both alert us and arm our bodies to fight or flee most efficiently. No matter how far beyond Stage Four you have climbed, you will still have access to that channel if you need it. Anxiety is more about worry. Likewise, anxiety — a Stage Four hook can sometimes alert us to a situation that cries out for more attention than you are giving it.
- When “in love,” your Stage Four hooks may add to the romantic feelings you experience. As with all hooks, as long as you are aware of what is driving you, your choice prevails. Then you are free to adopt any relationship POS you choose.
- When you need to use salesmanship skills strictly and deliberately to impress others or to make an appearance,
- You can always listen to your Stage Four hooks and choose to take the safe road. Thus, whenever you decide it is in your best interest to forgo what is in your heart, honor that decision as well— until it becomes clear that there is a better alternative.

CHAPTER 5

Stage Five

Balancing Your Roles

“Be open to everything, but attached to nothing.”

---The Buddha

Vito Corleone (of “The Godfather” fame) is a gripping fictional character because of his stark complexity. He is certainly a Two in his line of work (organized crime boss), and had a very definite and strict set of rules (Stage Three) that he not only followed himself, but also effectively insisted that virtually every one else in his orbit live by as well (e.g., “women and children can be careless, but not men”, etc.). However, much of his appeal is in his Stage Five characteristics. He could be anyone’s uncle or next-door neighbor — certainly not, what you think of as a hoodlum or thug. He handled his various roles — husband, father, grandfather, friend and breadwinner — as well as anyone could. What makes him such a memorable character is that he seems so *normal*, that his contradictions make him come across as charming and admirable.

In our society, a Stage Five POS is what we pretty much consider to be that of a “normal adult.” At Stage Five, relationships are now more mature. You are capable of experiencing true intimacy with another person without being preoccupied with the love and approval that comes in your direction. Since you are able to reveal much more of your true nature to those close to you — including your spouse, significant other, family and close friends— without constantly fearing rejection or judgment about what they think of you, true intimacy can develop and thrive. You can now have deep bonds without becoming too enmeshed, submerged or obsessed with them. You no longer expect your partner, friends, children or others around you to be or become clones of yourself. However, the *role* in your life that a relationship plays--- including the void or slot it fills--- can be inordinately important. At Stage Five, those roles can be as or even more critical than the people who fill them. For example, if you want a love relationship, you

might make it a mission to go out and meet suitable candidates in order to fill that void. Then, you might move toward becoming involved with the one that you liked the best (as opposed to considering lasting involvement because you believe you have met the person you wish to spend the rest of your life with). “Summer romances” provide a need for some involvement for a period of time when you are available and summer jobs to turn free time into cash are common examples of what might be some of our first deliberate Stage Five endeavors.

If the ultimate Stage Four *fantasy* makes you famous, the definitive Stage Five dream is to be rich, so you will never be beholden to anyone unless you choose to be.

As late adolescence morphs into early adulthood, you gradually begin to reach Stage Five, in different areas of your life. At Stage Five, you can now be comfortable in your own skin. You are also in a position to have a richer and deeper sense of security. With that, comes much awaited feelings of self-acceptance and a better recognition of your strengths and weaknesses. The idea of taking risks is much less intimidating than it ever could have been in Stage Four. You have taken certain risks. Some have not turned out well, but you realize that you have survived; and been able to use your failures as sources of insight, as opposed to hindsight-based excuses for berating yourself. Therefore, you now see the wisdom and value of leaving your comfort zone at times in order to flourish, in almost any desired aspect of your life. Nevertheless, to the degree that your POS is at Stage Five and whether or not you consciously acknowledge it, you are likely to think of yourself as *the sum total of your roles*.

Stage Five is the most neutral or dispassionate of all the stages, emotionally. Neutral, in that when making a life change (i.e., putting something into your life or taking something out of it), Fives are the most likely to objectively evaluate how it fits in with everything else and maintains their life balance. For example, when deciding whether to buy a new house, it is our Stage Five self that runs the numbers to determine whether the purchase is financially practical. Other stages tend to be governed more by desire or emotions, be they positive or negative.

Chores that you do not particularly look forward to doing, but that still need to be done are excellent examples of functions that are performed best at Stage Five. For instance, when commuting to work, you are probably operating out of Stage Five — in the role of traveler — as a means to an end. Managing your portfolio (for most people who lack an intrinsic interest in such things), backing up your computer or walking your dog on a cold rainy day are examples of this. You might say we need a Stage Five frame of mind in order to do things that need doing, whether we particularly enjoy them or not.

Sigmund Freud's description of the normal adult is one who is able "to love and work" (Erickson, 1963). This is where Freud's developmental theory stopped. That definition as paraphrased by many others has come to mean keeping our roles clear and in balance. It should be noted that Freud will always be known for many great things, but being a happy man is not one of them. At Stage Five, keeping your roles in balance and problem free is your definition of winning; but for reasons we will explore in the two higher stages, Stage Five often falls short on delivering happiness that is of a *lasting* nature.

A Stage Five marriage or love relationship generally takes on the function of filling various roles as well (e.g., lover, friend, co-parent, tennis partner, confidant, a good roommate, travel companion, etc.). In fact, arranged marriages (which are still common in some cultures and with few exceptions were the rule almost everywhere until early in the last century) are an old Stage Five solution to the problem of finding a suitable mate. A more modern counterpart is a dating service or internet-matching techniques that look for role compatibility first with the hope that attraction, passion and real connection between the partners will then follow.

Couples with Stage Five marriages, typically feel a void once they become empty nesters. Sometimes this will put an unexpected strain on a marriage. A Stage Five solution may be to substitute grandchildren and find a way to live vicariously through them. However, to *command respect without demanding it* and to accept that your adult children will be different than you is finally possible at Stage Five. There is much more difficulty with and rigidity about things such as this in the lower stages.

You can certainly see how a couple that related well when each had a love relationship POS at Stage Four (e.g., providing each other with validity and a sense of security) could be prone to growing apart at Stage Five. Many relationships and marriages that were never previously at risk may stop working for either partner when one climbs to Stage Five, and the roles become different and perhaps less compatible (or a partner outgrows the need for constant validation and realizes that the relationship provides little else).

Likewise, work fulfills the breadwinner role with external rewards such as money, acceptable hours, good working conditions (e.g., being able to afford the type of lifestyle you desire, an easy commute, etc.) and compatibility with your other roles as being your prime motivators. To the extent that your career POS is at Stage Five, you would probably choose to be spending your time in other ways; assuming you did not need the money or other things such as benefits, the group affiliation and connections that work provides. Thus, your work is not yet a part of your soul or life purpose. Enjoying your work at Stage Five is optional, no matter how good at it you are. Internal feelings of passion for the work you do, is not yet a requirement for Fives.

Boredom and discontent with your job or career is extremely common. When someone asks why you do your type of work, a Stage Five answer is likely to be “because that’s my job” or to cite the money, pension plan or other tangible rewards and/or lack of negatives your job provides you. (For example, if you were a Stage Five motivated writer, your reason for doing a certain project is not so much because you have something you feel you must say, as it is for what you are paid or as a means to get recognition and possibly additional work.). Elementary school teachers strictly at Stage Five will most likely be motivated more by summers off, the benefit package, shorter hours and job security — than the opportunity to influence and shape the lives of the children they teach. Teachers who are Fives see students as a means to the job benefits, rather than the other way around. The idea of leaving a job you do not particularly like, but which provides more money and benefits than you could get elsewhere might feel unthinkable (or at least be a conflict) at Stage Five; unless there is so much negative residue from that job, that it taints other areas of your life or your overall sense of well being.

You can take on any number of roles, at Stage Five at the same time---for example: leader, follower, admirer, student, mentor, hero, or skeptic. Even hobbies take on a role you want filled in your life, such as that of killing excess time or providing a social outlet. Exercise helps you to maintain your role as a fit and healthy person. Sporting events, perhaps the role of providing a family activity for Sunday afternoons; and vacations can fulfill the role of helping you “recharge your batteries”. These are all examples of fine motives for all of these activities. However, the degree of your actual enjoyment of them is not necessarily factored in at Stage Five. Thus, a Stage Five vacation might be visiting a country you have never been to, seeing and busily doing as much as time permits, even though a heartfelt interest or curiosity for the place is not necessarily there. Another example is going to a resort you never really cared to visit, because you need somewhere to go for vacation and it’s a bargain.

Fives may still have a strong need for uniformity and status quo. Voids in your life (caused by things that are beyond your control or created by an empty role) can be quite troubling. For example, going through a divorce, separation or the death of a loved one; loss of job, career, change in financial or social status; or ostracism by an important group to which you belong can trigger a panic surrounding the possibility that you and your existence are becoming unglued. Despite how content you may *usually* be, a major setback can feel as though your entire life is falling apart. When this happens, you might temporarily plunge back into Stage Four and experience many of the same symptoms and feelings of anxiety, depression and anger that are typical of Stage Four conflict and thus familiar to you. However, during your most reflective moments, you know you have been here before and will bounce back as soon as the crisis is over (as you may not have been able to realize or do--- without difficulty--- as a Four). Therefore, even a full blown emotional crisis is generally shorter, tends to feel much less devastating and easier to resolve (e.g., when a role becomes fulfilled again or you learn that you can cope with the void).

The important others at Stage Five include heroes and mentors — usually those who are more advanced in your same field, or who have already achieved certain goals for which you are now striving. Success, happiness and fulfillment at Stage Five, normally result when you believe that you are handling all of your

roles well, there are no major problems to deal with and you are getting all you are entitled to for your efforts. Fives often speak of the good times as “feeling so normal!”

Spirituality now has the capability of becoming more of an individual matter. Often there is a spiritual element to your relationships — love or otherwise. There is also a heartfelt awareness of things and causes in the world that are greater than you are. Unlike in the lower stages, the *higher being* you worship or your *higher self* is much more than an authority to fear or to please. You can now truly feel this as a source of love and benevolence. There is now the capacity to give some thought as to what in spiritual terms your place on earth — in the big picture sense — might be. However, too often, other aspects of life (e.g., your responsibilities) may conflict with your ability to follow that inner voice (which does not become an essential priority for you until Stage Six).

At Stage Five, your religious values can be complex. Your own values and those of your religion can coexist in certain areas yet conflict in others. In addition, you now have a tolerance for those whose thinking is radically different from yours, as long as it does not upset your role balance — which is still a major vulnerability. However, spirituality might also be merely another role that you experience in a neutral sense, as external and without the inner feelings to match the activities or practices.

The principles of most organized religions are generally a source of goodness, guidance and wisdom. Places of worship often fulfill the role of community; and can provide much support when you are grieving over a death, in crisis or even as a place to celebrate a major life milestone (e.g., a wedding, baptism, bar mitzvah or child’s confirmation, etc.). It is common for Fives to move in and out of their spiritual community, as the role that community plays becomes more or less needed. Remember — this is all within the definition of what is normal, meaning the most *commonly* practiced in our society.

At Stage Five, you can now recognize and appreciate that growth and learning often comes from a difference of opinion or even through mixed messages — something that is much more difficult or impossible to tolerate at the lower stages. However, when your roles conflict with each other or certain

ones become incompatible, anxiety may still be the result. In my practice, I have had many people at this stage ponder the question: “Which role (or who) is the “real me?” Another question often asked as part of the struggle with Stage Five issues is that one Peggy Lee immortalized in her standard, “Is That All There Is?”

Fives can be very much like the plate spinners and master jugglers. Consider all of your roles in life as plates that need to be kept in the air at the same time. As long as they stay up there, life is good. In some of the roles you play, you may be kind. Others may necessitate that you to be rather cold. There is no limit as to how many personas you can have in Stage Five (just as you can have many roles). One necessary skill in keeping it altogether is pick the right persona or sub-personality to optimize the role you are playing. Even Captain Bleigh — the tyrannical captain of the *Bounty of Mutiny on the Bounty* fame — was acknowledged by history to have been a very loving father, while he was still one of the cruelest ship captains of all time.

Life today can become extremely busy for people with many different roles, such as an involved career, activities with professional organizations, hobbies and various other avocations, church or synagogue and raising children. They can all represent different needs; but as those roles grow, Fives often experience life as overwhelming to the point where enjoying them all— each of which alone you might find to be quite nourishing and enjoyable— becomes difficult. Thus, when overwhelm sets in, things you once thrived on can inadvertently become reduced to mere obligations (or even stressors); and enjoying them becomes a luxury for which you no longer have time.

Your political affiliations at Stage Five are most likely to be with the party you believe will nurture the roles you play. In other words, you may vote for one party because they offer you tax cuts — and more money in your pocket — or the party that provides the best government entitlement programs, depending on your needs. The principles or ideology that your political party stands for is not nearly as important to you as what it will deliver to you and yours directly. Thus, you may fancy yourself a conservative because of the tax cuts you receive or a liberal because of the government programs you like.

If Stage Five is the norm in our society, it is fitting that the ideal Stage Five government is a representative democracy. You may make a choice as to who represents you based on whatever reasons or emotions you choose to follow, without necessarily having to take the time to understand all the issues in depth or actually develop positions on them.

When affluence, a comfortable decent family life, an adequate community, religious involvement, the demands you put on yourself to “keep it all together,” and all the staples of what we have come to believe constitute a good life just don’t seem to add up to fulfillment; you may find yourself looking for something more. That something is what we will find at Stage Six, which beyond the boundaries of what is merely normal.

Your Climb Out of Stage Five: What You Need to Know

At Stage Five, you are far less self-absorbed than in any of the lower stages. Thus, you are now freer to pay more attention to your hooks in the *higher* stages. Think of those higher stage hooks as your potential or as glimpses of what life can soon be like. When the human potential movement of the 1960s and 1970s took hold, the people it served the most, were Fives, who by societal standards had it all (e.g., a well functioning career, family life and relationship), but knew there was a richer, more fulfilling inner existence to be had. In reality, what they were looking for was the ladder to climb from Stage Five to the two higher stages. Such things as encounter groups and other types of personal growth opportunities were created to facilitate and encourage the steps to help them to leave their comfort zones. The result was often one or more major life changes as well as a litany of new empowering attitudes. Long-term love relationships as well as career activities would now have to provide deeper levels of satisfaction and fulfillment, heretofore not necessarily a mandatory requirement. For many Fives, a radical makeover was in order, while for others a tweaking was all that was necessary. Most interestingly, all of this was accomplished by simply and non-judgmentally asking each seeker, “*What do you want to do?*” The next

step was to provide support and encouragement to *go ahead and do it*. In other words, keep the roles that work; and make whatever changes are necessary — major or minor — to the ones that do not. Along the way, it is just as important to change your attitudes and philosophy of life so that you did not find yourself going backwards in that direction of unfulfillment. The result was a new world that will never allow things to be the way they were: opportunity equality for women and minorities, and permission for everyone to follow their dreams.

The Buddha said it best in what is arguably the most powerful statement ever made about how to maximize your potential, *“Be open to everything, but attached to nothing”*. This is perhaps the greatest core attitude you could ever have for climbing to the highest stages. Climbing out of Stage Five simply involves letting go of the roles you keep merely because you are attached to them, and trading them for ones that ignite your passion. Many are fortunate enough to find a mentor or coach to help them do this, to the extent that change is what they want and help is needed to achieve it. For others, psychotherapy or coaching is an answer.

The best therapy for Stage Five issues zeros in on improving higher levels of functioning, rather than merely focusing on personal and emotional problems. In other words, it helps you to follow the Buddha, in making choices and seeing them through to fruition. The process of choice and change along with support to see it through enables you to move to the coveted Stage Six, which is the first of the two *target stages*.

A few words about psychotherapy: Over the years, I have trained thousands of therapists and have found that virtually all do best or “specialize” in one stage or the other —whether or not they even realize it. Some therapists do really well with Stage Three issues, some with Stage Four issues and others with Stage Five issues. Those who are best with Stage Five issues are most comfortable in helping you to explore and facilitate major life changes you choose (as opposed to those you have to make) and the types of problems you may need to face along the way (which are often somewhat similar to those in

Stage Four). So picking the right therapist to work with in this case is crucial. Several websites and other resources to help you do this are provided in the Appendix section.

Some people leave one marriage or love relationship (whether or not by their own choice), only immediately to rebound into another one, or quickly replace one lost job with another similar one — without even briefly pausing to do a bit of self-exploration to see if a bigger life change is in the offing. Fives often erroneously see the act of replacing one role with another, as a permanent solution to the problem. Whereas, by reevaluating the bigger picture you are more likely to arrive at a much better and comprehensive solution than you would by merely switching roles or players. This is the principal reason why rebound relationships rarely work on the level of long-term fulfillment. Part of the climb to Stage Six is learning to tolerate the emotional pain you may feel when there is that void in your life, until you can replace the missing piece with what you *really* desire. That way you will break your pattern of just settling for whatever is available to you right now in order to end the discomfort caused by the void itself. Most importantly, you will have given yourself something much more than just another Band-Aid to get you through a difficult situation.

Many have described life at Stage Five as literally one thing occurring after another with little to tie it together. To get to Stage Five, your task was to reduce depression, anxiety, stress, and anger, to increase self-confidence and frustration tolerance so that you can function in your chosen roles. When you begin questioning what it all means, you are ready for the climb to Stage Six, where that understanding will become apparent.

Go to page 170 for Stage Five strategies to use now or read on to Stage Six, where we rise above our roles.

Sidebar 7**Why We Retain Stage Five Hooks (and when they might come in handy):**

- Whenever the reality of your status quo and the roles it requires blend into your life well,

- When you must or choose to be involved in activities that you find to be emotionally neutral at best (e.g., doing chores, dealing with certain family matters, traveling or paying the bills),

- When interacting with people you would never choose to be around under other circumstances,

- When handling obligations and unpleasant tasks or assignments, such as aspects of being a student (like studying for an exam or writing a dissertation) sometimes requires,

- When it is your choice to focus on such external rewards as earning money and other benefits to the exclusion of what you might prefer *doing*,

- When you need to adopt a persona in order to get something done that is not necessarily in sync with your preference.

CHAPTER 6

Stage Six*When Passion Takes Over*

“I have learned that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with an unexpected success....”

—Henry David Thoreau

Think about our evolutionary process as human beings. For much of our existence, we worked to survive, and married to procreate and share our chores. When there was free time, we would be likely to sleep and do other things for our ultimate survival. Instead of spending time hand-washing clothes, we are now free to watch a football game while the machine does it for us.

The quest for enjoyment and fulfillment as we know it today is relatively new in our evolution; but it is still quite an understatement to merely say this great concept has caught on! Today we ideally marry for love, and strive to do a type of work that is most personally gratifying. An entire book could be written (and many have been) simply of things we do and industries that have been conceived with no other goal but to gratify, fulfill and make us happy. This now is all possible (to the extent it is), simply because we have the time, skills and resources to give attention to those parts of ourselves that seek higher levels of gratification. In the last century, fulfillment has certainly become even more of an issue for many than survival; and one could argue that this is the result of the *Stage Climbing* process of civilization itself!

So where does your own climb optimally lead you? Fulfillment is one definition of our frame of mind at Stage Six. Our passions are what help us find this zone within ourselves. Stage Six is the first of the two stages in *Stage Climbing* that we recognize as being targets worthy of your aspirations in just about any area of life. Life is a wonderful occasion; *rising to that occasion* means becoming bigger than your roles. That is the breakthrough to Stage Six; it could even be a new and apt definition of positive mental health.

Stage Five has your roles defining you. At Stage Six, all of that changes. You know you are something different from the sum of your life roles — something much greater. Your *inner* voice now rules. The roles you play now revolve around you instead of becoming, controlling or defining you. This is the most essential distinction between Stages 5 and 6. Your unique passions and the self-permission to be guided by them are what launch you to Stage Six. Instead of shifting your personality to meet the demands of each role you play (although you can certainly still do that when you choose to), you are now in touch with a strong, consistent and solid layer of integrity that holds them all together. This is your core. It has been there all along; but at Stage Six, you are finally allowing it to become center stage and yourself to live by it.

A POS at Stage Six means your unique passions and the *internal* rewards they give you are now more meaningful to you than anything you could receive from outside of yourself. Up until now — Stages 1 through 5 — your main sources of motivation have been principally external (e.g., financial, status, recognition, praise, approval, survival, etc.). Listening to your passions and living your life accordingly has been at best a bonus (actually a Stage Six hook), but not your priority.

All things being equal, Sixes can understand and interact with those in the lower stages without feeling threatened, being preoccupied with fitting in, needing to be like anyone else or needing anyone else to be like them. You have no more needs to live vicariously through anyone, including your children. You have your own life, and without exception, honor everyone else's right to prudently and ethically live theirs. You are better able to pick your behavior consciously and without inner conflict. It is also at this stage where you become a peer to your mentors (and it is not uncommon for your mentors to have rather unexpected and sometimes negative reactions to how you have evolved, by virtue of *their* hooks in lower stages). Chances are you have pushed the envelope, and discovered that it can actually feel exhilarating (no longer frightening) to leave your comfort zone. Thus, taking *prudent* risks finally becomes a non-issue, rather than a source of anxiety or an excuse for avoidance.

What you love and what you hate (or dislike intensely) are your passions at their most extreme. Thus, a passion can be a feeling of strong positive gut level excitement on the one hand or of intense negativity on the other. Ignoring your passions can rob you of a huge slice of what life, at its best, has to offer you. The opposite of ignoring your passions is to listen to them so that they become your inner guides that can always be relied upon — at the very least — as a great source of information. Our positive passions — the things we love, the things that put us most in touch with our feelings of joy and our life's purpose — are the engine or life force behind our creativity, our ability to love others deeply and to accomplish great things.

Passion is the best currency to help you get what you want. The stronger your passion toward something, the more you will want to become committed to it. Most of the world's truly accomplished people would probably agree that passion and your willingness to live by it is the ingredient that makes success most likely. It is your roadmap at Stage Six. There are few things you will ever discover to be as rewarding as finding your way to that zone of positive passion within you, knowing how to call upon it at any time, how to utilize it maximally and how to give yourself ongoing permission to go inward to this zone at will. This even includes allowing yourself to be childlike, to play and experience fun, joy and happiness as you did at earlier times in your life that were characterized by innocence. At Stage Six, your own "adult self" has no problem letting your "child" take over for a while and enjoying every minute of it to the fullest.

Negative passions are equally as important since they serve two purposes. They tell us what we need to avoid or get away from (such as a bad marriage, an unfulfilling career or toxic people, etc.). Negative passions can also be the driving force behind a huge cause (such as with Nelson Mandela and apartheid). They can also be a signal to our dark side. No matter what they represent, they are somewhere between hard and impossible to ignore.

Fine-tuning your passion is a lot like selecting the right fuel for an engine. The very definition of what is often referred to as an "existential crisis" is either not being in touch with, or habitually ignoring your

passions. This is akin to having “Epstein Barr” (chronic fatigue) of the psyche; and it can take its toll — often with depression, chronic anger and bitterness, and even a variety of serious physical conditions.

Thus at Stage Six, doing what you love most and doing it as well as possible (even proceeding with the frame of mind that you are the best there is at what you do, or at least working toward that) is now an essential component of your happiness and well being. To win at Stage Six is simply to *enjoy* what you have or are doing. What you enjoy is what puts you *in joy*; and that is the state of mind you are after. A career or job that merely provides even excellent financial or other external rewards (as in Stage Five) may now be painfully unfulfilling to you. Your work is a part of your purpose or calling. When you are driven by your own passions and desires, chances are you would choose to do the type of work you are doing even if you had enough money never to *have to* work again. The process of being engaged in an activity you are passionate about is at least as meaningful as the outcome. For example, if playing golf is your passion, at Stage Six the process and enjoyment of playing the game would be at least as important to you as your score (i.e., the outcome).

Sixes are much less interested in *being* something important or prestigious than in doing or accomplishing that is truly meaningful or enjoyable to them. Your feelings of success, happiness and fulfillment connect strongly to what you see as your purpose. At Stage Six, your passions are your ticket to greatness and to accomplishing great things. And when you trade passion for something like more money, you ultimately lose (or at least perceive it that way).

At Stage Six, fun and happiness are defined as fulfilling your passions and purpose in any area of life. You can play as hard as you work, feel free to leave your inhibitions and anything serious behind. You learned how to play and enjoy it throughout childhood and have not forgotten. This wonderful, childlike and light frame of mind is one that you can choose to call up at will and apply to any area of your life at all. Thus, work and play can truly be equally joyous. In fact, work often can feel richer and even more fun than leisure activities. My routine advice about picking a career has always been to do what you love and what is fun for you. You will spend a lot of time at work. So in addition to the obvious benefit of highly

enjoying what you are doing, you are setting a standard for yourself that can spill over to all aspects of your life.

Here is a sort of a barometer as to how strongly your work POS is at Stage Six. For example, a Six who has inherited a large sum of money and did *not* quit his or her job; would also perplex many in the lower stages as to why. If you asked a Five who did not need to work why he or she did, you might hear, "I'd go nuts if I didn't." At Stage Six the answer would be, "I love what I do" or "I wouldn't want to be doing anything else." I believe we all have the capacity to find something we love to do enough to say that. (Of course, earning a lot of money for doing something you love enough to do for free is obviously what most would rightly consider a grand slam.) If you haven't yet found out what that something is for you, regardless of your circumstances (age, obligations or any other reasons you may be telling yourself), don't abandon the mission to discover it until you do. This is certainly one definition of personal greatness.

Recently, I was sitting on a train and overheard two management types talking about someone who had worked in their organization and gave up a \$200,000 a year job, for one that paid less than \$40,000. They could not understand why, and thought that person had lost his mind. It is indeed hard to understand this phenomenon when your thinking regarding such things is in the lower stages, particularly Stage Five. Moreover, in my practice, I have helped many people, and in virtually every field and profession to make career changes from lucrative fields (e.g., medicine, law, successful family businesses, etc.) who could not *happily* continue doing the work they were doing because of their missing sense of purpose and lack of a passion for it. That was certainly the reason I switched from accounting (Stage Five) to psychology (Stage Six) early in my career. Yet many of my old accounting colleagues still do that kind of work and love it. For them, the accounting field represents a wonderful Stage Six career choice, whereas for me it simply did not.

Sixes can also be quite subject to job and career burnout. This is most common in two situations: when workplace frustrations conflict with your passionate attempts to get a job or creative endeavor

accomplished and when your passion changes or evolves to another level that your present job or career cannot satisfy. The term “burnout” uses the metaphor of fire. In my experience, those who are most likely to burnout are the very people who indeed are or were most “on fire” with respect to their commitment to what they do. By listening to the message your passions provide, the correct course of action for you will usually be apparent. Remember, your main obstacles to a blessed life at Stage Six are your hooks in the lower stages, which, of course, can come in infinite varieties and surface at any time. However, when you come back to Stage Six, you are able to deal with reality even when the reality is one you do not like.

When you are acting *on purpose*, you are inspired (or *in spirit*); and it is inspiration that blurs the lines between work and fun. You are now likely to choose spending as little time as possible with anything — work, hobbies or people — that do not inspire you on some level. The more Stage Six becomes your POS, the more your inner motivators become your driving force in every area of life. That source of fulfillment is available to you twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. You only have to remember to seek it. Some of the most consistently successful people are those who can line up their passions, talents, obsessions and ambitions — then let them reinforce each other, in order to create their own distinctive brand of magic. Often---but not always---that even includes abundance, which comes along as an effortless byproduct of a Stage Six POS.

In part, the human species is the most evolved because of a characteristic we as humans have that makes us distinctive: No two of us want the exact same things when we look inwardly at our passions, desires and talents. Just about all foxes, elephants and squirrels have desires similar to others of their species. However, humans have a consciousness that enables us to have a huge diversity of interests and desires. The many different directions we can go is what enables us to think, process and thus build the world we have. This is possible only because of the natural drive in each of us to utilize the unique talents that grow out of an infinite variety of directions our collective passions take us.

Passion can also govern such things as your love relationships, parenting, hobbies, community involvement and virtually everything else that is important to you (e.g., theater, opera, travel, reading,

learning, sports, and---of course---your sexual desires). If you tend to be politically liberal or conservative at Stage Six, you are operating out of an inner commitment to the principles and values that match your core beliefs, as opposed to such things as guilt, envy, fear, what is directly in it for you or the need to fit in with or impress others who have similar beliefs.

Over the years, many have told me that they have never been passionate about anything. Yet, I have met very few who could not find that trait of passion in themselves regarding something — if only they were willing to seek it. For example, if you are an avid baseball or basketball fan, movie or theatre buff, gourmet cook or really enjoy sex or a good novel, then you know you have the *capacity* to be passionate. Yet simply having passion is not enough. It is allowing yourself to act on it that leads to those feelings of fulfillment. When you follow your passion, the path you are on may not be clear at first; but living by the commitment to stay on that path is what will take you to where you want to go. Then once you have hit the “been there, done that” point, you will know that it is time to move on to another passion.

There are two things I have lightheartedly referred to as “passion disorders”: One is obviously, where passion is missing. The other is when passion is so important that there is a tendency to be neglectful of anything you are not passionate about. For example, you may have little or no passion for your work, even though it is necessary to make a living (Stage Five), but then you allow your passion for playing computer games and surfing the Internet to take priority over your job responsibilities, causing you endless career and/or financial problems. At Stage Six, you are capable of carrying out choices that make the most long-term sense (e.g. minding your job responsibilities and temporarily putting aside the things you enjoy more, while developing a long-term strategy for a job or career change that allows you to do what you really want to be doing). Once you are comfortable with your passionate self, you can even teach yourself how to act (then eventually feel or even become) passionate when doing a Stage Six task you would never choose, but that needs to be done.

Nobody outside of your own skin can tell you what you are or should be passionate about. Moreover, our passions, themselves, not are something any of us really choose consciously. They choose or call upon

us. We can only allow ourselves to recognize them, act on them, spend time pursuing them and learn ways to fine-tune them. This principle applies to career preferences, people we are attracted to, and even the types of food we enjoy. We can choose our behavior (e.g. whether to eat that piece of cheesecake), and the people we associate with or make love to, but not our desires themselves. On page 170, Part III, I will offer strategies to get you started in unlocking and accessing those parts of you that constitute your Stage Six core — which is there and awaits your conscious attention.

Spirituality for Sixes is also a highly individual matter; no definition of spirituality at Stage Six is complete without using the terms *unique* and *higher self*. Your higher self is the internal part of you connected to whatever is your distinct image of God, a Godlike higher power within you or cosmic connection that can be expressed with or without an organized religion. Likewise, it is even possible to be an atheist at Stage Six, if you would have been open to other spiritual alternatives and possibilities, but instead arrived at a deeply held inner conviction consistent with an atheist philosophy and practice.

There is a spiritual aspect to your unique purpose or calling that is also yours to recognize. Practices such as meditation, yoga, journeying and visualization are excellent ways to deepen and enhance your connection to the unlimited inner resources of your passion, wisdom, purpose, calling, core and soul. On a deep level, you have discovered and firmly believe that your spirituality along with all of the answers connected to it (that you may ever need) exist somewhere within you. Your challenge is to access this infinite reservoir. Thus, any way to go inside your self and become more and more in touch with your uniqueness is a step in the right direction. Stage Six strategies which begin on page 172 will get you started. Whether or not your values and beliefs are consistent with those of an organized religion and/or which one is your call; but there is no longer a blur between what is religious (external) and what is spiritual (internal).

When you love at this stage, it can potentially be very deep. Stage Six love is focused on the other person — never out of your own fear or neediness. The act of loving someone else is central to you at Stage Six. You now know that it is even more gratifying to love than to be loved (the love that comes *your way* is the

prime motivator at Stage Four. A Six saying “I love you,” does not need his/her partner to say it back for that statement of love to stand. I have heard many people point to this incredible shift in their *ability to love* as profoundly life changing.

You can also be quite happy for other people, even though their good fortune does not benefit you (or even if in some way, it has an adverse effect upon you). For example, a Stage Six politician who lost an election could on a personal level be genuinely happy for his opponent’s good fortune, while still being quite appropriately sad for himself at having been defeated (and not just for the TV cameras which would be more indicative of Stage Four. An actress who lost an Oscar can be genuinely happy for the winner who she believes also gave an excellent performance. In addition, you are now better able to disagree with someone even on a major issue without anger or defensiveness and without ever thinking less of that individual. At Stage Six, you have also risen above envy. Although you can be extraordinarily competitive, when appropriate, you know your life, mission and circumstances are distinctly your own and could never accurately be compared to anyone else’s.

To the extent that the POS for your marriage or love relationship is at Stage Six, you will never again allow yourself to get into a bad or shallow one. Partners genuinely feel good about themselves and each other when they are together. Stage Six sex is passionate and satisfying for each partner. If by chance you find your relationship going in a bad direction, you will either take great pains to remedy the situation or decisively get out of it. Insecurities about being alone — that may have tempted you to settle for an unfulfilling involvement in the past — are staples of the lower stages.

Many long-term love relationships begin with a Stage Six POS. However, as time and life goes on and passions change or wane, the relationship can move backwards towards Stage Five. As I have pointed out in previous books, namely, *The Art of Staying Together* (Broder 1993) and *Can Your Relationship Be Saved? How to know Whether to Stay or Go*, (Broder 2002) couples or partners who are unaware or unwilling to work together to keep their passion alive often replace that passion by gradually moving toward indifference. Sometimes this prompts an affair or a breakup, while other times it simply reduces

the marriages to a dutiful collaboration of roles and a permanent Stage Five POS (unless, as I have pointed out elsewhere, both partners make a commitment to work on whatever issues need to be dealt with in order to climb back to Stage Six together). However, please note that most relationships with a Stage Six POS are also grounded in a sense of comfort and deep caring for each other that even transcends sex. Even though most people normally associate passion with sex, at Stage Six it is your partner you are passionate about, not necessarily any activity you share together. (Sexual desire can vary so much from person to person and be influenced by many factors both psychological and physiological. Moreover, I have seen many couples who report having great and passionate sex although virtually every other aspect of the relationship is in the lower and sometimes even the lowest stages.)

The trend toward divorce in recent decades was a revolution. The trend away from divorce — to reduce the divorce rate — will be more of an evolution brought on by the tendency to custom design your lifestyle together, to make your own choices and to understand that your partner has as much right to be passionate about his or her own needs, desires and sources of fulfillment as you do. Marriages whose operating fuel is dependency, intimidation, rules, insecurity and simply following the role each partner expects the other partner to play are less likely to survive the spurts of growth into Stage Six for either partner. Breakups and divorces at Stage Six triggered by partners growing apart are as common as in the lower stages.

Stage Six hooks can first appear at almost any age. Child prodigies in various fields are the most obvious example. However, most of us can recognize that there was a clue to the roots of our unique talents back in childhood or adolescence. Parents do well to reinforce these early passions, as they are a child's first Stage Six hooks. It is indeed a great moment at any time in your life when you are able break out of the pack and believe in yourself enough to use your innate gifts to the fullest. Someone recently described to me her experience of this as “having the courage first to find and then to follow (and stay on) her “trail of joy”. For many, life rarely gets better than that. Still, it is unusual for an actual Stage Six POS to genuinely kick into the various aspects of our lives until at least early adulthood. Then, the more you believe that

you must be what you *can be*, the less likely you will be to let anything or anyone *bring you down*— to those lower stages, of course.

Having said that, it is important to note that at Stage Six, as in any stage, you may sometimes feel a need to react to certain life situations or people as though you would have in earlier stages. These are merely your hooks manifesting themselves, often by choice. Remember, it is always your prerogative to use those hooks as you see fit. However, as a Six, you can now compartmentalize tasks and even people much more easily, when it's appropriate. For example, as a Six, no matter how much passion might govern your work, you may still have to fill out time and expense reports (Stage Five), flatter a difficult boss or customer/client (Stage Four), and follow certain rules that seem anachronistic (Stage Three). However, since you are able ultimately to face and deal with reality constructively, you will quickly return to your Stage Six POS once the matter is addressed on all levels.

The roles assumed by other people who are important in your life— such as lover, brother, mother-in-law, next-door neighbor, etc. usually define friendships and other relationships that operate below Stage Six. Stage Six relationships value the person over the role. In addition, at Stage Six, the difference between liking someone and merely accepting that person is clear to you and rarely in conflict. You now relate to other people in a manner that is more consistent with the situation. Thus, you have gone beyond your need for people to be different from what they are (although you may find yourself at times using every means possible to get someone else to change certain behavior). You can generally decide what reaction you want from another person when in the middle of a difficult interaction, and then consciously design a strategy to get that reaction. (Although this might sound similar to what Twos routinely do, at Stage Six, this would not be something you would do automatically, merely one of your choices. Also, the intention is not one of deception.) You will rarely if ever judge a person based *solely* on how they behave around you or act towards you. Sixes realize that would be quite an overgeneralization; and remember not to take it personally when someone is relating to you as part of a role that either you or they are playing (such as boss or subordinate). You can keenly distinguish between a person and his or her behavior. Thus, rather than globally resenting someone, you feel little if any conflict in “loving the sinner, but hating the sin”.

To the degree that Stage Six is your POS, you are no longer a passenger — *emotionally* under the control of others you depend on, your roles, your fears and anxieties, those whose approval you seek or even your own ego. Your sense of integrity is strong enough to overpower all of these things. You are now the driver. Your own values are far more important to you than what anyone could ever tell you they should be. Rather than merely being the actor acting out your roles, you are now also the director overseeing them. Furthermore, as long as you have any choice at all about the matter, you will never have it any other way.

As a Six, when you find yourself troubled or confused, you are best served by some form of practice that will direct you inward to the answer that is right for you. You know in your mind, your heart and your gut that the only source of true wisdom that will ultimately work for you exists *inside of yourself*.

Even though you are motivated mainly through your internal or *intrinsic* rewards, you will certainly and can passionately accept or demand external rewards when appropriate. However, at Stage Six, at least in the privacy of your own mind, you see them more as gravy or as a nice bonus than as a necessity. More likely, you will ask yourself whether whatever you are considering is worth the effort irrespective of the external rewards. If so, you will go for it. If not you will most likely let it go.

Consider this observation of two street musicians — both solo violinists: Musician #1 was playing the violin quite competently, yet still managed a smile to those who put money in his box, and a dirty look to each passerby who neglected to give him a contribution. Musician #2 was also playing very well, but with his eyes closed and totally into the music. He appeared to be quite oblivious to passersby — to the point where you wondered if he knew that anything else existed in the moment but the music he was playing. *He*, ironically, seemed to get a much better rate of contribution from passersby. One could hypothesize that this is because Musician #2 was not only delivering the music, but conveying passion and enjoyment of it. You could somehow sense that he was absorbed in what he was doing and believed in it at least as much as he wanted his audience to — regardless of whether they contributed money. However,

expectations that the street should take care of him (Stage One), people who hear his music should pay for it (Stage Three), external rewards, i.e., money (Stage Five), and the approval of those who passed by him (Stage Four), seemed to govern musician #1. He put both his internal and external success that day into the hands of the passersby. Musician #2 was operating out of Stage Six (doing what he loved). The recognition of those who passed by in his case were merely incidental. Even if at the end of the day there had been a disappointing amount of money, for Musician #2 the day would arguably still have been worthwhile and enjoyable.

A big house, expensive car, and all the toys and trappings of financial success, for instance, have less meaning to you by themselves at Stage Six than they would have in lower stages. For example, unless cars are a passion of yours, no matter how luxurious yours may be, you will view it more as a means of transportation and comfort rather than as a status symbol that will make you feel better about yourself (as it might in Stage Four). Whatever emotional boosts or validation any of these props may have given you in the past, you can now provide to yourself without them.

For instance, if you are an artist, you are no longer thinking as much about who will buy your work or what will make it more marketable, *while you are creating it*. Your primary reward for being creative comes from the process of creating. You can certainly focus on marketing (usually a Stage Five activity for artists later). Ironically, many people have told me that once they have been able to change their thinking to focus on that process of creating, instead of the outcome or payoff, that more successful payoffs resulted with much less effort. The creative process often works that way. Thus, a means to get the recognition that may be eluding you (which depends on others) is to stop focusing on recognition---which is more characteristic of Stage Four and instead concentrate on improving the level of what you are doing (which is under your control). It is usually difficult or impossible to be optimally creative, while obsessing about what others will think of your creation. Once you remove that pressure and instead concentrate on doing what you were truly meant to do, you can expect to experience some amazing changes. One of the things that surprise many Sixes is that abundance finds them the minute they stop chasing it.

Authority at Stage Six is being *authoritative* — someone who people choose to look up to, admire and follow by choice. Sixes admire *authoritativeness*, but not *authoritarianism*, which is leadership by sheer power of force and fear. Thus, the best way to motivate your Stage Six subordinates (if you are in a position to provide them an environment where they can thrive) is to give them a challenge that motivates them intrinsically; that activates their passion, creativity and all of the synergy that results; then leave them alone to work their magic. For CEOs, political leaders, and others in positions of authority, power can be a Stage Six passion. However, it is how they use that power, which gives a clue to their POS.

Some Stage Six icons include Thomas Edison, Isaac Newton, Galileo, Johann Gutenberg, Jonas Salk, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Mozart, Beethoven, George and Ira Gershwin, Madame Curie, Louis Pasteur, Charles Darwin, Christopher Columbus, the Wright Brothers, Alexander Graham Bell, Walt Disney, Picasso, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Babe Ruth, Mohammad Ali as well as most professional athletes and entertainers and countless others whose passion has led to excellence. Those I mentioned happened to make gigantic and indelible contributions to the world that long survived them; but the best news is that Stage Six is a club that is open to everyone.

True democracy is a Stage Six concept where everyone has an equal voice. Some evolved organizations that are run by and function for highly committed people operate that way. However, I do not believe there is a truly democratic government (as opposed to a representative democracy such as we have in the USA) that survived for long; nor is there currently a society where a Stage Six (or higher) POS was the norm (although such communities have sporadically been reported to exist). This would be practically a utopian society.

Still, Sixes do feel their own brand of emotional pain. Becoming *too* attached to your passions and purpose can also create a great deal of suffering at times. It can be difficult when you are surrounded by those whose POSs are in lower stages and you feel conflicted between your obligations and loyalties to them, and serving what you see as your own higher purpose. For this reason, many marriages fail to continue, where one partner climbs to Stage Six and the other does not, such as when a breadwinner

chooses to make a lifestyle change and earn less money in order to pursue a passion. In a marriage, once you and/or your partner rise above your marital roles, it is far from automatic to assume that both of you will continue to find yourselves walking along the same path.

The freedom to both love what you do and do what you love is there for the taking. Whatever roles you now chose to take on will most likely be passion driven, a part of your purpose and in your long-term best interest; or chances are you will quickly discard them if you possibly can. If you now had to choose between external success and internal peace, your sense of integrity will demand that internal peace---a staple of the target stages--- wins every time.

Making the Climb: What You Need to Know

The reason to climb higher than Stage Six is to answer an inner calling to do so for the greater good. This can be the discovery of a cause to pursue that is more satisfying than any form of self-gratification, or merely something that you determine you must do in this lifetime. For others, it could be boredom — one of our most underrated stressors — that tells you it's time to re-ignite your passion. Whatever you do to self reflect, whether through meditation, long silent walks, or your association with a spiritual guide or mentor — the task to go from Stage Six to 7 involves being in tune with and committed to a mission or calling larger than yourself.

Life does not give you happiness; it only gives you time to use in the best way you can. Think about those times when you were profoundly happy. Chances are you were in some way connected to passion. That is the barometer to follow. Take the time to strategize about how you can use the time you have to meet this new standard you have set for yourself! It was James Dean who said, "Dream as though you'll live forever. Live as though you'll die today." That is a great summary of Stage Six.

So imagine now that you can take the initiative, and you have a well-developed conscience along with a penchant for living by your own rules. You know that chasing other people's approval ultimately returns

you little. Your ducks are in a row so that your life is managed well with all necessities provided. As a bonus, you now enjoy what you are doing, so that you are "in joy" with the categories and aspects of life that matter most to you. Could there be anywhere else to go? Yes, there is! What else could you possibly need or want? Sevens always seem to know the answer to that question. You can still raise the bar to make the best you can be even better. At Stage Seven, we are beyond self-gratification and ourselves, and are now ready to use our considerable energies and passions for the benefit of the larger world.

CHAPTER 7

Stage Seven

Beyond Self-Gratification:

The Calling to Give Back

"I'd rather be right than be president".

-Henry Clay

Henry Clay's famous quote immortalized him in his day as a Seven. Yet, no one has ever set this stage apart more concisely than Sir Winston Churchill who said, "We make a *living* by what we get, but we make a *life* by what we give".

When the forces of gratitude and passion work together, practically anything is possible. The major distinction between Stages 6 and 7 is that at Stage Seven your focus shifts away from yourself. This by no means deprives you in any way — quite the contrary. You are simply no longer as motivated by personal enjoyment or gratification (Stage Six), money (Stage Five) or praise and recognition (Stage Four). These things are still desirable and nice, and you still might find yourself striving for them. However, as you climb, they lose their ability to motivate and fulfill you as they once did. At Stage Seven, these lower stage motivators take a back seat to a stronger desire, which is a calling *to give something back*. Sevens keep the world going by their realization---either consciously or unconsciously---that there is only so much that they can keep for themselves.

Sixes sometimes in a sense may become "victims of their own success", where things that used to motivate them no longer do. Sometimes it's even accurate to say that Sixes "overflow" or burnout on their own gratification. When you sense you have enough personal gratification and you aren't motivated to seek more, then you need something different from merely another means of indulgence to bring meaning back to your life. Climbing to Stage Seven subsequently becomes the natural way to go. It is —

and always has been — your Stage Seven hooks that call upon you whenever you focus on the needs of others *without regard to what is in it for you*. To the degree you are Seven, *gratitude* (for all the good things you have been able to manifest and enjoy in your life or even simply for life itself) *joins* passion as your main motivator and source of fulfillment. As you enter Stage Seven territory, your calling and desire to give back gets louder and louder. Your passions are still guiding you, but now toward truly caring about something beyond you — whatever or whoever that may be. Like Stage Six, Stage Seven is where goodness can morph into greatness---certainly personal greatness and perhaps even beyond that. However, what motivates the Seven in you is the *internal* reward your contribution and service towards a bigger cause or purpose provides.

Personal success is no longer an issue for you, as you are beyond thinking in terms of your own success and failure. You have broken out of that pack. I define this as the ultimate *personal* success. Sevens instinctually understand the simple *paradox* of happiness: by focusing on your own, you rarely achieve it in a lasting way; but by helping others to find it, happiness comes back to you almost effortlessly. Those you help can be individuals, groups, organizations or nations. They can be close family members, neighbors or friends, animals, the environment, those you recognize in your will — who will not have a chance to thank you, people whom you never have or never will meet, the entire world, or any segment of it.

Whenever you are advocating other than for yourself, (with no strings attached), you are operating out of this coveted target stage. Your Stage Seven purpose is also a highly individual matter. For some, helping one person is enough. For others, nothing short of changing the entire world in some major way will do. Your contribution can be money to a charity that you can easily afford, your life itself or anything in between. It is not the size of your mission that is important, only that your mission be driven by your own true desire to give as opposed to receive.

As in other stages, it is probable that a real person with an *across the board* or *perfect* Stage Seven POS has never existed. However, in a crucial sense, our hooks to Stage Seven are what keep this planet

going. Stage Seven is open to you anytime at all and in any area of your life. In fact, there are ways you undoubtedly are there already, regardless of whether or not you even realize it. For example, the part of you that donates blood (unless you're merely doing it to fit in, get praise or think it's your role) is your Stage Seven self. Good parenting — where you genuinely put your child's needs above your own without regard to any apparent rewards for it that come or will come your way is a Stage Seven endeavor. Almost every parent routinely makes incalculable sacrifices of time, money and perhaps their own personal ambitions when raising children. This also holds true when you take care of siblings, aging parents or other family members with temporary or permanent special needs. Becoming a resource to, or mentor for someone where even a small amount of your time, could mean the difference between him or her succeeding on a healthy path and never finding that path. Perhaps you can think of someone (or several people) who made a Stage Seven difference in your life.

A Stage Seven act that requires little sacrifice could merely involve sending a blessing, a prayer or a meditation to a person or cause that can use some positive or healing energy. It can certainly even involve ordinary people helping ordinary people anonymously. For example, going out of your way to pick up a piece of glass on the beach that is not likely to hurt you, yet might protect the next person walking by, who will never know to give you credit. Helping a blind person across the street or reaching out to an isolated and elderly neighbor, who has no one else and perhaps nothing to give back are but a couple of other examples of the infinite possibilities of Stage Seven contributions. In Part II, there will be many breakdowns of how Stage Seven (as well as all of the others stages) manifest themselves in various careers and professions as well other applications.

However, others can easily be fooled as to whether you are acting out of Stage Seven, or a lower stage. Only you know what is in your heart. Thus, it is most important not to fool yourself. For incidence, if you have sacrificed your own comfort to finance your children's education, have you done so because you are afraid that otherwise they will not take care of you should you need help someday in your old age (Stage One)? In order to gain access to a trust fund that a grandparent set up for them, where your real agenda is to net a lot more money for yourself than you laid out, thus deviously costing your child in the long run

(Stage Two)? Because you would feel guilty, otherwise since the rule has been drilled into you that, “only bad parents don’t pay for college” (Stage Three)? So that your children will love you and praise you for it (Stage Four)? Because it is simply a part of the expected role of parents to help their children reap the rewards of a college education (Stage Five)? As a way of demonstrating and feeling, the joy of parental love (Stage Six)? Or in order to reap the pleasure of seeing them benefit, and perhaps enhance their ability to contribute to the world and to do your share in helping to trigger the many ripple effects that their subsequent contribution will entail — even long after you are gone (Stage Seven)? Of course, there can be any combination of these reasons in play via the many hooks we typically have (which you will see many other examples of throughout Part II). It is simply notable that at Stage Seven, you never need to be thanked, appreciated or given any quid pro quo. Your contribution is based on your own principles and values regarding the greater good it will do. Perhaps it is even your way of expressing the gratitude you feel toward someone who once helped you and passing that energy on to where it is needed now.

Contributions of time or money to charity, or a cause you support is similar. It is your motive — which often is known only to you — that’s important. For example, at Stage Seven it is conceivably to follow your inspiration and benefit the world or a deserving subset of it for a cause in which you believe (which at times could even make your personal life more complicated or difficult than it would be otherwise). At Stage Six, it could be to do some type of work for a charity that you enjoy doing, which you do not have the opportunity to perform as a part of your career or regular life. At Stage Five, possibly to fulfill the expected role of giving back (and besides, giving tangibles to charity is tax deductible). Stage Four, it could be to receive the praise and recognition that often comes from others as a result of giving (many charities even publish the names of their donors, partially for that purpose). Another way to put it is that Fours (as well as Twos) can act like Sevens, when those cameras are rolling. At Stage Three, you may be giving merely to stay out of hell; Stage Two, to convince others that you have pure intentions, so that they fall prey to a scam of yours; and/or Stage One in order, somehow, to receive that charity’s help. Once again, infinite combinations of any or all of these are possible. (See Part II for numerous breakdowns of how this applies for many different aspects of life.)

As a Six can, at Stage Seven, you have the capacity to understand all of the people you have passed along the way. Just remember not to insist that they understand you, since that will often lead to disappointment. Even more importantly, the higher you go, the more you can now understand *yourself* at your lower stages (as well as gain insight as to why you may have done or thought certain things during earlier times in your life). It is this knowledge that helps you to manage your hooks, let go of the past and stay on your path. For example, at Stage Seven (and to a lesser degree Stage Six) you are no longer guided by "shoulds" or absolute truths of any kind. At Stages 1 and 2, you may still need them to survive. At Stage Three, you generally agree with them, while at Stage Four you try to fight them, but often lose. At Stage Five, you finally start winning the battle of the "shoulds", but they are still a factor until you climb to Stage Six.

Unlike those at lower stages, Sevens never expect, require, demand or even ask for any more respect or love from someone else than they are willing to give. This applies to your children and subordinates, as well as anyone else in your world. At Stage Seven, you know that if you treat others with genuine respect, it comes right back to you effortlessly (but you accept that it only comes back as strongly as the other person is capable of sending it).

With a Stage Seven POS, you have raised the bar; and have indeed arrived. You can certainly grow, expand and change missions, but there is no *higher* stage to which you can aspire. Since your own personal gratification and fulfillment do not require much of your attention at Stage Seven, you become emotionally freer and freer to put your considerable energy towards your cause or purpose. Your intentions and your behavior match. You are no longer needy or self-absorbed. You are finished with the type of self-destructive behavior that caused you innumerable problems in the lower stages. However, Stage Seven values can sometimes conflict with other aspects of your life (e.g., your love relationship or day job), making it necessary to change your mission, behavior or lifestyle accordingly. Yet, painful as these conflicts may be, your core at Stage Seven will survive these tweaks. Your self-doubts will rarely stand up to what you have chosen as your unique and important set of causes and purpose. You have developed a reservoir of inner resources and wisdom to live life at the highest levels of consciousness.

As a Seven, your reaction to conflict would normally be to take the needs and points of view of every concerned or affected person and faction into consideration --- rather than just your own. Since you seek no absolute realities or rigid rules to guide you, you understand that the other person has a point of view as well. That does not necessarily mean you buy into it; but it will become part of what you consider in resolving the conflict. You now have not only the capacity for empathy (which, of course, is merely an understanding of how the other person feels), but also a deep appreciation of it that prompts you to practice it routinely.

There is a new quality to your life, because your purpose can actually overtake your self. In other words, your cause can potentially become even more important to you than your physical or emotional well-being. While it is not by any means, a given or even something applies to most, many Sevens would relinquish their own wealth and personal comforts if those in any way conflicted with the mission. An example is someone who by virtue of their Stage Seven calling chooses a life of pure service (e.g., nuns, priests and monks) and is able to put aside practically every other aspect of life---material and otherwise, like Mother Theresa and those of her ilk. Again, this is certainly not required (or even necessarily Stage Seven motivated by everyone who does it), only an option that a small percentage of people exercise; and one that sometimes causes more conflict to those around them, than it does in themselves. However, much more common, is your tendency as a Seven to do the right thing as opposed to what is popular when the two conflict. This would come naturally to a politician with a Stage Seven POS---routinely ignoring polls and other pressures that summon their Stage Three, 4 and 5 hooks. Most notably, at Stage Seven, you are secure enough within yourself to commit to taking what Walt Whitman described as the "road less traveled" (Peck 2003).

The Sevens in indigenous cultures are the elders, whose purpose is to guide others through the wisdom they have acquired for the ultimate good of future generations they may themselves never even get to see. At Stage Seven, you are in good company. Think of some of the world's greatest luminaries. The Sevens throughout history are those who have made immeasurable contributions. As we understand the

inner workings of some of history's greats, such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Joan of Arc, they rarely — if ever — were afraid to listen to their inner voices and follow their deepest and strongest passions. This is despite the consequences they were aware might result (and in these cases did). These included rejection, wholesale ridicule, giving up all of the material perks of a blessed life and even death.

A difference between a Stage Six calling and one at Stage Seven is that at Stage Six, the rewards are obvious. At Stage Seven, it is quite possible for you to be the only one to realize (or even not to fully realize) what your rewards are. For many greats, a Stage Six passion can lead to a Stage Seven consciousness and results. For example, after Marconi discovered radio waves, the world was never again the same. It is hard to imagine the world today without radio, television or satellite technology. Nevertheless, he was not the first person who thought radio waves existed. Many others before him had that vision but were famously judged to be insane (e.g., hearing voices) or, at the very least, quite weird. Despite the potential for that level of scorn and ridicule (many Sevens routinely risk or ruin their reputations, if that is what their mission calls for), Marconi had the courage to bring his vision to full fruition despite much adversity. This is what puts his contribution at Stage Seven as opposed to Stage Six, which would have been enough, had he discovered radio waves as a result of merely pursuing the work he loved. The difference between people like him and all those who keep their “silly” ideas to themselves is part of the definition of Stage Seven. History is full of examples where the crazy people of one era become the geniuses of another. Timing and the courage to keep going is what ultimately determines into which, if either, category one fits.

At best, Stage Seven icons and luminaries have the same intention you do when you unselfishly donate bone marrow, your time or money. (Perhaps, for example, your contribution will save the life of someone who will somehow go on to save the world.) Like you, they could not control the outcome, only their intention and the extent of their contribution.

True spiritual leaders, saints, mystics and sages are also examples of a Stage Seven POS. In many cases, their very existence is experienced as something holy. They are the rarest specimens of what people can be. With little or no effort on their part, they can often acquire huge followings. On the other hand, they sometimes present such a threat to those opposed to the often-radical views that in a given time and place their mere presence represents, that they become martyred. Many of the greatest Sevens never were to know the impact of their contributions in their lifetime; but we assume that to them, it would not have been what really mattered. They probably believed at all levels that they were much more than their physical bodies and anything else that is of the material world.

At Stage Six, it is what you live for that is most important; but at Stage Seven, sometimes what you would die for is what sets you apart. What we know about our most iconic sages: Jesus, Moses, and Mohammad (for example) along with many of the others, were their Stage Seven qualities and contributions to the world in which they lived and beyond. Of course, the great self-sacrifices they made for their beliefs and causes, sometimes included their lives. Abraham Lincoln--- a member of this coveted group--- said, "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years".

What is behind the functioning of those greatest giants in history? Although they have all blazed gigantic trails, we scientists, of course, can only speculate about what was in their hearts. No valid evidence based profile of them exists. For an icon to be considered a true Seven, however, there needs to be evidence that more than their own gratification was what motivated them to do what they did. That the results they achieved changed the world is not enough to put their contribution in the Stage Seven category. It is their intention that is the pivotal factor. For example, Bill Gates' contributions to the world through his work with Microsoft — numerous and giant as they are — would arguably still be motivated by his enormous and brilliant Stage Six passion for computers and business (a few have even said Stage Two business practices at certain points entered into it as well). However, the contributions of huge (and unprecedented) amounts of time and money he makes through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation clearly make him a Stage Seven luminary — in addition to being an iconic Six through the work for which he is best known. The same can be said for Albert Einstein, who whose work as a physicist (Stage Six)

gave him the giant platform to impact our thinking about world peace (Stage Seven). Of course, we can only speculate. There is no doubt that Oprah Winfrey's show gets her much praise and prestige (Stage Four), money (Stage Five) and enjoyment of her work (Stage Six); but it is what she gives back via her many causes such as education in Africa that makes most people think of her as a Seven.

We often honor our conformists in life and our non-conformists in death. Indeed, the non-conformists are who change the world; but the conformists maintain it. Most of our Stage Seven contributions are quite modest compared to those of the giants of history; but they are by no means less important in the grand scheme of things merely because of the size of the league one plays in. The privates of one army sometimes become the generals of another (and visa versa).

There are two common popular templates for our heroes in literature and the movies. Stage Six heroes are those like Mohammad Ali, whose courage enables them to break away from a repressive pack in order to pursue their passions and do their thing. Sixes generally are doing what they do, at least initially, for their own enjoyment. Then there are our Stage Seven heroes like St. Francis of Assisi and Florence Nightingale, who somehow find the highest of inner resources (such as love, faith, hope, wisdom, courage and creativity, or a unique combination of them) to solve some insurmountable problem, create peace, save a life, save the world or a segment of it without seeking or taking personal credit for their contribution. We rarely think of Sevens as having fun or needing to enjoy what they are doing. They do their mission because it needs to be done. Even the Stage Seven cartoon character heroes who have been with us the longest, such as "Superman" and "The Lone Ranger" make it a point to pass on the enjoyment, or recognition and acclaim for their acts. Often, our heroes — whether authentic or imaginary — make it look easy. In real life, mustering the determination to reach that finish line and resist the urge to quit rarely is. However, both Stage Six and 7 heroes tend to live by the old truism, "If you don't enter the lions' den you will never capture the lion."

Spirituality at Stage Seven is indistinguishably connected to your purpose. Your dialogue with God or higher consciousness is as uniquely personal — as you define God. As in Stage Six, you access your

inner voice by whatever means you use to go inside of yourself. At Stage Seven, you often tend to ask how you can bring a higher consciousness to any situation, problem, or conflict you are facing or recognize exists — even if it only affects others. An unshakable commitment to following that inner voice, whether you think of it as listening to God, your higher self or your own intuition is where you will find the answers or direction you seek.

Many ponder the mystery as to whether there is life after death. At Stage Seven, you are comfortable with whatever conclusion you reach to this great mystery, remain keenly focused on this life, but realize that to wonder about the afterlife is natural. Yet the reality is not that important, since either way you would probably not live this life any differently.

Fun and play at Stage Seven, as in Stage Six, are non-issues. They can be, but not necessarily are connected to your cause and contribution.

As a Seven, your close relationships never have to be limited to those who share your causes, values or beliefs. You not only can tolerate those who are different, but have a keen appreciation of them. You can choose to encourage those you love to follow their passion and reach their potential even if it causes you some personal inconvenience or short-term disappointments. A Stage Seven couple who grows apart will never find the partners making each other wrong in order to justify a breakup. Instead, they will have no problem seeing the other person as something separate from their role in the relationship and react with gratitude for what they had, rather than anger at what they did or do not have. It should also be noted that many of the greats in virtually every field, have been panned by their children or spouses as “being there for the world, but not for their family”. The son of one rather famous luminary once told me, "I can personally attest to the fact that great men are not necessarily good men."

Personal conflicts at Stage Seven usually relate to your hooks in Stage Six and below, where you find yourself at times torn between your purpose and your own self-gratification. Nevertheless, to the extent

that you are operating at Stage Seven, confusion dissolves quickly, you know the next step to take and your values do not fluctuate as life's circumstances change.

All the greats have had significant pain of some kind that mobilizes them to take definitive action. Often anger morphs into determination that they direct toward righting a wrong through their creative and constructive outlets. However, they are able to manage their expectations of people and events, so that anger does not overpower or blind them. Sevens are least likely to take things personally; but they tend to be most frustrated when they are (or feel) powerless to correct an injustice or make their mission effective. Sevens realize that anger is an internally destructive emotion, which serves no valid purpose other than to act as an alarm clock or mobilizer of your energy. Beyond that, it only hurts the one who feels it. Thus, prolonged anger is pointless. This makes letting go of anger the logical choice. Forgiving those who have deliberately hurt them tends to be a no-brainer. Forgiving and letting go, when you get nothing in return from the other person is a Stage Seven event; and the ability to do that has been described to me by many as a major breakthrough. As Nelson Mandela said, "Being angry is like drinking poison, then hoping your enemy will be the one who suffers as a result." Thus, Sevens do easily forgive, though they often have to endure harsh treatment from others as well as meld it out when having to stand up against a person or force that needs to be defeated.

Even at Stage Seven, you most certainly have good and bad days; but in your gut, you are way past any expectations that life be perfect.

Is A Stage Seven POS What You Want?

Before you answer yes, understand that a POS at this stage is not for everyone. For many, the rewards of Stage Six — where you are at the pinnacle of pleasing yourself — are all you could possibly want, right now; and there is no place else, you truly want to go (other than where your Stage Seven hooks naturally

take you, of course). For others, Stage Six takes on a “been there, done that” quality that begs for something more. Thus, you climb to Stage Seven to the extent that your passion for merely gratifying yourself (and those around you) is replaced by an equal or stronger drive for something new which is greater than yourself.

People, who have reliably supported you up until now, may not understand what you are thinking. It’s highly unusual for anyone to not benefit by climbing to Stage Six from the lower stages in an aspect of life. However, Stage Seven is another story because this often involves bypassing self-indulgence and sometimes even dismantling important aspects of a blessed life that you have put together for yourself and others close to you. Thus, to the extent that this represents conflict, a Stage Seven POS may not yet be for you.

To both reach and stay at Stage Seven, follow your inner voice in whatever way you channel it. It will not mislead you in this matter. You need only listen to the message that comes out of your gut. That message comes in the form of an intuition, calling or desire—*never* in the form of a “should” (e.g., “I feel guilty about all I have, so I should give back”, etc.)

There is a folk Zen saying: “The wise men said, it can’t be done, the fool then came and did it.” Many causes that have one chance in a thousand of reaching fruition, would have been seen as too difficult or impossible in any of the lower stages; but at Stage Seven, that one in a thousand (or million) chance might be the only odds you need to put passionate energy into some important direction. So stay in the lab, until the experiment is a success. When your next mission is ripe, that same inner voice will let you know.

Whether or not a Stage Seven POS is what you want, you can still develop more hooks there; and I certainly encourage you to do that (see the exercises on page 177 in Part III for lots of help in the area of all things Stage Seven). Rarely — if ever— will you regret having more Stage Seven *hooks*.

In the next section, we will explore what it would mean to target Stage Seven (as well as each of the seven stages) in many major aspects of your life.

Part II

Calibrating Your Stage Climb

Where You Are Now Versus Where You Want To Be

A calibration is a type of measurement that is designed to fine tune or pinpoint something with as much precision as possible. In *Stage Climbing*, I use the term “calibration” as a metaphor for determining *where you are now* in your *Stage Climbing* process vs. *where you want to be* in any given area of your life.

This section will show you what a POS at each of the seven stages would look like. It contains numerous examples and illustrations of life in all seven of the stages that you can compare, reflect upon and tweak into tailor-made insights and goals that fit you exactly. This sampling by each stage is organized into categories of personal issues, relationship situations, organizations and institutions as well as certain careers and professions. It is also an ongoing guide for you to consult often in order to stay on your chosen track. *Each page could be expanded to become a complete book in and of itself.* For that reason, I only included the basics for a wide variety of items.

Use these calibrations to make your present and target POS much clearer to you and to help you with anything you are trying to understand or resolve — past, present, or future. Begin by identifying your POS--- the stage you most identify with. Stage Five (which is presented in smaller bold type), is a good starting point whenever your POS is unclear to you, since it’s generally the most neutral or dispassionate stage.

Hooks in Stages One to Four may serve you in certain situations. This is a choice only you can make. However, those lower stage hooks clearly illustrate both their limitations in the way you operate in that life

area as well as the obvious benefits to climbing upwards to higher stages. Lower stage calibrations can also be seen as reminders of how you used to be (such as during a prior marriage or relationship, what made you choose your line of work or how you were raised as compared to how you parent your own children), descriptions of others in your life or choices you are *now* making for yourself. In some cases, identifying your lower stage hooks can be a wakeup call; or it could be the first step toward self-acceptance in an area of life. Go back to reflect upon these whenever you can use a boost, some guidelines for relating to others on their own turf or examples of different points of view.

The higher stage calibrations can be your potential targets or personal goals, which you can fine-tune. In some areas you may already be at your target, while others cry out to you for change. Stages Six and Seven (in larger bold type for emphasis) are the highest POS aspirations to consider for the areas of your life that matter most. As you will notice, a Stage Seven calibration usually includes many of the best elements of Stage Six as well as unique Stage Seven characteristics. A POS at a given stage usually means that you have the ability to understand other people operating at stages below it. Thus a Seven can relate to and empathize with a Six, as a Six can with a Five etc., but not necessarily the other way around.

Your POS with respect to love relationships and other friendships, work and career issues, hobbies and avocations, your religion and spirituality, etc. can all be uniquely observed here as separate entities. Once you identify your target, you can literally pick a new attitude or view of life. Sometimes, by merely recognizing or working on a lower stage hook, you will find that your POS is exactly on target.

After pondering all the stages in a given category, you may find it helpful to write down your POS targets and goals and never stop tweaking them until they fit you and your life situation exactly. I have included calibration forms throughout Part II for this purpose. In order to help keep yourself on track, refer to your POS targets and goals often until they become second nature or a solid part of you.

Think of climbing the stages as rising to those occasions of life you most cherish. Simply pick your target stages and choose the goals that represent most where you want to be. Once you know where you are and where you are going, use every means possible to get there. Then be relentless and commit to *doing whatever it takes to live by your choices*.

CHAPTER 8

Your Master Settings

Fine Tuning the Basic Calibrations of Your Life by the Stages

This chapter represents the *Stage Climbing* applications that are fundamental and universal to all of us. See how each of them fit you. At the end of every chapter of Part II, there is a reproducible form to help you make your own calibration for any issue or aspect of your life you would like to change, tweak or better understand.

At each stage, our **Ultimate Master Goals** are different. Here they are, broken down by the stages:

- Stage Seven- To change the world in some way---large or small**
- Stage Six- To do what you love, are best at and enjoy most... Perhaps to strive to do your particular niche as well as it can possibly be done by anyone**
- Stage Five- To have affluence (and/or whatever you believe is necessary for living a good and worthwhile) life as well as having all of your roles optimally and comfortably covered**
- Stage Four- To be accepted, admired, and respected by all of those who in any way matter to you
- Stage Three- To be conflict free
- Stage Two- To get exactly what you want, while staying under the radar screen and avoiding any scrutiny or consequences
- Stage One- To have all your needs met with minimal effort or obligation on your part

Default Position

- When each POS is age appropriate (or considered normal) ... and when that *same* POS *best* serves you as an adult:

Stage Seven- Later in life... Whenever your focus shifts to a problem that does not affect you directly (or is not necessarily your job to address) and you feel the need to be giving back or find yourself asking”, “How can I contribute or be of benefit to_____?”

Stage Six- Through the prime of life and beyond... When you are doing what you enjoy, loving others in your life (or doing “labors or love” for them), being creative or when needing to feel in touch with your inner core that holds all of the diverse areas of your life together...When it is your passion that drives you

Stage Five- Early adulthood...When it is important to attend to and create a structure for necessary areas of your life from which you do not particularly get intrinsic enjoyment (e.g. managing finances, doing chores, being around people you would rather not be with, etc.)

Stage Four- Through late adolescence...When enjoying the “buzz” of a new romance, when selling yourself and/or in a situation where the image you put out to others is important...when it is your desire to fit into a chosen group

Stage Three- Through late childhood...When in military type organizations or other situations where blending in and not questioning (or enforcing) the rules imposed on you is decidedly the best strategy.

Stage Two- Toddlers... In prison or when you are cornered (flight/fight mode) or need to take unusually courageous, defensive, offensive or manipulative action in the moment without regard to long term consequences in order to get through a crisis or immediate danger and/or when being in a survival mode is your best option

Stage One- Infancy (and sometimes old age and toward the end of life)...When you choose or have no choice but to be taken care of (e.g. when sick or infirm, when being pampered or on vacation) by others or simply letting yourself receive without needing to give back in kind

To determine the **Stage At Which You Are Operating** in a specific life area or a specific situation, issue, thought, belief, attitude or behavior, ask yourself the question(s) next to the stage they typify:

Stage Seven- Are the individual and/or collective needs of the others involved in this big picture (specific to the situation) at least as important to me as my own? (In addition to Stage Six below)

Stage Six- Am I doing what truly feels right and best for *me* on a heartfelt level?

Stage Five- Am I taking into account that which best affects all aspects of and roles in my life?

Stage Four- Am I being influenced or governed by what others think of me?

Stage Three- Am I insisting that there is only one way or one set of rules that I and/or everyone else involved should/must follow?

Stage Two- Am I trying to get away with something, reap a reward I know I am not entitled to (or would have no trouble seeing as offensive or problematic if someone else were doing the same thing at my expense)?

Stage One- Am I believing I am too dependent, helpless and/or weak to take the initiative and do what needs to be done? Am I being just plain resistant to taking measures I know would benefit me?

You ideal **Attitude for Climbing at each Stage** to a higher stage you have chosen in any area of your life:

- Stage Seven- “On to the next (perhaps even bigger, more challenging or self-sacrificing) mission**

- Stage Six- “Life is good; but there is more to life than my own gratification. It’s time to focus on the world that’s larger than myself.”**

- Stage Five- “I want to be doing what I love and to feel rewarded internally (as well as externally)”.**

- Stage Four- “People who won’t accept me for who I am are no longer worth my time and attention. There is more to life than putting boundless energy into fitting in and/or the hope of getting others to admire or envy, love and/or approve of me”.

- Stage Three- “I am ready to start examining the rules I have lived by (or that I have demanded others live by) without questioning, and even to consider making some rules of my own”.

- Stage Two- “Being excessively self-absorbed, has thus far not gotten me what I thought it would, what I truly wanted or satisfaction around what I have gotten”.

- Stage One- “I am tired of being dependent and relying on others. I now want to begin taking charge of my own life-”.

These are the typical **Attitudes or Beliefs That Disrupt Our Stage Climb** at the various stages. Resolve on an ongoing basis to challenge any of them that continue to get in your way:

- Stage Seven- “There are only larger, grander, bolder, and more challenging missions to undertake“.** (This is a disruption, only to the degree that it undermines a mission you are committed to and not pursuing.)

- Stage Six- “I must not only have passion, but also feel *personally* gratified around everything I do” ... “Changing the world that is larger than me is not my mission, problem or concern.”**

- Stage Five- “I must keep it all together and step up to the plate with respect to all of my roles (e.g. spouse, breadwinner, etc.), regardless of whether or not they provide me feelings of satisfaction or gratification.”**

- Stage Four- “I must be loved or approved of by others” ... “Failing at something (e.g. a relationship, a job, an exam or to meet a goal) makes me a failure.”**

- Stage Three- “I must fit in by doing only what I should do and by being what I should be—that which is expected of me— or some dire consequence will result.”**

- Stage Two- “I must have and do whatever I want, regardless of the effect I (or my actions) have on others (or even the *long term* consequences I cause to myself) ... “I don’t want to change” ... “I will be whatever I have to be to get whatever I want at any given moment.”**

- Stage One- “I must be taken care of” ... “I am Inadequate” ... “I am incapable of change or taking the initiative to better my life.”**

How **Conflict** is generally handled at each stage:

Stage Seven- By carefully listening to the point of view of everyone involved, considering each possibility, then making the decision or taking the action(s) that comes closest to best serving everyone involved---then staunchly standing by your decision or action, if necessary. (In addition to Stages 6 and possibly 5 below)

Stage Six- By doing what feels consistent with your own principles and purpose on a heartfelt level

Stage Five- By evaluating whether and how the source of the conflict is attuned with the totality of all your roles, then taking the action(s) that come as close as possible to rebalancing your life.

Stage Four- By taking the road that produces the most validation from others (no matter how things shake out) and the least anxiety.

Stage Three- By following a set of black and white rules that clearly dictates who is right and who is wrong.

Stage Two- By using some form of deception or strong-arm tactic (or doing whatever you have to do, sometimes even without limits) to assure that you get your way (thus, twos can be extremely charming to manipulate someone, extremely brutal to get what they want or anything in between).

Stage One- By doing what is easiest, such as surrendering and/ or allowing some person or force that you consider stronger than you to take over the situation, thus allowing you to wash your hands of conflict.

This is how you would define **Happiness and Success** (and perhaps even **Personal Greatness**) at each stage:

□ **Stage Seven- Achieving the desired impact on a person/people/ or segment of the world you most care about...Watching others reap the benefits of your efforts...Being fully connected to your principles and purpose**

□ **Stage Six- The satisfaction of reaching a difficult goal or solving a tough problem/ the feelings of excitement and being unstoppable that come from peak performance... Feelings of relaxation and inner peace...The bliss associated with the little things encountered in everyday life, such as the glow of a nice spring day, a good book or your favorite music...Exploring novelty and whatever makes you curious...Doing what you really want to be doing (what you are most passionate about, which often provides the most fun and enjoyment)... When the distinction between work and play disappears...Being with those you love and feeling deeply connected to them...When you can call up your “inner child” at will, connect with those feelings of innocence that result, letting yourself enjoy being *childlike* as appropriate**

□ **Stage Five- Keeping all roles and relationships in balance and without problems... Being effective and not overwhelmed...Achieving affluence...Finding a hobby and making time for fun activities as another important way to balance life and “recharge batteries” (“fun activities” are seen as providing a healthy alternative to work and chores).**

□ **Stage Four- Achieving acceptance, approval, fame and positive recognition...Keeping personal relationships conflict free**

□ **Stage Three- Living your life “properly” by staying within the black and white parameters of your world... Not drawing any negative attention to yourself, by fitting in and doing, what you “should” as well as doing your part to cause others around you, to “toe the line” as well...Believing you are one of “God’s chosen people”**

□ **Stage Two- Getting away with something...Achieving dominance over people**

□ **Stage One- When life is easy with no demands or challenges to worry about...Having a reliable and dependable provider of all necessities**

What **Motivates** you at each stage:

Stage Seven- The opportunity to serve others in a cause or mission you believe in...To solve a problem that has an impact on people or things larger than you and your inner circle are... To touch many lives

Stage Six- The feeling of satisfaction that comes when doing what you love and were meant to do as dictated by your unique talents at the deepest level... Meeting a challenge... Performing optimally with passion and ease as opposed to effort and difficulty...Anything that triggers feelings of “inner bliss”... "If you aren't having fun doing it you either are not doing it right or it is not for the right thing for you to be doing"

Stage Five- Money, benefits, privileges, respect of others for how you handle your role and sense of responsibility

Stage Four- Awards, celebrity, prestige, validation, praise, love, recognition and approval of you (often in a global way as opposed to merely a specific area)...impressing friends, acquaintances, colleagues and relatives (or the public, in the case of celebrity)

Stage Three- Not making waves, by doing whatever is expected of you and staying on the good side of whomever or whatever you consider the authority to be obeyed...Your power to rule others

Stage Two- Opportunities to lure people in and/or reap rewards without paying the necessary dues or playing on a level field

Stage One- Whatever feels easiest, the most safe and comfortable

What you are typically **Needing and Seeking** at each stage:

Stage Seven- To spread your abundance and/or the feelings of fulfillment you have achieved for yourself to others in some general or specific area

Stage Six- To accomplish something... Enjoyment of what you do as well as who you spend time with... “Enlightenment”

Stage Five- Normalcy...“peace and quiet”...abundance

Stage Four- To “find yourself”...To “be something”... To “make something of yourself”...To feel liked and accepted by those in your orbit

Stage Three- To please authority...and be pleased or appeased when *you are* the authority

Stage Two- The easiest way to satisfy your *short-term* needs

Stage One- Safety and security

To **Problem Solve**, when stuck or in crisis, here is where you would typically turn for help at each stage:

Stage Seven- Spiritual master of some type (or practice) who helps you to transcend your ego and access your inner resources to search for the answer(s) you are seeking

Stage Six- Chosen mentor in the specific area you need help, who is personally beyond the problem or challenge you are struggling with

Stage Five- Self-help books and audio programs...peers (talking to people you value) and all types of peer groups that focus on personal growth or a specific challenge you are trying to meet...(this book, for example)

Stage Four- Psychotherapy for treatment of such conditions as anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues and relationship conflicts...taking the advice of and adopting the accepted approach of those around you

Stage Three- The Bible, church, a clergyperson or a charismatic leader who clearly spells out the rules and/or authority that needs to be adhered to in order to resolve issue

Stage Two- Legal counsel...Behavior modification and other concrete forms of counseling to change errant habits that threaten relationships or freedom

Stage One- Someone you see as more capable than you to take over problem and allow you to resume a conflict free existence as much as possible...Medication and/or drug detoxification for chemical issues

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** for **Any Area of Life, Problem or Issue You Are Working On** (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for guidelines and reference. For additional help, see Part III. Also visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

CHAPTER 9

Emotions

What Triggers Anger, Anxiety, Depression and Grief at Each Stage

These are the most common emotions along with items most likely to set them off at each stage. To make the best use of this section, notice how your hooks in the lower stages can throw you off balance in any area of your life. The more you can make a conscious commitment to do a better job in *choosing your battles*, the more you become the master of your emotions, rather than the other way around.

Things that typically trigger **Anger** in you at various stages:

- Stage Seven- The Injustice or misfortune of others (could be one person, an entire society or segment of it) who are unable (as opposed to unwilling) to fend for themselves. Sevens also have no problem letting go of their anger at specific individuals or entities through forgiveness; and will not let their emotions interfere with the larger mission.**
- Stage Six- Anything that you believe needlessly distracts you from pursuing your passion or calling. Forgiveness is a means to let go of an unpleasant situation in order to get back to positive emotions and areas of interest.**
- Stage Five- Things or people you perceive as overwhelming you or throwing your life out of balance or control.**
- Stage Four- Rejection or disappointment from others whose approval or love is on some level important to you, jealousy in relationships or a betrayal by someone you thought was in your camp. Sometimes anger is turned inward to create depression or self-esteem issues.
- Stage Three- Others who do not follow the same rules or have the same values and beliefs that you do. At its most extreme, this could include prejudice, hatred or bigotry. Anger at this stage often takes on or results from an attitude of “self-righteousness”.
- Stage Two- Getting caught, being punished (or turned in), confined, or called upon to take responsibility for your behavior. Revenge is often the first response to adversaries.
- Stage One- Being abandoned, neglected, or deprived by whomever you depend on as your protector, provider or caretaker. Anger sometimes triggers feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

Things that typically trigger **Anxiety** in you at various stages:

Stage Seven- Being unable to make the necessary contribution that the mission or calling to which you are committed requires.

Stage Six- The prospect of being unable to pursue or receive satisfaction from something you passionately enjoy.

Stage Five- Becoming unglued as your roles expand, or worry that circumstances will overwhelm or render you unable to fulfill them.

Stage Four- Being rejected, embarrassed or seen as inadequate, “a failure” or of lesser worth by someone (or many, e.g. your peer group or even a segment of the public) whose validation is important to you.

Stage Three- Leaving your comfort zone (especially when the rules aren't clear) ...the possibility of being damned, punished or killed for doing or perhaps even thinking something different than whatever would be acceptable to a feared authority (real or imagined)...”shades of gray”

Stage Two- The prospect of being caught, punished or exposed for your deliberate antisocial activities...losing your freedom or cover

Stage One- Fears concerning such things as abandonment, mental disability and extreme poverty... Being, living and/or dying alone where you would be or feel unable to survive, influence or have an impact on your own fate.

Things that typically trigger **Depression** in you at various stages:

Stage Seven- Failing to help those to whom you are committed via your calling or mission

Stage Six- Being unable to pursue or enjoy that which you love or are passionate about and do best

Stage Five- Having an important role in your life (e.g., a relationship, financial situation or career) change (usually a loss) in a way that is undesirable to you and out of your control to reverse or correct

Stage Four- A major rejection or scorn by someone or a group whose opinion, you believe, has significance to you

Stage Three- Being unable to find the answers to a crisis or dilemma within the narrow boundaries of your comfort zone or the inability to get hold of a clear direction and/or feeling of reassurance from the “book of rules” to which you subscribe

Stage Two- Having unpleasant (and usually unexpected) consequences for your behavior, from which you cannot escape

Stage One- The self-perception that results from feelings of grief, inadequacy, hopelessness or self-pity...fear of abandonment (or having to survive alone)

How **Grief** (over loss) is typically handled by the stages:

□ **Stage Seven-** By knowing and accepting the non-permanence of life, life events and situations that sadly or prematurely change...Understands that everyone grieves in their own way, therefore can tolerate and support those who grieve in an entirely different manner...Forgives the people or forces responsible for the loss (including yourself)

□ **Stage Six-** By understanding and allowing the process of detachment through a healthy, natural and emotional grieving process (e.g., purging painful feelings by crying and then letting go of whatever you have lost)...Consciously learning how to tolerate the void of loss before filling it

□ **Stage Five-** Putting the pieces (and roles) of your life back together again, often by finding a substitute for whatever or whomever you have lost

□ **Stage Four-** By blaming yourself for somehow causing the loss as well as for any existing unfinished business that may remain

□ **Stage Three-** You practice traditional grieving rituals (such as those of your religion or community)...You may judge others who grieve differently that you as wrong

□ **Stage Two-** Loss may become an excuse for acting out and displacing feelings such as anger on to others

□ **Stage One-** Self pity (can be quite intense) along with anger (at who or what you have lost) over *your* difficulty about separating emotionally...May also be in denial about (e.g., difficulty believing that a someone is really gone) or overwhelmed by loss resulting in a condition such as PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** to understand what triggers an emotion (or emotions) of yours and to choose alternatives when **appropriate** (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for reference. For additional help, see Part III. Also, visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

CHAPTER 10

Values

Personal Issues and Attitudes along with Some Other Common States of Mind by the Stages

This section describes how we typically view certain key aspects of life through the lense of each of the seven stages. See how you relate to them with respect to your POS and hooks. Be especially aware of any changes you would like to make as you recognize new hooks for the first time.

Typical *best* attitudes about your **Career** and the work you do by the stages:

- Stage Seven- “It’s an excellent way (or the best way I can) to make the contribution I most want to make”.**

- Stage Six- “I love what I do...It is what comes easiest to me, feels most flowing and natural...I wouldn’t want to do anything else...I feel fulfilled irrespective of the financial and other extrinsic rewards I get (though I can still pursue and accept those via my chosen Stage Five hooks)...I get off on the challenge of it...If I never again *had* to work, I would still choose to be doing this.”**

- Stage Five- “It is lucrative or pays the bills and/ or gives me something to do and /or nice perks”.**

- Stage Four- “It gives me prestige and/or a steady stream of good people contact.”

- Stage Three- “It is the type of work my family/ “tribe” does (or always did) or values most.”

- Stage Two- “It’s an easy way to find lots of opportunities to feel powerful by manipulating and bullying others as well as (perhaps) to make easy money ”.

- Stage One- “It’s safe and provides me with feelings of security”.

Typical reasons for making Job or Career Changes:

- Stage Seven- To move on to serve a higher cause**

- Stage Six- To seek a greater, more fulfilling (or more enjoyable) personal challenge**

- Stage Five- For advancement, more money, less hours, easier commute, better contacts and/or benefits, etc.**

- Stage Four- May seek change because of not fitting in, getting along with, liking or being liked by co-workers...For more prestige ... To follow an emotionally nurturing boss

- Stage Three- Environment was too unstructured... Need more structure

- Stage Two- Was exposed for violating policy, claiming undeserved credit or other forms of dishonesty/unethical behavior

- Stage One- Job became too challenging and/or less secure

The role of **Charity** (giving/receiving of time, money or other tangibles to/from others):

Stage Seven- To move the world or a segment of it in the right direction with respect to something you feel strongly about, where nothing extrinsic for yourself is expected in return...Sevens need no recognition for their acts of kindness. (In addition to Stage Six below)

Stage Six- Doing some form of work you love (which you may not have the opportunity to do otherwise) for a cause you believe in (perhaps without the level of responsibility or potential for consequences that would be there if it were part of your day job)

Stage Five- To fill a role in your world which recognizes that those more fortunate than people in need are expected to provide...To get tax deductions... To network with people who may be of some benefit in another area of your life ...To do your part in resolving a problem that you become aware of (which may possibly even affect or have affected you or someone you know/care about)

Stage Four- It is a means for getting recognition, awards and praise and/or to feel good about yourself.

Stage Three- Charitable giving is seen as a mandated requirement of members of the group or religion to which you belong.

Stage Two- Finds ways to defraud a charity or set one up to use as a scam

Stage One- To be the recipient of needed help from others

Examples of typical attitudes regarding the **Environment** at each stage:

Stage Seven- “Sacrifice now for the benefit of future/unborn generations”.

Stage Six- “Do work you enjoy toward preserving it” (often motivated by a love of nature and the outdoors)

Stage Five- “It is the responsibility of every good citizen to do his/her share.”

Stage Four- “I’ll be admired by others who value the environment, if I am (for example) energy efficient.”

Stage Three- “It’s the law to recycle”.

Stage Two- “If I have to wreck it in order to benefit me or my business, too bad.”

Stage One- “It’s not my responsibility to worry about” ... “I’ll live off of the environment and use it to my advantage as much as I need to”.

Pathological Terms/Profiles often associated each stage:

Stage Seven- None

Stage Six- Existential neurosis... burnout

Stage Five- Reactive depression and/or anxiety that result from having too many/too few roles or the void of losing one or more highly valued roles

Stage Four- Anger...anxiety... phobias... depression... avoidant... histrionic

Stage Three- Rigid... obsessive compulsive

Stage Two- Antisocial... narcissistic...borderline

Stage One- Paranoid... psychosis... schizoid... dependent

Typical view(s) of **Self** at each stage:

Stage Seven- Grateful...determined

Stage Six- Passionate...happy

Stage Five- Content...Over/underwhelmed

Stage Four- Anxious

Stage Three- Righteous

Stage Two- Omnipotent

Stage One- Helpless

View of **Spirituality** by stage:

Stage Seven (In reality, Sevens usually come to and live by their own custom blend of spiritual principles. However, these are usually included in that blend.)- **Laws of spirit (e.g. “We are all one”, “Our cores all want the same thing”, “We each have a unique purpose”, Karmic rewards and consequences, etc.) apply to all of people...”Those who act badly do so because they lost their way” ...”We achieve solace with God by helping/serving others--- including even our adversaries (on a personal level) ” ...”The mystery of whether or not there is an afterlife has no bearing on how this life is lived”**. (In addition to Stage Six below)

Stage Six- **“Higher self resides inside of each of us, whose function is to connect us with our unique strengths, calling, purpose, principles and mission and our commitment to pursue them”...Spiritual self (or lack thereof) is heartfelt and chosen.**

Stage Five- **“Spirituality (often in the form of the organized religion that is most familiar) as well as observing religious traditions is an important part of life”**. However, the role of spirituality in life often is confusing and unsettled. In reflective moments, Fives ponder such questions as **“What is the meaning of life?”** or **“Is this all there is?”** (as well as questions about such things as afterlife, dilemmas about God’s role in tragedy and injustice etc.)

Stage Four- **“God is benevolent”...“If I do the right thing, God will love me”**.

Stage Three- Whether an Atheist, a Fundamentalist_____ (name the religion) or anything in between-- there is a strict and inflexible set of rules to be followed... **“God is malevolent and unforgiving”...“If I disobey God, I incur his wrath (burn in hell, etc.)”**

Stage Two- **“There is no God”...”There are no consequences or rewards (karmic or otherwise) beyond the obvious, such as getting caught and punished or getting away with something” ...”What you see is what you get”...**

Stage One- **“God is whoever (or whatever) takes care of me.”**

View and purpose of **Wealth** by the stages:

Stage Seven- Wealth is to help and share with others who lack the means you do.

Stage Six- Its main purpose is to ensure that you can continue to pursue what you enjoy the most.

Stage Five- To acquire possessions...To provide for yourself and family and keep all necessary areas of your life functioning optimally...To not *have to* work...To reinvest

Stage Four- To acquire status and be envied

Stage Three- To acquire authority and followers of your rules

Stage- 2- To acquire raw and absolute power

Stage One- To acquire security

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** for an area of your life you would like to examine. (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for reference. For additional help, see Part III. Also, visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

CHAPTER 11

Relationships

Your View of Family, Friendships, Love Relationships, Marriage, Parenting and Sex by the Stages by the Stages

The principles of *Stage Climbing* can explain your relationships and the issues related to them at all levels. This chapter provides calibrations that can help you see how people— past or present— fit into your life. Many (but not all) relationships can be upgraded, provided that's your choice. However, it's always possible to gain a better understanding and acceptance of someone by identifying the stages by which you relate to each other.

How **Families** operate at each stage:

- **Stage Seven- Family shares deep (perhaps spiritual) values and is guided by strong principles of service outside of the family or “tribe” ...Children are carefully and lovingly trained to be strong, respectful, empathetic and highly decent individuals.**
- **Stage Six- Whole is greater than the sum of its parts...Family is held together with love and respect...Family members encourage and support each other's strengths, ambitions and personal growth.**
- **Stage Five- When each member is functioning well in his/her family role, the family thrives. Problems occur when a member deviates from the family norm for a reason that is not clear to the other members (e.g. when siblings of similar ages are in different stages or children function at higher stages than parents or other elders, etc.)**
- Stages 4- When functioning well, members headed by a benevolent matriarch/patriarch serve to validate each other. When dysfunctional, often the result for certain family members (usually children who witness a lot of anxious behavior throughout their formative years) is that self-esteem and self-confidence are unwittingly undermined... Approval and validation is withdrawn or withheld as the system of rewards and punishment.
- Stage Three- Family is rigidly run with an “iron hand” by a tough matriarch/patriarch in an authoritarian manner where stereotypical roles are unquestioned. Respect is demanded, not necessarily earned. Strict and sometimes severe punishment is mandated for failing to meet the often-stern expectations. Children usually go into the line of work and the adopt lifestyles that are expected of them more out of guilt and fear than choice... Family members are sometimes ostracized as a punishment for not “towing the line” or failing to fit in.
- Stage Two- Deception, anger and abuse are a typical climate (can be emotional, physical, and/or sexual).
- Stage One- Family members are enmeshed and feel unable to face the outside world with even a minimal degree of independence.

Ingredients of a Friendship by stages:

Stage Seven- There is a deep mutual respect for the other person and his/her person's respective commitments and impact (even though their mission may be different and in some cases even incompatible or in opposition to yours, as long as it is honorable and with integrity)...Sevens have no problem choosing to put the needs of a friend above their own, when appropriate.

Stage Six- The connection is to the core of a person, which underlies and transcends all of his/her roles and the circumstances that initially brought you together as friends.

Stage Five- Friends are those with whom there is a common role (e.g., same church, neighbors, co-workers, tennis or travel partners, etc.)...When role changes, often relationship does as well....Friendships are generally supportive.

Stage Four- Friends tend to validate and praise each other.

Stage Three- Friends are those who have the same beliefs.

Stage Two- Friends are co-conspirators.

Stage One- Friends are "fellow victims".

Love Relationships/Marriages- and how partners relate to each other at the various stages:

□ **Stage Seven-** Couple becomes a team who selflessly work together in a common mission outside of themselves (e.g. their children, their community, etc.)... Can easily put partner first, can even put other partner's mission above ones own without distain or expecting a quid pro quo... Are beyond being attached to and governed merely by anyone's expectations

□ **Stage Six-** Partners look to each other as a person to love and support as opposed to someone from whom love, sex, support and validation is merely expected. There is genuine caring, intimacy and respect that is not predicated on what you get back. When Sixes tell partner, "I love you", they mean just that.

□ **Stage Five-** Each partner dutifully fulfills the other's spouse/ relationship slot and all that it entails (e.g. sex partner, companion, co-parent, someone with whom to be intimate, share finances, etc.)... Partners are not necessarily governed by passion or strong attachment that transcends their roles, in many areas of the relationship

□ **Stage Four-** Partners look to relationship and each other as a source of love validation and approval. There is often an inordinate degree of jealousy and insecurity. Emphasis is on being loved (receiving) and validated as opposed to loving (giving). Fours often try to please partner as a way of getting back as much or more affection. When they say, "I love you", it can mean, "I want you to love me." Fours may often ask partner, "Do you love me?"

□ **Stage Three-** Both the foundation and the climate for the relationship are grounded in dictums (often clichés or stereotypes) that are usually based on long standing rules and traditions, but in any case were not willfully chosen (e.g. how they met, religious or ethnic background of anyone who could be considered for involvement, who works, who stays home, the nature of their sex life, fidelity, etc.)

□ **Stage Two-** Usually, one partner strongly dominates the other and/ or uses the relationship as a vehicle to act out in a variety of ways...Deception and even abuse is often the substitute for intimacy (what is not felt can be lied about)...Often demands that partner be faithful while they are not.

□ **Stage One-** The foundation of the relationship (and often the reason it even came to be) is security, dependency and neediness (perhaps emotionally or financially, etc.)...Often experienced (and seen) by partner as a "bottomless pit"...One or both partners may be preoccupied with "needing to be needed".

A key to good **Parenting** is to compliment what is age/stage appropriate. Consider this as a basic guideline for ideal parenting *at each stage of the child* (Note: On this page, when the stages of the *parents* are discussed, they are in parenthesis):

Stage Seven- You only need be proud and feel gratified for having been able to model/encourage Stage Seven behavior as a parent by those times when you put your own needs aside for those of your children without inducing guilt and by teaching the values of service. Respect from your children flows back to you synergistically. (Many Parents as Sevens choose to become foster parents, adopt needy children or find some similar mission to serve)

Stage Six- By the time *they* reach this stage, you and your children are hopefully equal emotionally. However, you are obviously still the parent...However, you parenting a child as a six whenever you are enjoying the process of helping them grow. (Parents in lower stages will often have difficulty understanding and appreciating their children in these highest stages.)

Stage Five- You have a certain number of years to influence your children, usually by example. Chances are that whatever they have not learned from you — regardless of whether or not that was by choice — by the time *they* reach Stage Five, they will learn elsewhere. So let go of any need to control their lives. Allow and honor the right of your adult children to be independent and different from you. By doing that, you will command respect without demanding it. (Fives consider parenting their children another role, albeit a very major and precious one.)

Stage Four- To encourage self-exploration while carefully and lovingly setting limits, letting go and allowing your adolescent make his or her own mistakes — all the while, remaining a source of support and guidance that he or she can turn to as needed. However, it is also crucial to provide discipline and “tough love” whenever an adolescent crosses the line. This could be your last opportunity to be the one who teaches your child the rules of life. (Stage Four parents are often obsessed with being loved, respected and considered a friend by their children. Highly authoritarian Stage Three parents have the most difficulty being effective with adolescents.)

Stage Three- To provide a solid structure and resolve to do whatever it takes to patiently teach those complex, yet basic rules of life is your main challenge with Stage Three children. By providing loving guidance along with appropriate discipline, children have the best possible environment to learn all about what it takes not only to fit in, but also to thrive and begin to discover their uniqueness. (It is not hard to see how Stage Three parents who stifle their kids and rule by fear, usually miss the mark. Moreover, fear mongering and type of abusive behavior do not translate to effective discipline.)

Stage Two- To let the toddler explore while teaching/setting limits and being mindful of his or her safety, yet not acting out your frustrations and emotions — especially anger — on to your child. This period can be thought of as a trial run for when your child becomes an adolescent, a stage that is less demanding physically, but much more demanding emotionally. (Stage Two parents may be very neglectful or abusive-emotionally, physically or even sexually. In extreme cases, have been known even to use their children to beg or steal for them, etc.)

Stage One- To provide unconditional love, nurturing and care during the first year of life. (Parents who themselves operate as Ones---regardless of the age of their child---may expect and encourage their children to become parentified and thus take care of them.)

How adult children at each stage view taking care of their aging **Parents**:

Stage Seven- “It’s an honor and gracious endeavor to give back”.

Stage Six- “It’s an opportunity to strengthen and complete our relationship while there is the chance”.

Stage Five- “Taking care of them is my duty. In addition, saving money now is a way I can maximize my inheritance. “...However, Fives are quite likely at times to find the experience fatiguing, overwhelming and in conflict with other aspects of life.

Stage Four- “Maybe now they will finally recognize/ love me”.

Stage Three- “Now I make the rules.”

Stage Two- “Now it’s my turn for revenge.”

Stage One- “What did they ever do for me?” ...Ones are also likely still to feel entitled to be on the receiving end, no matter how incapable their parents are of giving...Ones are least able to accept the reality of when parents die or are close to death, regardless of their age, health or other circumstances.

Most likely attitudes about **Sex** by the stages:

Stage Seven- “Sex is a way to deepen the loving connection in a spiritual way between two partners who love care greatly for each other”.

Stage Six- “Sex with my partner is an ecstatically pleasurable experience!”

Stage Five- “In addition to procreation, sex is a healthy, normal and nice way to have good sensations as well as an important part of any marriage or love relationship.”

Stage Four- “Sex is one way I feel needed and loved by my partner”. ... Also, four's sometimes use sex as an anxiety reducer.

Stage Three- Sex comes with a set of rules that can only be done one way (e.g. between married people, in the bedroom, missionary position, lights out, etc.)... Strong belief prevails that infidelity is *always* — and perhaps unforgivably — wrong.

Stage Two- Sex is a means by which to manipulate and control or truly humiliate the other person.

Stage One- “Putting out” is necessary to keep your partner happy and the relationship intact...On the other hand, Stage One is also the stage that is most identified with sexual addiction, where a partner is somewhere between difficult and impossible to satisfy sexually (as is the case with most addictions) and therefore might put all aspects of his or her relationship (and/or life) at risk.

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** for a relationship in your life—past or present—where some changes may be in order or which you would like to understand better (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for reference. For additional help, see Part III. Also, visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

CHAPTER 12

Careers and Professions

Selected Occupations Through the Typical Lense of Each Stage

This is how those who do these various types of work see themselves (and/or are seen by others), by the stages. Remember, rarely does anything less than a complex and unique mixture of several or even all the stages govern how you see your work in the real world.

Actors, Athletes, Musicians and other Performers:

- Stage Seven- Sees performance as a way to make a statement that will benefit the audience, raise consciousness in some important area and/or help others such as those who enjoy their performances to maximize their leisure time**
- Stage Six- Enjoys the challenge and exercise of talent that goes into the performance. Considers applause as merely feedback for that performance and does not become preoccupied by (or addicted to) it...Enjoys (for example) acting more than *being* an actor, playing more than *being* a celebrity... Loves their sport/game as a passion... Enjoys watching excellence in their field perhaps as much as playing/performing... On a professional level, is inspired by achieving greater and greater excellence which often involves pushing the boundaries more and more**
- Stage Five- Considers it a job for which external rewards such as excellent pay are most important.**
- Stage Four- Relishes celebrity... applause is taken as personal validation...all expressions of audience appreciation are sought, regardless of the quality of a given performance... performance anxiety about being judged as well as self downing about a below average performance is common
- Stage Three- Can perform only under strict direction with and adherence to "the script". In sports, the referees and umpires optimally operate here by definition (though they certainly usually still enjoy the work they do as Sixes).
- Stage Two- Uses performance skills or celebrity to con, exploit or defraud others.
- Stage One- Uses such things as the high unemployment rate, difficulties finding work and other harsh realities of their field as an excuse not to work harder or at all.

Attorney:

- Stage Seven- Truly seeks justice; and will choose the branch of law, type of advocacy and legal positions that will maximize impact (e.g. become a prosecutor who is sensitive to victim rights, go into community law, help poor people or developing nations, etc.) and always for the highest motives...Will not hesitate to take a pro bono case that he/she believes in.**

- Stage Six- Loves particular law specialty and is usually very good at it... Sees law as a fascinating work in progress with much ambiguity, lots of room for exceptions and as an outlet for creativity.**

- Stage Five- Will practice branch of law that is thought to be most lucrative and provides best connections.**

- Stage Four- Seeks specialty, professional environment and/or types of cases that are seen as most prestigious.

- Stage Three- Sees law as absolute, rigid, unbending and unforgiving ... Likely to believe that punitive measures should be taken toward anyone (with very little or no exception) who deviates from the letter of law for any reason, regardless of the circumstances...May join the practice run by family members, because that's what is expected of them.

- Stage Two- Uses skills and contacts to defraud or take unfair advantage of others

- Stage One- Finds the easiest and most undemanding type of work to do.

Business Owner:

□ Stage Seven- Sees customers as *clients* who have entrusted them with a need, and who are to be served with sincerity and care...Would rather send customer/client elsewhere than not be of genuine service (believing that is a good strategy for business as well as life)...Is truly concerned with the long term benefits of giving value

□ Stage Six- Enjoys the game of business as well as the specific type of business they are in...Focused on meeting the various challenges business requires...Sees profits additionally as means for expansion as well as a method of evaluating business decisions and objectives

□ Stage Five- See customers as dollar bills and opportunities to which they will lawfully (and within whatever may be their code of ethics) sell and profiteer as much as possible...Business direction is profit motivated, bottom line is what matters and drives practically all decisions

□ Stage Four- May undermine business through lack of assertiveness (by not using hard edge when appropriate or by overreacting when handling a difficult problem), avoiding making unpopular decisions and over caution due to anxiety about making mistakes and failing... Fours seek recognition for themselves, over and above their organization as well as within it

□ Stage Three- May also go into the family business, not out of choice, but because of unquestioned tradition, to avoid family alienation or to alleviate the irrational fear of poverty...Will employ very little creativity or give much attention to changing trends...Seeks business with lots of structure (e.g., a franchise).

□ Stage Two- Consciously operates some type of fraudulent or unethical enterprise...Would not hesitate to use or bend bankruptcy laws liberally.

□ Stage One- Seeks and chooses an easy path (perhaps the family business or some other turnkey operation) in order to minimize own necessary efforts ...Will often fail in business, due to a lack of initiative and hard work.

Construction and Tradespersons:

□ Stage Seven- Appreciates the contribution their projects make to the larger world and future generations

□ Stage Six- Enjoys the work of their chosen trade, the creativity of applying specialized skills to difficult tasks and seeing projects come together... Values the subtleties as well (e.g., working outdoors, being in the moment with a high level of concentration, etc.)...Supports new technology and more advanced and efficient ways of doing the job

□ Stage Five- Is motivated by such things as good pay and benefits, decent hours and the freedom of not having to do or think about work after hours

□ Stage Four- Finds the camaraderie and feeling of belonging or being part of a group to be an important aspect of the work they do

□ Stage Three- Skips any pretence of creativity in favor of the traditional...Often believes “they don’t make things like they used to” and can feel quite threatened by new advancements and technology

□ Stage Two- Looks for ways to exploit their system and those they work with for personal gain and profit

□ Stage One- Depends on such things as employment, union protection and other people (who they work with, for and/or in their field) for job security and support for exerting as little effort as they have to...Seeks easiest possible work with least responsibility for results

Executive/ Managers:

- Stage Seven- Keeps the focus on the greater good...encourages subordinates to become part of organization's mission...cares about members of their team beyond merely their immediate use to the organization**

- Stage Six- Motivates subordinates to care, be creative and thrive, because it makes good business sense...encourages them to help the common cause by reaching their potential...reinforces and values a subordinate's right to give dissenting opinions (would prefer access to the entire mind of a subordinate as opposed to only the part of their mind that agrees with them)...wants the brightest and most capable people around them (and are not threatened by the prospect of being compared to subordinates who outshine them in certain areas)**

- Stage Five- Focuses on fairness in the workplace and giving tangible rewards for good performance... "Makes the trains run on time".**

- Stage Four- Gives and seeks ample praise and personal validation...may feel threatened by a subordinate who is "too competent" or getting too much recognition... believes (often erroneously) that the respect they get from subordinates is personal rather than related their role as boss...often covers for subordinates in order to be liked.

- Stage Three- Rules by fearful atmosphere... heavy, unforgiving and unbending on discipline...discourages and often punishes dissenting opinions of subordinates

- Stage Two- Deceives, manipulates, takes advantage of, harasses, abuses and/or bullies subordinates in a predatory and often very personal manner

- Stage One- Makes job of subordinates (as well as self) as easy and sheltered as possible... keeps work environment safe and non-threatening...but then might reinforce a subordinate's feelings of inadequacy to find a better job, when conflict arises.

Military/ Law Enforcement:

□ Stage Seven- The calling is nothing less than a cherished opportunity to join and contribute to the mission in order to help save the planet or a subset of it...See themselves as warriors against evil for the greater good...Motivated by the opportunity to do heroic acts, regardless of whether or not personally recognized for them...Realize and accept the reality that their mission could result in extreme sacrifice and even death

□ Stage Six- Military or law enforcement offers unique opportunity to do a specific kind work they love

□ Stage Five- Government benefits take care of family, medical needs, perhaps even housing and provide a good pension as well as many other perks. In addition, there are great opportunities for advancement.

□ Stage Four- Thrives on the image and potential for admiration and hero worship “the uniform” provides in certain circles... Often works for the recognition, awards and medals

□ Stage Three- Regardless of whether in a high position (providing an opportunity to give orders) or low position (which often requires the endless taking of orders) thrives on the structure of an authoritarian environment that military or law enforcement organizations offer

□ Stage Two- Sees their position as a foot in the door that comes with an opportunity to rip off the government, shake people down and or act out in a variety of different ways (possibly even including brutally for brutality sake)

□ Stage One- Joins military or law enforcement field to be taken care of by a system they perceive as providing the ultimate level of job security and benefits, that provide protection extending to all basic needs and potential disasters ...Seeks easiest and safest assignments

Physicians, nurses, and other health professionals:

Stage Seven- To make the greatest impact possible on those who put their health and lives into the hands of these helping professionals...To save some lives and greatly improve the quality of others by applying their skills to cure as well as reduce pain and suffering

Stage Six- Passion for the specific work they do along with an intense interest in the new developments that affect their field and ability to be maximally effective

Stage Five- The field is lucrative, recession proof and will always offer opportunities

Stage Four- For the admiration of those they help as well as those impressed with the profession to which they belong

Stage Three- Would choose to adhere to traditional procedures over being sensitive to the unique needs of a patient or others who rely on their services or have to deal with them

Stage Two- Uses position of power to exploit vulnerable people under their care

Stage One- Uses the security of the field to meet their needs, while doing only the absolute minimum and showing little or no concern for those who depend on them

Politician:

- Stage Seven-** Would not concern himself/herself with being re-elected, being popular or *being* anything for that matter... It is only the cause(s) that they seek or are in office to take on and the problems they hear a calling to resolve for the good of their constituency (and beyond) that is important to them...Has no hidden agendas...Says and believes the same things in private as in public...Is humbled by the sense of duty that comes with their position and the opportunity to serve.
- Stage Six-** Loves public policy and doing the work exceptionally well that each aspect of it requires ...May even enjoy (for real) the challenge of an election campaign and the opportunity to get out their message
- Stage Five-** It is a job that provides power, contacts and perhaps a social circle that he or she may otherwise not have access to; but is not yet a calling.
- Stage Four-** The most gratifying part of the job is the prestige that comes with it...Being liked and admired by constituents and others who are impressed by the office held...Stage Four politicians are governed by polls and often obsessed with their own popularity or lack thereof...Sees role and position as more of an honor (being in office) than a duty (to deliver on promises, for example).
- Stage Three-** They see themselves as ruling rather than serving their constituencies. They would perhaps have no problem even supporting the principles of a totalitarian dictatorship were they in that kind of system or society... In addition, extreme left and right wingers, for example, and (their often toady like staunch---sometimes idol worshiping--- followers) who never go beyond ideological rules to carve out positions — generally are operating out of Stage Three. Talking points are considered sacred and never to be challenged.
- Stage Two-** A politician who is out for whatever he or she can get away with and/or steal in the way of money and power...Will say or do anything necessary to get into office and hold on to power, often through deception and demagoguery
- Stage One-** To the extent that an opportunity for a One in this field exists, it would be a very low-level situation where the government is seen as an undemanding and unlimited resource to fulfill personal and security needs (for example, “no show” jobs they consider to be an entitlement).

Psychotherapist:

- **Stage Seven-** Sees their own life's work as being a healer and force to help and improve the lives of patients/clients and all of the people *they* impact...Does some pro bono work...Sees mission as helping as many people and as deeply as possible...Sees (and sets up) office as “sanctuary” for clients/patients to work on their most haunting issues and life problems (In addition to Stage Six below)
- **Stage Six-** Finds helping people to be challenging and intrinsically rewarding...There is also a level of affinity and layer of empathy for the population they treat...Will religiously stay within their area(s) of expertise and do only what they know and do best.
- **Stage Five-** Consider it a fine profession with flexibility in hours, a customized work environment and a nice income.
- **Stage Four-** Likes being a therapist as a way of gaining deference and admiration from patients/clients.
- **Stage Three-** May apply their favorite dogmatic theory or technique—in a highly authoritarian manner---to every case they treat, regardless of whether that approach is the best in a given situation...Insists that patients/clients conform to their personal values and instructions if they want to get better.
- **Stage Two-** Will exploit (e.g., sexually, etc.) patients/clients whenever and however it suits them...May also do what Stage One therapists do, only more consciously and deliberately.
- **Stage One-** Without realizing it, they breed dependency by training their patients/clients to need therapy — and them — more than any healthy treatment would dictate. This is often in order to have their own emotional and financial needs met. Thus, their therapy serves the psychotherapist more than it does the patient/client (who it is meant to serve).

Note: Being aware of the POS of the therapist you choose to work with is often important. Many therapists (but not all) are less than effective when trying to help clients who have presenting issues that typify higher stages than their own POS.

Teachers/ College Professors:

Stage Seven- Marvels at the impact their work can have on the future of their students (and the ripple effects of all those people and elements of the planet that will be touched by what they have taught their students as well) for an infinite period into the future

Stage Six- Loves their subject and the art of teaching it... An affinity for the type of students they teach is an added bonus

Stage Five- Are often doing it mainly for the benefits and favorable work conditions (hours, summers off schedule, etc.) that teaching provides... Might consider students merely as a means to the perks their job provides

Stage Four- Feels superior to students... Enjoys the deference, but often mistakes it for genuine respect and affection

Stage Three- Gets off on the sometime dictatorial authority that job often provides

Stage Two- Sees students as prey, to be exploited

Stage One- Are still on the job, mainly because bureaucracy and tenure protect them

Writers (and Speakers):

□ Stage Seven- Are in tune to the ripple effects their work could have on their audience, the many people they and their audience will impact and perhaps even the larger world...Feels very lucky to have the opportunity to do this kind of work even though it may be a tough field sometimes...Work speaks to a higher calling...Would easily pass on top engagements in favor of less lucrative or prestigious ones that would better provide them the platform to get out their exact message in their own way...Believe so much in their message that a great presentation of it is often inordinately effortless (In addition to Stage Six below)

□ Stage Six- Loves to communicate their message and feels passionate about what they have to say or they would be doing/saying something else...Chooses professional organizations as a way find mentors and enhance skills

□ Stage Five- Likes the flexibility of hours, perks, pay and contacts their field provides them...Will write and speak about topics and in formats that are most marketable and lucrative...Are often commissioned to write or speak about topics and say things they might even disagree with...Sometimes have “publish or perish” mentality ...Joins professional organizations to network and maximize opportunities

□ Stage Four- Likes the prestige of being a writer or speaker...Cherishes good feedback as a means to self-validation... Often motivated by the anxiety over deadlines and performance, etc.

□ Stage Three- “Preaches to the choir” in a highly conventional and expected way, with an underlying fear based message (usually some variation of “what would happen” If and/or when some tradition is violated, rule is broken or some drive toward change, which is framed as totally wrongheaded or evil, is not defeated)

□ Stage Two- Uses skills and opportunity to defame, deceive, demagogue and deliberately spread false information

□ Stage One- Communicates a variation of the “we are all victims” theme, with emphasis on the “hopeless” of a problem and little---if any---strategy toward solution or to help rise above plight

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** for your career (or even certain vocational activities), both as it is and as you would like it to be. (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for reference. For additional help, see Part III or visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

CHAPTER 13

Organizations and Institutions

They operate By the Stages, Too

Just as the *Stage Climbing* model can explain the motives of individuals, couples and families; it fits organizations, institutions and other groups as well! You can use the calibrations in this chapter to determine which organizations are right for you, your attitudes about them and just how they now fit into your life.

Here is how **Business Organizations** operate by the stages:

- Stage Seven- Policy is established and management is very conscious of giving everyone – employees, customers/clients, and other associates the fairest possible treatment as well as highest regard...Customer service is a genuine part of the company’s mission statement and reinforces its intention to make an impact (as opposed to merely a marketing tool)....Does pro bono work, donates goods to community and/or a portion of profits to charity... Is environmentally and socially conscious.**

- Stage Six- Creativity is valued and reinforced in an environment that listens to the opinions and suggestions of all staff...Extraordinary efforts are made to make maximum use of all talent (considered a major resource) for the long-term good of the organization including it’s bottom line.**

- Stage Five- Perks, money and benefits are mainly used to manage employees in a conventional environment where the management style is tailored to the primary mission of the company which is maximizing profits ...Other than bottom line profit making, almost everything else is considered small potatoes.**

- Stage Four- Management sees value in pacifying, being kind to employees and/or defers (whether or not by choice) to labor union.

- Stage Three- Run by strict rules and unquestioned authority (e.g. assembly line factories, post office, etc.)...Values “yes men”, toadies, “company men” and those who totally blend in and follow the system and “party line” without bringing attention to themselves.

- Stage Two- Operates on a foundation of lies, deception and fraudulent practices.

- Stage One- Provides sheltered environment to certain employees...Deliberately hires others who would be most likely to latch for the sake of job security.

Government by the stages would operate like this. However, as in the case with all institutions and organizations, unique combinations of these are certainly possible:

Stage Seven- Utopian society, which may exist only in theory and folklore

Stage Six- True democracy, where each person has an equal say

Stage Five- Representative democracy (such as USA)

Stage Four- Benevolent dictatorship

Stage Three- Authoritarian dictatorship (or possibility even a totalitarian one where oppositional thoughts are as punishable as forbidden deeds)

Stage Two- Rogue state where government exists and rulers are in power through the blood or exploitation of its citizens and/or weaker nations

Stage One- “Client state” of another other nation who supports them in return for various forms of aid and as a reward for their dependency

These are some examples of **Organizations** that serve those at various stages:

Stage Seven- Communities of the elders and luminaries of their chosen fields

Stage Six- Artistic, creative, professional and spiritual communities (that value and encourage uniqueness and freethinking)

Stage Five- Business organizations

Stage Four- Schools and universities

Stage Three- Military

Stage Two- Prisons and other aspects of the justice system (where mission is to help Twos climb to Stage Three), crime organizations

Stage One- Nursing homes, hospitals, charities

Schools generally operate at the various stages (or a combination of them as well:

Stage Seven- Focused on grand mission of preparing generations of students to take over and better their world (In addition to Stage Six below)

Stage Six- Encourages students to find and maximize unique talents..."Open" classrooms

Stage Five- Well run by highly competent staff for mainstream students, provides good programs, such as sports and other extracurricular activities

Stage Four- Good at marketing and promotion...Shows calculated "sensitivity" to parents and others who can affect or determine the extent of their existence or success (not quite as focused on the students, as their carefully crafted image would indicate)

Stage Three- Traditional schools that are run in an "old fashioned" or strict authoritarian manner

Stage Two- Specializes in various degrees of discipline for delinquents and those who act out. (Often part of a justice system.

Stage One- Provides various types of special education for challenged and special need (but non-delinquent) students.

If there were seven **Travel Agencies**, each of which specialized in booking vacations and trips for its clients by the stages from which they wished to operate while away, a summary of their specialties or mission statements would look something like this:

□ **“Stage Seven Travels” – Sets up trips to places such as Africa, India, poverty-stricken third world and disaster ridden countries to work for and contribute to various types of victimized and needy populations...Doctors Without Borders, for example, and various other charitable missions, etc.**

□ **“Stage Six Travels”- Books “Outward Bound” type adventures, Shamanic trips to indigenous cultures for healing... Tennis, baseball, football or golf “camps” for adults, etc.**

□ **“Stage Five Travels” – Specializes in bargain vacations and trips, cheap excursions to popular places that keep you very busy and use every minute to do as much as possible with what time you have to be away...main mission is to make sure you got more than your money’s worth**

□ **“Stage Four Travels”- Trips for singles and others whose mission is to meet people and make friendships... Vacations that encourage dressing to impress...Cruises only on the ships or lines with the most prestige...Vacations you would rather not even go on, but take to please someone else; such as a spouse, family member, group of friends or someone you are visiting**

□ **“Stage Three Travels”- Visiting the family compound...Highly predictable theme parks**

□ **“Stage Two Travels” -Provides transportation to and from penitentiaries to which offender clients are sentenced as well as transportation and accommodations for their visitors...Books other vacations as well, but at a very high premium price or to non-existent locations...no bargains here (agency may not even exist by the time you actually leave for the trip)**

□ **“Stage One Travels” – Mindless vacations where you can let yourself be totally taken care of and pampered, such as at an all-inclusive resort or spa where pure self-indulgence is the mission and the norm.**

Use this reproducible form to **Make Your Own *Stage Climbing* Calibration** for an organization, institution or group that has meaning for you. (Use calibrations in this section as appropriate for reference. For additional help, see Part III or visit www.StageClimbing.com):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

Part III

Actionable Strategies:

How to Climb Your Way to Personal Greatness

Part III provides you exercises and strategies to reach your target stages, help you further integrate the *Stage Climbing* process into your life and make whatever changes you have chosen for yourself in the most straightforward way and in the shortest time possible. More than anything else, your quest for personal greatness in an area of life depends on how strong your commitment is to get there. “There” is whatever you define it to be. I have included two categories of strategies and exercises in this *workbook* format:

- **Strategies that focus on your present POS and the hooks specific to it---broken down by each of the Seven Stages:**

These speak directly to the unique choices, issues, challenges and opportunities of each stage. Consider them all; and use the ones that speak to you as appropriate. Come back to this section often, whenever you can use a bit of help or support with your *Stage Climbing* process.

- **Additional *Stage Climbing* strategies that focus on your POS and hooks across all seven stages:**

These begin on page 180. They will help you further calibrate and succeed in your stage climb, by focusing on the bigger picture.

All of the strategies included in this section are designed to keep you on the path to your chosen target stage in any aspect of life.

Strategies That Focus On Your POS and Hooks

Specific to and Broken Down By Each of the Seven Stages

Use the calibrations in Part II along with those you have created for yourself for specific points of reference. These strategies are timeless. They can be revisited any time you determine that your *Stage Climbing* process is in need of a major overhaul, a minor tweaking in one stage or anything in between.

CHAPTER 14

Taking the Initiative

Climbing Out of Stage One

Stage One Action Steps You Can Now Take:

- **Identify** areas of your life where you see Stage One as being your Principal Operating Stage. (For example, the way in which you may relate to aging parents) Then list any areas where you may merely have hooks in Stage One (For example, your list could be entitled, *things in my life I don't like but feel powerless to change*, etc.).
- For each item you have identified, note **which** ones you would like to change and **why** as well as which you are happy keeping.
- Always make sure you know exactly **what's in it for you** to make the changes you have identified. Without solid reasons that are your own (as opposed to somebody else's), you simply will not be motivated leave your comfort zone. This principle also applies with varying degrees to all the stages.

- Next, formulate a **simple goal** for each hook or aspect of your life you wish to change. In other words, if you could totally take your life into your own hands with respect to that hook, how would life be different or better?

- Now focus on **taking some steps** in the right direction. Make a long list under the heading, *if I were taking the initiative, I'd_____*. (For example, getting information about going to school or an independent financial opinion to help you evaluate the feasibility of leaving your marriage, updating your resume, etc.) Make that list as comprehensive as possible of things you could do to take some initiative with respect to those areas of your life you have identified as wanting to change.

- Using the calibrations as a guide, **challenge** those fears and anxieties that stand in your way of taking prudent action. Never let them hold you back. Settle for nothing less than taking control of your life. Remember, each time you allow your comfort zone to overshadow your dream or goal; you are strengthening a Stage One hook. Each time you take action in spite of a fear or anxiety, you are *Stage Climbing*.

- Fine tune and add to your list of **action steps** (ways you can take a desired initiative that you have been avoiding) — at least one for each hook that you have identified — that you are willing and committed to do immediately (even today if possible). Remember, as soon as you begin to take those steps, your stage climb with respect to that part of your life has triumphantly begun. If you find this difficult, try as an intermediate step, simply acting *as if* you could or were taking charge. The more you do this, the easier will become to commit to taking those necessary action steps.

CHAPTER 15

Learning Your Limits*Climbing Out of Stage Two***Stage Two Action Steps You Can Now Take:**

- **Identify** and list areas of your life (for your own eyes, of course) where you recognize hooks (e.g., a tendency to lie, etc.), or a POS in Stage Two (e.g., your tendency to advance at work by taking credit for undeserved things).

- Identify and list some potential **role models** who are getting it right. What would you be doing differently if you were following their lead or the model they present? How would it be of benefit to you?

- Identify what you are **willing to change** about yourself. Include areas where the changes might not instantly feel gratifying, but could have long-term positive effects for you, such as having the type of relationship or job you want. As with Stage One, at Stage Two, becoming aware of your hooks and making a commitment to do whatever it takes to change them is the lion's share of the battle.

- Make a list of **everything** you can think of that could be called, "What's *in it for me, personally to climb out of Stage Two?*"

- **Reflect** and answer for yourself: "Why must I always have what I want?" Do you know of any actual person first hand (celebrities or others you know only by legend do not count) who has

everything he or she wants? How could your life be better if you just changed this one belief/attitude/demand?

- Consider **involving yourself** in some new form of spiritual endeavor that may have been missing for you up until now. This can be through an organized religion or just simply by discovering your own higher self as discussed in the higher stages.
- Whether or not this is new to you, **consider the possibility** that there is a God or higher being, with consequences beyond the obvious ones. If that were the case, what might you change in your life and how might you operate differently with respect to the Stage Two hooks you have identified?
- Read some of the principles that whatever **spiritual path** interests you most subscribes to, with an open mind. Regard these teachings simply as alternative choices (not dictums) to consider and then possibly to make.
- **Think** about Twos you know or have known or tried to get close to. These could have been friends, lovers, business associates or co-workers. Perhaps they related to you through an extremely trustworthy facade, only to prove be thoroughly untrustworthy. What did these people have in common? See if you can recognize how they may have affected you and even how you might still be susceptible to the manipulation of others like this. *Are you, and if so how might you still be affecting others in this way?* If either is the case, reflect on what changes you would now like to make.

CHAPTER 16

Awakening to New Ideas*Climbing Out of Stage Three***Stage Three Action Steps You Can Now Take:**

- **Identify** and list the aspects of your life where you recognize yourself as having hooks in Stage Three (i.e., where you —habitually or even blindly — follow an obsolete rule that no longer works for you, applies to you or possibly even conflicts with your life). In what life area(s) might your POS be at Stage Three (e.g., your marriage or parenting style)?
- Be aware of and **challenge** your thinking whenever you tell yourself some variation of these two Stage Three mantras, *“I must fit in”* and/or *“I can do/be only what is expected of me”*.
- What have you always wanted to do with your life but resisted merely because you were **afraid to march to the sound of a different drum**? Make a complete list of anything that occurs to you in answer to that question along with a list of those risks you *wish* you could now take.
- Look at each item on the lists you just made and **ask yourself**, *“What steps can I now take in order to pursue what I really want to pursue, even though it necessitates my being different or on an unfamiliar path-possibly out of my comfort zone”*?
- Next, make commitment to **begin taking some of those risks** you have identified — perhaps very small ones at first, working your way up to the more important ones. The task is to do whatever it takes to bring yourself closer to the potential you recognize for yourself.

- Make a special effort to be around and to **relate to people who are different** in some way from those to which you normally relate.

- Reserve your highest level of **respect** for people according to what they *do*, not merely what they say, how nice they are to you or the position they hold (i.e., who they *are*).

- **Pay special attention** to any tendency you have to employ that typical Stage Three reaction to conflict — where in a given situation, you passively feel compelled to follow an unchallenged rule or dictum that in reality does not fit for you. Make a strong commitment to yourself to resist the urge to go in any direction that is not compatible with the goals you have set for yourself.

You (as well as everyone else on this planet) are different from any other human being ever created since the beginning of time. Do something new each day to honor, rather than ignore this wonderful reality.

CHAPTER 17

Accepting Yourself*Climbing Out of Stage Four***Stage Four Action Steps You Can Now Take:**

- Note the area(s) of your life Stage Four might be your POS. **Identify** and list all of the Stage Four hooks you can recognize —especially those you would like to eliminate.

- **Imagine getting all of the love and admiration** you could ever want from anyone and everyone on your radar screen (close people in your life and/ or those who look at you from a distance as a celebrity). Imagine being a highly popular and sought out luminary in your field. How does that feel? You can certainly create your ideal Stage Four fantasy in your own mind, whenever you choose. Take a minute to imagine just what in the areas of acceptance and approval for you would be ultimate. Here are a few other Stage Four questions to consider and reflect upon--- How much energy do you put into being loved, applauded, admired, revered, idolized, and into creating an image to be admired? Is it worth it (especially if you can create the feelings it provides without expending frustrating or desperate energy)? If you had complete control of your Stage Four hooks, what would you do differently? What is preventing you from providing to yourself (in the area of acceptance) what you are seeking from others?

- Imagine for a moment that you were **absolutely fearless** and immune to anxiety. (For example, you did not *fear* rejection from others, the prospect of looking foolish or even publicly failing at something you consider important, etc.) What are some things you would do differently, or life changes you would make (that perhaps your fears or anxieties now put beyond your reach)?

Make a comprehensive list of whatever comes up for you, along with an idea or two for a strategy to take at least one *prudent* risk to counter each fear you listed. (For example, begin researching a job change you are wanting to make, asking your boss for a raise, asking someone out for a date, or bringing up a difficult issue that you have been avoiding with a friend, your spouse or partner.)

- **What is the worst possible thing that could happen** if what you feared the most actually happened (e.g., a rejection by someone you asked out for a date). Ask yourself, “Are the consequences really so dire that I need to continue avoiding it or living my life in deference to that fear?” If the answer is yes, then ask yourself “why”? Do not give up challenging yourself until you are satisfied that you are acting out of *choice*, rather than fear/anxiety.

- Be aware of how you may be **confusing insight** (the healthy learning that results from both positive and negative life experiences) and **hindsight** (berating yourself for not knowing “then what you know now”). Which of your hooks are fueled by hindsight? What do you *now* need to believe to replace things you have learned by hindsight with insight?

- Try spending an hour at first, and work your way up to an entire day **acting as if** you were genuinely fearless. Consciously walk and even breathe as though you were fearless. First, try it on a day or at a time when there is not much going on, like during a weekend or day off that you can spend alone. Notice what comes up for you. Gradually extend this new mind-set to the times when it would matter most, such as during the week---perhaps to meet a “dreaded” work confrontation. Notice how much easier acting fearlessly becomes, as you are more familiar and comfortable with this attitude and posture. The great performers, such as Sir Laurence Olivier, often had stage fright but knew how to act as if they were in complete control in spite of it. Soon the jitters would disappear, meaning that they “fooled” themselves as much as they were able to convince everyone else of their self-confidence!

- Next, **apply these tools to your biggest fear or anxiety**. First, identify it; and then allow yourself to visualize how your life could be different if this fear or anxiety were permanently gone. Once you have done that, make a detailed strategy to finally obliterate the power of that hook which underlies your anxiety. (Be sure to repeat this step for every major Stage Four hook you have identified that you want to eliminate.) Then revisit the last exercise and spend time in the situation, specifically *acting as if* you were not afraid of the feared items that haunt you the most.

- **Put the spotlight on any and all the remaining areas** that you are depressed about, anxious about, angry about, stressed about and that prompt you to question your self-confidence. Sometimes it especially helps to look at each of your issues separately (as though it were your only challenge). How would someone you truly *looked up to* handle the problem you are working on? What would have to change within yourself for you to be able deal with it masterfully (as well as the person you most admire could)? Whether or not he or she is even aware of your struggle (or even aware that you exist), use that person as a model as you proceed to face anything that triggers your anxiety or other types of upset. Working on these aspects of your life can be a major challenge; but conquering them will be extremely rewarding and well worth any effort it takes.

- **Forgive** those toward whom you hold anger. This can be a very liberating experience *for you*. Forgiving does not mean that you excuse their behavior. It simply means that you are *letting go of the pain you feel within yourself* with respect to them. This will free your energy for bigger and better things.

- Consider getting psychotherapy, coaching or other forms of **professional help** with any of the Stage Four hooks in your way that you cannot seem to handle by using these specific strategies. The Appendix gives some starting point resources, should you need them.

CHAPTER 18

Rising Above Your Roles*Facilitating Your Climb Beyond Stage Five***Some Action Steps To Facilitate Your Stage Five Climb:**

- In what major areas of your life is your POS in Stage Five? Identify what you see as your Stage Five hooks. As you have with previous stages, **note and list** them.
- Next, **identify** those hooks and POS areas of your life that you would like to change (as opposed to those where you prefer to stay neutral).
- For each item you want to change, **ask yourself**, *“If I were not attached to a role (such as breadwinner, husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, boss, subordinate, fundraising chairman, friend or neighbor), what would be the ideal situation for this aspect of my life?”*
- **Ponder** on how you believe your life could be simpler, more enjoyable, more purposeful and less overwhelming.
- To the extent your POS is at Stage Five in an aspect of life, you are generally still motivated more by external rewards than internal rewards. **Pretend** those external rewards, such as money, were not a factor. Ask yourself, *“What roles do I then choose to keep?”* (In addition, remember, sometimes trading one role for another is indeed the best solution to a dilemma. Thus, keeping Stage Five solutions in your arsenal are often quite useful.) You will serve yourself well by asking yourself often what it is that you wish to keep (regardless of the externals) as you climb out of Stage Five.

- In light of the above assessment, most simply put — what is it that you want to do/change? What action steps are you *willing* to take to bring about the changes you want?
- Next, **set specific goals** as to what you would most like to accomplish with respect to everything you have identified.
- **What are you fearing** or telling yourself that could prevent you from succeeding?
- Resolve to do as little as necessary of whatever you have chosen to discontinue. Expect some discomfort. Whenever you give up a role, the **void** alone can bring about some uneasiness. Don't get discouraged. Assure yourself there is something far better for you ahead, even if you do not see it now. *Act as if* the void is a temporary one to be replaced by whatever it is that you really want in its place (or resolve that ultimately you don't need it).
- What **sources of help** (e.g., a mentor, support group, coach, or therapist, etc.) would be most beneficial to you right now in order to explore and/or facilitate the life changes you want to make, but are having difficulty doing on your own? Take a step or two in the direction of getting that help and support.

Remember, for certain things or aspects of life you feel most neutral about, “necessary evils” and/or are means for enjoying or maximizing life at the higher stages, Stage Five can also be your target.

CHAPTER 19

Living your Passions

Strengthening Everything Stage Six

Stage Six Action Steps:

Since this is a target stage, climbing out of it may certainly not be what you want. That is a highly personal matter. In addition, I do not know of an example of anyone who has *totally* passed through Stage Six. In that spirit, I offer you some action steps to strengthen Stage Six as your POS in chosen areas of life:

- Our **passions** are a major part of what determine our inner purpose and calling. If you made a list of all the things, you feel passionately about and are truly committed to—regardless of what anyone else may think of them—you would have a list of the things that constitute an important aspect of the *meaning of your life* in the simplest possible terms. Make that list, consult it often and add to it each time a new item occurs to you. Keep it handy as a private reference.

- Think of the **sun as a metaphor** for that comprehensive list of your passions. Then imagine your fears and obstacles as the clouds and storms that are blocking the sun from shining through. This inner turbulence is what blocks the natural process of *Stage Climbing*. To the extent that you are living in Stage Six, you have managed to eliminate those storms and clouds from a given aspect of your life. Make another list of all those obstacles you can identify that are still blocking you in some way. Include old hurts you have not let go of from childhood to present and people for whom you still carry resentment. Resolve to use every tool at your disposal to work toward eliminating these obstacles as much as possible.

- What **hooks into the lower stages** do you now recognize that may not have been apparent to you earlier? Take some time to revise your strategies as appropriate for acting on those lower stage hooks.

- If all things were possible, **what would you do differently with your** life right now? After you have answered this question for today, try to project ahead to next month, next year, five years, twenty years, and finally to the end of your life. How would you answer this question differently for today from the perspective of each of these different periods of time?

- Make a list of at least ten times when you were at **your absolute best** — at peak performance, feeling successful, unstoppable, “bulletproof” and full of passion. Select one of the times you just listed (perhaps the most powerful one). Close your eyes and relive that moment. Allow yourself to re-experience the glory of those feelings. See the sights, smell the smells and hear the sounds while you allow yourself to re-experience that feeling of having arrived, as fully as possible. Then open your eyes. Observe the body language, breath, thoughts and facial expressions that go with the experience that you just relived. This is your mind and body in a peak state — your zone of passion. This state of mind is something that you can trigger at will. This is also a natural frame of mind for you at Stage Six. You can produce it anytime you wish to be in a peak state. Eventually it will come more and more automatically to you.

- **If you could be in the peak state**, you just identified (body language and all) what would you most like to tackle now? Using this peak state as a foot into the door of what you are most passionate about, identify where would you now most wish to apply that zone of passion you just created (which, remember, you can recreate again anytime...and I suggest you do often!).

- **If you were beyond money** — a billionaire — what would you do differently with your life? (Include what you would do after that “big trip” and spending spree is over.) In addition, what would you do differently if you were to believe yourself to be completely and absolutely in control

of your destiny? Make a list of whatever comes to mind. There is no doubt that there are items you have listed that are impossible to do sans the money. So when your list is complete, cross them off (for now). Then, pick out those things that you could still accomplish with your present resources. Chances are there are some real passions to fulfill right now.

- At what do you consider yourself the “**best in the world**”? Make another list— *“If I were only to do what I believe I were the best at there is, I would _____”* Make that list as long as possible.
- Make a list of the things you are most likely to be doing when you are **feeling the best about yourself**.
- **Spend a set amount of time** such as one full day (adjust the amount of time up or down to what you are truly willing to do) only doing that, which you associate with your strongest feelings of passion. Take special note as to how it feels.
- If you could have **any mentor in the world** (who is either alive today or has ever lived), who would that person or those people be? Take a current dilemma or situation you are considering or with which you are now struggling. When you have something in mind, write a short essay — even a paragraph or two — on how that person would handle or resolve your issue or dilemma. What do your “mentors” *believe* about your circumstances that you would be much better off believing? Keep in mind the fact that you can have as many of these kinds of “mentors” as you want— even different ones for different aspects of your life. With this exercise, think of them (your “mentors”) as your “strongest self” which you can access 24 hours a day.
- Is there **an actual mentor**, coach or therapist who is now available to you in person, which you could reach out to for help in manifesting your dream or removing the obstacles to it? Consider getting the help you need to get moving.

- To the extent that you believe, as I do, that from now on the most powerful answers and guidance you seek reside inside yourself just waiting to be accessed; it is crucial to find a **regular practice** to tap into this precious source of information, passion and peace. Regular meditation, yoga, long quiet and reflective walks visualization and journeying (or a combination of them that uniquely suits you); all provide excellent tools to deepen your conscious connection with your inner core. These are the best interventions there are at Stage Six and higher. There are numerous sources of information available to help you develop and enhance these practices as staples in your life. Some of the best books as well as places where they are taught are included in the Appendix section of this book.

- **Mindfulness meditation** is an extremely easy thing to learn, yet something that few people (if anybody) actually masters *completely*. Sit comfortably in a chair, close your eyes, and for a set amount of time, focus all of your attention on your breathing (without trying to change how you breathe in any way). Simply staying in the present moment while following your breath as a guide is but one of many meditation techniques that are beyond the scope of this book to discuss fully; but using available resources to learn one that you will practice regularly will pay you incredible dividends.

- Here are some **additional questions** to ask yourself and make lists of the answers—“*What truly inspires me?*” “ *What comes easiest to me?*” “What special talents do I have that I am most proud of?” “*What rewards do I find as being most gratifying?*” (Eliminate those that come from outside of yourself or someone else (e.g., praise or money). Focus instead on your **intrinsic rewards** (those that come from within.)

- **What are you willing to do** in order to live the blessed life that a Stage Six POS could deliver you? What tradeoffs would you have to make? What is still holding you back? Where do you go from here? No matter what steps you will ultimately choose to take, you owe it to yourself to know

what your choices are. Most importantly, empower yourself by acknowledging that it is the choices you have made prior to now that have led to your life circumstances today. Take complete responsibility for them. Then simply **refuse to blame** yourself, another person or any other factor for an aspect of your life you don't like. If you can do this, you have taken a giant step towards removing and gaining control of remaining toxic hooks to the lower stages. The same can be said for the reality of what your circumstances *will be tomorrow*—which you can think of as your reward for working on a strong Stage Six POS today.

CHAPTER 20

Going Beyond Yourself

Expanding Everything Stage Seven

Stage Seven Action Steps:

To the extent Stage Seven is already your POS, there is no place to climb to-only new missions to consider and hooks from the lower stages to manage.

That which is Stage Seven is grounded in the truth you most deeply believe. This is the one characteristic all of Stage Seven has common. Be aware of what your truth is and faithfully abide by it — wherever it takes you.

If there is a recipe to reach Stage Seven and make it your POS, it is to let the combination of your passion (to manifest something new) and your gratitude (for that which you already have), be the forces that guide you. In addition:

- Make a list of the **qualities of Stage Seven people** you know or know of and admire that most puts them in this stage.
- What do the Sevens you have noted **believe** about themselves and/ or their mission that you need to believe (or believe more) about yours? What do you have in common with them?
- What **purpose(s) outside of yourself** inspires you or prompt(s) you to care deeply? It could be a charitable endeavor, political issue, ongoing world problem, a specific person or group (as close as an immediate family member[s], a complete stranger or a specific population such as children

or animals) who need some kind of help that you could provide. Identify anything that comes to mind where you could see yourself expending the degree of energy toward something that you would have (in the earlier stages) if you were looking to benefit yourself directly and greatly. What are some steps you are willing to take in order to maximize your impact toward that cause(s) you've identified? If nothing comes up, let it go for now (but feel free to revisit this question often) and trust that a Stage Seven mission with the necessary level of inspiration will find or call upon you, when the time is right. Remember, the way in which most Sixes go toward Stage Seven is simply by allowing their concerns and passions to point them to a new direction--which can then morph into a mission.

- Continue your **practice of meditation**, yoga and/or other ways of exploring and deepening your inner wisdom and insight. Maintaining some form of practice as a permanent staple in your life is quite important at Stage Seven.
- **Visualize** the potential impact on others and the world that your involvement could have. Then ask yourself if you are still interested or inspired.
- **Commit yourself** in every way possible to your intention to make a contribution to something larger than you are. You may want to do one Stage Seven act per week. Random acts of kindness, charitable contributions of time or money and community involvement all count.
- By **acknowledging, supporting and reinforcing** someone else's Stage Seven behavior, you are in effect operating as a Seven yourself. You can take this simple step at any time, by contributing whatever time money or other resources you can afford to a cause you believe in that is being well championed by another committed person or organization.
- Spend one day **acting in the Stage Seven mode of being selfless**. In other words, try walking the walk of Stage Seven in as many ways as you can. Use the "act as if" technique to see what fits you. Remember, as a Seven, there is no one outside of your own skin to impress.

There are a few **attitudes you can employ** to manifest what you want in your life. For example, if *you believe, you already have what you want* (at the target Stages 6 or 7); the *law of attraction* tells us that you have dramatically increased the odds that it will show up for you very soon. Then, simply *keep going* once you know you are on the right track. Finally, make that unshakable commitment to *be governed by your own choices* and expectations. More than anything else, it is this commitment to yourself that will keep you in your target stages.

CHAPTER 21

Additional *Stage Climbing* Strategies*To Integrate All Seven Stages*

These Strategies and Exercises Focus on Your POS and Hooks across All Seven Stages. You might also find it helpful to use these in conjunction with the strategies by the stages in the previous section.

A *Stage Climbing* Strategy to help you resolve a hook, issue or problem:

1) Identify the hook, issue or problem in your life you would like to

resolve: _____

2) When you are struggling with this issue or problem, from which stage(s) are you operating? Consider this stage (or these stages) as the lenses(s) through which you are now seeing this situation:

3) Next, identify the stage that would be ideal for you, to be able to manage this hook optimally or resolve the issue or problem it creates. What would be the best target stage from which to approach this problem? (Please use the calibrations in Part II as reference.) If in doubt, start from Stage Five--- the most neutral of the seven stages.

4) What would be the situation (or, how would things be different) if your issue were resolved? What would you be doing or doing differently if you were operating out of the target stage you have chosen? What would you believe that is different?

Confirm that this target stage is where you want to be.

5) Assume the point of view and posture of someone with a POS in your new and selected target stage.

What steps are you now willing to take or commit to toward resolving this issue or problem?

What do you need to believe in order to obliterate this issue or problem in a permanent way?

Write out that new belief as an affirmation; and refer to it as often as necessary.

6) Act as if you are in the target stage. When you are doing that, you are consciously triggering a *higher stage hook*. You cannot be something you are not. Thus, even if you have never done this before, when you *act as if* you were in your target stage, you can be there just as powerfully as if you had been there all your life. Once you get used to operating out of your new target stage, it will become as second nature as the old one was.

7) Make a calibration for the issue you just described (or another one), on the reproducible form below. Examples include getting into a relationship, getting out of a relationship (i.e., going through a divorce or separation) or making a decision (whether it is who to vote for in a political election, whether to change your career or any other decision).

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

A Simple Three-Step Decision Making Strategy:

1) The decision you want to make concerns _____

2) Do a calibration that answers this question. What would be the direction that someone with a POS *at each stage* would most likely take?

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

3) Keep refining your insights at each stage until the choice becomes clear to you.

Stage Climbing In a Specific Area of Your Life:

1) Pick an area where you would like to stage climb. (Examples include your attitude toward the work you do, how you have fun, your view of relationships, spirituality or sex, how you see yourself or your approach to parenting, etc.)

2) What is your current POS with respect to this area (or where are you now)?

3) At what stage would you most like to be operating (your target stage such as Stages Six or Seven, or Stage Five---the most neutral one)?

4) In this aspect of your life, define what your target stage would look like or mean for you (immediately, next month, next year, in five years, 10 years, 20 years or ultimately):

5) List the action steps *you are willing to take* to get from where you are now to where you want to be-your chosen stage. Consider this your "this is how I get there" roadmap:_____

Create A Profile Of Yourself By Listing As Many Of Your Hooks That You Can Identify In Each Of The Seven Stages.

My Hooks In (For example, love relationships, friendships, my career, my hobby, what motivates me, etc.):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

Some Lists to Make (to help you with your stage climb in any area of life):

Stage Seven- The person(s) I admire the most (my favorite mentor(s) - real or imagined) in an area of my life where I would most like to make a contribution do the following:

Stage Six- I love _____

(Make this list as long as possible.)

Stage Five- The life roles I am committed to

are _____

_____ . **If I could take complete control of my life, I would make changes in these roles (add, delete or modify them)**

Stage Four- If I had absolutely no fears or anxieties, I would _____

Stage Three- If I were making and living by my own rules, I

would _____

Stage Two- Ways I sabotage myself _____

Stage One- If I were taking the initiative, I would _____

In The Major Areas of Life (e.g., relationships, career, hobbies, spirituality, friendships, hobbies, etc.), **what is Your Current POS?** (For example, you could be operating out of Stage Six in your career and 7 with respect to your volunteer work. Your involvement with your church or synagogue could be at Stage Five in that it provides some needed community involvement. At the same time, you might be recognizing your marital POS at Stage Four, if it is characterized by various insecurities; while your parenting reflects a Stage Three attitude of adherence to rules. Of course, all of this is possible with a Stage Six sex life and spirituality, etc.) **Use this reproducible form as a barometer. Refer to the calibrations in Part II that most apply to you for examples.**

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

My Ideal Profile by the Stages

What Would You Most Like It To Be? In Each of the Seven Stages

(use calibrations in Part II as appropriate for reference):

Stage Seven-

Stage Six-

Stage Five-

Stage Four-

Stage Three-

Stage Two-

Stage One-

Also, remember to visit www.StageClimbing.com for additional strategies as well as further help with your custom calibrations.

EPILOG

Embracing Your Seven Stages

“To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critiques and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others... to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child or a garden patch... to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded!”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

As you stage climb, your life choices increase. Remember, that it is the nature of humankind to have hooks in all seven stages. Hooks are only problematic when they hold you back and become your hang-ups. Once you are in control of them, those hooks can be thought of as simply more choices at your disposal for whenever you need them. Sources of fulfillment at one stage may no longer work for you at the next. This reckoning with yourself as well as the people, places and things with which you surround yourself is an ongoing process.

You now know that you are free to operate out of any chosen stage — higher or lower — at any time. Whenever you function at the lower stages, as you may even if it is rarely, I only urge that you do so with deliberate consciousness.

If you believe that all things considered we are each doing our best at any given time, please accept *Stage Climbing* as a tool to make that best even better. You have arrived to the extent that your life is, as you want it to be. *Stage Climbing*, an ongoing process that continues as long as you are alive, will help you continue to hit that moving target. I urge you to maximize your process so that your life can be one that is lived and enjoyed to the fullest.

I wish you much happiness, success and fulfillment!



Michael S. Broder, Ph.D.

Appendix

Resources at Each Stage

To Help You in Your Stage Climb

The appendix contains many types of resources, broken down by the stages where they are most relevant. Included are books, audio and video programs, websites, organizations and other resources all designed to go beyond the strategies provided in this book and speak to the challenges that characterize each stage.

The appendix is a work in progress that can be accessed at www.StageClimbing.com/resources

□ Stage Seven- Biographies of history's greats, books and tapes on finding a calling/mission, making various types of contributions to people/the planet, spirituality and inspiration (e.g., Dali Lama books), etc.

□ Stage Six- Literature and resources for yoga, meditation, mindfulness, finding and pursuing passion and dreams, goal setting and manifesting, excellence, performance zones, etc.

□ Stage Five-Literature-self-help books and audio programs on relationship, career, life change and stress management issues, etc

□ Stage Four- "Help Yourself Audio Series"; cognitive behavioral self-help for anxiety, depression, anger, self-confidence, dating, beginning new love relationships, etc.

□ Stage Three- Books on fundamentalist religion, cults, mind control, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, taking charge of your life, challenging your "shoulds" and "musts", management styles, etc.

□ Stage Two-Books on sociopathy, criminal behavior (white collar and otherwise) overcoming abuse, gangs, bullying, finding positive role models, developing spirituality and conscience development, etc.

□ Stage One- Books that contain first person accounts of people overcoming extreme dependency on others, and addiction; books and other resources on medication, and basic mental health/mental illness issues, etc.

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