

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.

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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

PREVIEW

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

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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

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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

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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.

PREVIEW

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

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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.

PREVIEW

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 —

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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.

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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

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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.

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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”.

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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.

PREVIEW

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.

PREVIEW

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.

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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.

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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

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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.

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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)?

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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.

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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.

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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

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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.

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