

## BREAKTHROUGH STRATEGY #1

**Make Your Default Stage Match Your Target Stage** in any part of your life.

**To change your default stage in a specific area of your life using the principles of *Stage Climbing*:**

- 1) **Identify an *area* of your life in which you are *not* functioning optimally.** Examples include how you view yourself; how you function in your job or career, your marriage, or love relationship; how you parent or relate to your own parents; how you view spirituality, experience sex, become motivated, have fun, or choose to enjoy your leisure time.

Please choose only one life area to work on at a time:

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Note: Do this exercise separately for each part of your life that you would like to address. You can download and reproduce the worksheet for this entire exercise at [StageClimbing.com/worksheets](http://StageClimbing.com/worksheets) (Password: MyStageClimb).. Use additional paper if necessary.

- 2) **Identify your *present* default stage in this aspect of your life.** This is the stage—*that you recognize*—from which you **now** normally operate in this life area:

Stage 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Choose the target stage that would be ideal** for this part of your life. Consider this to be your goal. If you are unclear about your target stage, it may be helpful for you to find the calibration(s) in Part II closest to the life area you are now working on. In most cases, you will find yourself choosing Stages Six or Seven as your target stage (or sometimes Stage Five—the most neutral of the seven stages).

Stage 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) When you look at this aspect of your life through the lens of your chosen target stage, how do you now see things differently?**

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- 5) With this aspect of your life in mind, define what operating out of your chosen target stage would look like or mean for you. Focus on what's in it for you** immediately, next month, next year, in five years, 10 years, 20 years, or ultimately? That is, focus on whatever time frame(s) is relevant:

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**Confirm that this is the target stage that you want:**

It is \_\_\_\_\_ It is not \_\_\_\_\_



there all your life. Once you are used to operating out of your new target stage, it will surely become as automatic and second nature to you as the old one has been. In case you're wondering why this is so, it's based on a simple principle of reinforcement. **The higher stages tend to trigger such an ongoing sense of *internal* fulfillment, that they are constantly and perpetually reinforcing themselves. Soon they become hardwired into your brain, much the way any strong habit is.**

Therefore, as you live by and act on the beliefs and attitudes you have chosen, as a reward they will become an indelible part of you, or in *Stage Climbing* terms, your new default stage in that part of your life.

This breakthrough can be a life changer. And the best news of all is that it's available to you in any part of your life in which you are willing to pursue it!

Note: In many situations, that's all you need to do. However, below are some additional strategies for you to use as needed to reinforce and enhance this exercise:

**Make a calibration to categorize the major areas of your life** (e.g., relationships, career, hobbies, spirituality, friendships, etc.) **by what you see as their default stages. This can be especially helpful if you have a part of your life in which the default stage is unclear, to see where it fits into the bigger picture.** For example, you could be operating out of Stage Six in your career and Seven 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 default 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. Refer to the calibrations in Part II that most apply to you for examples. (Use additional paper, if necessary.)

- Stage Seven—**
- Stage Six—**
- Stage Five—**
- Stage Four—
- Stage Three—
- Stage Two—
- Stage One—

**Make a calibration below for any part of your life that you are working on.** Start with your present stage, as you have identified it in (2), and fill in the blanks, including your chosen target stages. (Use additional paper, if necessary.)

- Stage Seven—**
- Stage Six—**
- Stage Five—**
- Stage Four—
- Stage Three—
- Stage Two—
- Stage One—

You may also find it helpful to consult the section on “Making the Climb” as well as the strategies at the end of the chapter in Part I that are dedicated to your present stage. In fact, you may even want to reread the entire chapter on any stage you are committed to leaving behind as your default in this area of your life.

**What else might you need to believe/tell yourself to be at your chosen target stage in this part of your life?** Write out any belief or whatever else occurs to you that would put you in lockstep with someone solidly in that target stage. **Commit yourself to using these affirmations, and refer to them at least daily, but as often as necessary:**

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What other action steps are you now willing to take or commit to in order to get from where you are now to where you want to be (your chosen target stage)? Consider this a “How do I get there?” roadmap. Identify and apply whatever strategies and action steps may be needed to lock in your target stage (e.g., those that speak to you, which can be found at the end of each relevant chapter in Part I).

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