

Calibrate an Area of Your Life

from Stage Climbing: The Shortest Path to Your Highest Potential

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A calibration is a type of measurement that's 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 precisely where you are now in your Stage Climbing process so that you can establish exactly where you want to be in any given area of your life. Calibrations simply define each stage for any category to which you choose to apply the principles of Stage Climbing.

It's most likely that you normally operate out of different stages in different areas of your life. Most of us do. As you explore the seven stages and calibrate where you are now versus where you want to be, consider one area of your life that you wish to understand better or improve upon in some way. It might be your relationship, career, finances, spiritual life, you as a parent or boss, etc. Start with the stage you most identify with now - then identify the stage where you most want to be operating:

- Stage One** Only possible stage during **infancy**; later can potentially render one profoundly **dependent** upon others and result in feelings of inadequacy and victimhood.

- Stage Two** Typical stage for **toddlers**; thereafter, a life without internalized limits can result in **primitive** and **undisciplined** behavior, extreme self-centeredness, the tendency to act out and create much chaos for yourself and others.

- Stage Three** Usual stage through **late childhood**; thereafter can morph into various degrees of an authoritarian personality and/or **rigid rule abider** who is extremely inflexible regarding rules and ideas.

- Stage Four** Typical stage throughout **adolescence**; as an adult, can result in anxiety, depression, self-doubt, alienation, shame, and a wide variety of neurotic and **approval-seeking** behaviors.

Stage Five

Typical stage for an **adult** in our society, where you often think of yourself as a **role juggler**, or the sum of all your life roles. Your characteristic view of life at this stage is often **comfortable, dispassionate, or neutral**. This stage offers the ideal attitudes and frame of mind to function best, while doing what is merely necessary to keep your life together and functioning in order to live in the higher stages. While a Stage Five frame of mind is important to have at times with respect to certain relationships and activities, it often results in disappointment when you expect higher degrees of fulfillment than this stage can deliver.

Stages Six and Seven are the **target stages** that most people aspire to. As you understand Stages Six and Seven, it will become clear that by removing anything that blocks that natural drive to be your best, you will quickly get to the zone in which you can naturally and effortlessly operate at your **highest potential**. Most people view life at the target stages as life at its very best. **It is at the target stages that you feel the very best about yourself**. The target stages represent what you are here for, or from a spiritual perspective, your life's purpose.

Stage Six

Mature adult (determined not by chronological age but by the way you conduct your life) with a strong integrity and sense of self. At Stage Six, you rise *above* your roles; and operate according to your own **unique internally generated values and passions**. To the extent that these become your driving forces; genuine spirituality, fulfillment, and happiness result. This is the stage in which you love, enjoy, excel, and create in your own distinctive way.

Stage Seven

The highest stage attainable. You are beyond *needing* self-gratification, and find fulfillment as a result of your **benevolence** and your unique contribution to others, to the world, and to how you can be an agent of change in some large *or* small way. At Stage Seven, your purpose outside of yourself has more importance to you than what is purely in your own self-interest.

Remember, the seven stages represent a choice of seven lenses that are available to you, through which you can view any aspect of your life. Knowing the stages at which you are operating in any part of your life provides you with a benchmark in your Stage Climbing process. How you are living your life then becomes much clearer to you. The stages can also provide you with helpful insights for understanding or resolving an issue—past, present, or future. Begin by identifying your present stage —the stage you most identify with right now in

that area of life. Stage Five is a good starting point for whenever your default stage is unclear to you, since it's generally the most neutral or dispassionate stage. Then identify your target stage. Once you are clear as to where you are (your present stage) and where you would like to be (your target stage), the only task that remains is to clarify what you need to do to be operating out of your chosen target stage for that part of your life. You can find help with that whenever you need it, by going back to the strategies at the end of each chapter in Part I (to work on the challenges unique to a particular stage) or Chapter 14 (which contains step-by-step strategies that incorporate all seven stages) as well as throughout Part II.

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