

Life and Growth of a Christian Leader
Spiritual Formation Class
Stages of Leadership
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Research indicates we tend to go thru stages in our leadership, pastors, administrators, and professors.

6 Stages Jon wants to identify and each one builds on the other.

You can't jump from one to the other, but must take them in course.

1. Commitment to God

A point in the person's life where you become aware that God exists and He makes contact with you in important ways.

Happens in a couple of ways:

- a) You meet God in terms of your need
- b) You meet God in terms of awe

Sometimes think people will meet God when you need Him.

We have felt needs seminars to accommodate that.

Awe: in the course of life you come into encounter with God.

You know God is real and He is making a claim upon you.

For example: a person is on alcohol and drugs and family is breaking up, but out of this sense of need in time of degradation, a person reaches out to God.

Awe: i.e., Joe was one day lying on a couch and listening to the Rolling Stones and smoking marijuana. Stoned on the stones!

Not much of an evangelistic promise.

However, in the middle of the song, He sees the face of Jesus and Jesus says, "When this song is over, you belong to me!"

At the conclusion of this song, he got rid of the cigarette and applied for the seminary.

You come into encounter with God.

Apostle Paul: he didn't come to God out of need.

One of the revelations in scholarship in recent years is that Saul was proud of his background and one day he got knocked off his horse.

Prodigal son: need was the basis for coming to God.

So, at this stage, a person is committed to God and makes this initial step.

You can get stuck at this point—feeling unworthy or like a nobody.

Having a strong sense of unworthiness, some get stuck here and continue to feel unworthy.

One of the challenges of growing up SDA is that kids are confronted with the rules and never feel good enough.

Thus, you never take the next step of leadership.

Another way folks get stuck they just have a lack of knowledge—don't know being a Christian is more than existing in the shadow of God.

SDA's know that you have to spend time with the Bible and God.

Fundamental #28 has been inserted because a lot of Christians have taken for granted the spiritual formation.

2nd motivation: many Christians have felt overwhelmed by demonic powers.

A lot of Christians get stuck and never progress—they recycle the same story.

Sometimes people have superstitions that keep them stuck.

Superstitions are beliefs that are as powerful as the 10 C's, but have no basis in reality.

In the spiritual life we all have superstitions.

As a pastor you can steamroll a whole lot of people by pushing to be on time.

Times when Jesus bypassed the schedule to keep His ministry viable.

How do you move ahead to stage 2?

Having an assurance that you are right with God.

Jon: I ministered for two years before I had a sense of acceptance with God.

Feeling you are of value, you will begin to lead—if you feel worthwhile, you have something to share.

On what basis can we tell folks they are valuable—creation, redemption, etc.

Generally, we sense value based upon what others think of me.

My body parts and chemical components, we are worth around \$15-20.

Conference thinks we're valuable to the tune of \$50,000 per year.

Value tends to be determined in relation to others.

Who is Jesus—the Creator, the Son of God...

He created the entire universe and chose to design me and keep me sustained.

Whatever it is in this life that might give me a sense of value, compare that with the One that made every star, every jewel, every planet—He can bestow infinite value.

When He made the decision to die for me, that gives me infinite value.

If we want our lay people to become leaders, we need to help them have a sense of value.

Warning: You can know that Jesus died for you, but you may not feel it.

You can know He died for you, but you may not feel it!

Emotions are a lagging indicator of reality.

You can know that you are right with God, but you won't feel it.

In my personal experience (Jon) I knew of my connection in the 70's but didn't know it until the 90's.

2nd indicator: sense of community affirmation—important that our communities be accepting and affirming.

Here a sense of social unity is so important.

A lot of people never go into leadership because they don't feel worthy or wanted.

At this point you need to attach people to a mentor who have made it to stage 2 or 3 who can coach folks up to the next level.

What does need to move on?

Value
Affirmation
Spiritual mentor

2. Discipleship stage

This is the learning stage.

This is a time when you become a part of the community when you are learning and growing and have a deeper sense of the privilege of participating in the community.

This is a stage where you absorb the belief system.

In the community there is room for learning and growing.

This is the internship stage.

This is when you have a mentor—you watch and observe your mentor.

Here at this stage you have a strong sense of identity—they've been rescued from disaster.

This is a person who is excited, belonging, and has a strong sense of being right.

At this point usually they attach to somebody, a leader, pastor, elder, professor, a conference president, etc.

You have a strong relationship with a leader.

Timothy was in the learning stage here.

Throwing people into leadership too soon, is not a good idea.

Danger: experiencing failure too early—marks you in a negative way.

Don't go too fast and do too much.

Danger in scholarship: writing too soon and get hammered; so, pull back and stop writing.

Remember a young man who was a rock musician—so proud of the congregation.

2nd problem: when you're writing if you publish too soon you end up defending those ideas the rest of your life.

Someone came up with a novel idea.

In leadership development have a mentor associate to help them.

People can get stuck in this discipleship phase.

a) they can be legalistic and judgmental

They know that they are right and they've got a mentor they can depend upon.

Always talking about what they should do and ought to do—too rigid.

Particularly happens when you have a very influential teacher for everything is black and white.

“My way is the only way to act.”

Usually at this stage the leader can't even see his/her being stuck.

Jon: grew up in a very legalistic setting.

Sociology calls this the tribal system.

We are right, they are wrong.
They are weak we are strong.

Sense of community breaks down.

Let me just suggest that suicide bombers are stuck at stage 2.
They have a mentor who may have gone beyond this, but it's very useful to have disciples willing to blow himself up for this cause.

Dangerous to get stuck at this stage.

Suggestion: a healthy discipleship stage would involve mentoring from many people.

Jon: I can think of at least a dozen names that served as mentors to me.
Any one had the potential to destroy me if I had gotten stuck at this stage.

EGW: People need to have exposure to many minds.
Growing leadership: encourage folks to be exposed to many mentors and read many books.

Jon mentioned how he had Des Ford and Ralph Larson both as mentors, but didn't get stuck with them.

Importance of having a variety of mentors in the community.

Google is a fascinating mentor—puts you in touch with people and ideas that broadens you.

However, one thing that is happening is that folks are getting stuck with dysfunctional groups.

A senior pastor can be a good or bad mentor.

Identifying opportunities to serve...

To know their gifts, to know the needs in the community.

Identify people with church offices and connect them where they can serve.

Key: the disciple is more a receiver than a giver.

You begin to move beyond that stage when you are giving more than you are taking.

Pastor: is he giving more than he is taking?

“moving ahead” means that you are giver more than a taker.

3. Success stage

Everybody loves you, you are in charge, you are contributing.

You enjoy leadership.

For Moses, at the burning bush, Moses moved ahead and began to be a contributor.

During this time we are striving for success and would like to grow the finance of the church and grow the numbers of people we are working with.

We gain confidence in our ability to lead.

We work really hard to prove ourselves.

Win awards and recognized for successes and/or we recite our successes for ourselves.

If you are not a leader at this stage, you are going to get shoved into it.

People are now saying that this is the biggest thing we've ever seen.

You may not be spiritually or emotionally ready.

You realize that all four dean positions in North America are open at the same time.

Common lament: the lists look weak for those available.

Jon: my generation is the first one not to be lifers.

Lifer: pastors for 40 years—where you draw GC presidents, conference presidents, etc.

Tremendous challenge for the church.

People may get pushed into things they are not entirely ready for.

At this point you start to know where your spiritual gifts are?

Can you get stuck?

Yes, serving in your own strength.

Solve anything yourself and manage the rest.

We become performance people.

One negative way to be stuck: your whole life becomes a performance.

You may not be doing this consciously.

Another way to get stuck is to get hooked on perfection.

You want to be the best conference president, union, GC, etc.

Always possible to be in a rut where you are never satisfied—and that's always over the horizon.

We like feeling busy—chasing after that goal where you really are feeling good.

You mask the anxieties and wounds of life, driving ahead for numbers and goals.

Another way to get stuck at this stage is called, “pastoral burnout.”

You lost the flavor and fun...tired.

Move ahead?

What's better than success—the whole reason we're doing this thing is success.

Is it possible to move ahead from burnout, success, perfection, etc.?

Yes, we move ahead by surrendering to God.

My strength is limited and recognize that there is a truth about you/me—being willing to have the Lord search my heart and success and let me know where I am really at.

This is where recovery process comes in.

Begin to ask hard question.

Talking less and less to members and more to you.

Not many mentors out there any more.

What you need is a mentor that is at stage 4, 5, or 6.

You need a mentor that has gone beyond success.

Quote: “so many of those to whom we looked for help in the past are inadequate guides at this stage in the journey.”

Most of the people to whom you have reached out in the past are not available.

At this point something happens that everybody in ministry knows but doesn't want to talk about:

Dark night of the soul.

On the other hand you don't want to stay there.

This experience comes to most successful pastors.

It's a moment of personal crisis.

Just when I thought I had it all together, I forgot where I put it.

Elijah—went into a cave deeply depressed, decided that his whole life had been a failure.

It's what marathon runners call it the “wall.”

Everything closes in.

Your past certainties can't help you now.

Your faith doesn't seem to work anymore.

Everything you have been teaching everybody else, doesn't work.

God breaks out of his box.

Dark night of the soul is an explosion where God comes out and we wish He hadn't.

Jonah had God exploding his box, and he took a submarine ride.
Even at the end of the soul, he is still ticked off.

End of your rope and your answers are begging with questions.

Story of Job comes to the plate here.

I suspect that most of the pastors that leave the SDA church hit the dark night of the soul and have felt this.

If you are on track, you will hit the dark night of the soul

Awareness that everything that you had dreamed for, all shattered.

This is God's call to go deeper yet.

Jon tells us of his dark night of the soul in 1980—the man who brought me to Christ said, “You cannot be an SDA and a Christian at the same time.”

May sound like a silly dilemma, but wasn't then.

This was a crisis: in Brooklyn, NY, I remember laying down on a wooden floor and pounding it with a fist, “God, what do I do?”

God said, “The disciples never left Judaism, Luther never left Catholic church, and EGW never left the Methodist church; so, until you get thrown out, don't leave.”

2 years later I was teaching at the seminary.

Bible scholar has two roles:

Take the unclear and make them clear.

Take the clear things and discover that they are not quite so clear and caution them about their overconfidence.

Tempting to share that success and more comfortable path.

Dark night can come for a lot of reasons:

- 1) just a stage of life—like mid-life crisis

- 2) sometimes an external force (rebellious child, death of a loved one, theological crisis, church split)
- 3) sometime an internal crisis (diagnosis of cancer, realization of bad past, an illness, an emotional crisis)
- 4) sometimes it's Gethsemane (God isn't there anymore, prayers only hit the ceiling, can happen to Jesus, can happen to anybody)

This is a positive sign.

If you never hit the wall, you may never know real meaning.

Can happen more than once—Jesus in the wilderness and in Gethsemane.

At this point there is a big temptation—back off!

I don't want to be there.

I'm going to stay with success.

Now, you're successful with phoniness rather than with a clear conscience.

You will become a shell if you're phony and a pastoral rut.

There's a healthy way to move back and forth.

Choosing to remain stuck is bad.

We may back off because of a strong ego.

We may back off because we are guilty or shame-ridden (O, this is what I deserve!)

Or may decide, I will stay here for the sake of the people.

You can't go thru the wall by working 60 hours a week.

You need solitude and a mentor here.

Solitary confinement in the emergency room—happened to Bill Hybels.

You move thru the dark night by getting forgiveness and re-discovering your value with God and increasingly learning to think of others.

After break

4. Inward journey

We are craving something personal and build a relational experience.

We desperately crave friendships.

7 Stages of Friendships (at every stage the risk increases; testing the waters at each stage)

1. Greeting stage (hello, how are you?)
2. Exchanging facts and reports (you know what I heard on the news?)
3. Opinions and judgments (if somebody rejects your opinion, closer to home)
4. Sharing feelings (deeper than about somebody else—very few churches get to this level unless there is breaking down, opening up, and crying)

Feelings are not where our church is comfortable necessarily

5. Self-disclosure (sharing of faults)
6. Accountability (when you're deep enough in relationship where you give the deep friend the ability to call you about something you're doing—here is a real mentor).
7. Total intimacy (rare in this life)

Which of these stages of relationship with God is the one of conversion?

Stage 5 is the point of conversion – Faults

Most of our churches are at stage 3—closer to God than to others.

But the problem is: nobody has ever seen, heard, or touched God.

John 3 is telling us that we are not to be closer to God than we are to people.

1 John 4:20--Not likely to be closer to a being that you never see or touch.

Our relationships become the measure of how close we are to God really.

David: who is David's favorite son? Absalom, but David never was able to take care of his family; so Absalom did.

And why does David leave Joab to be dealt with afterward?

If you're a person who doesn't say you're sorry in marriage, are you likely to say it to God?

We seek personal direction in our lives from whatever our past has experienced.

Not a crime for a SDA pastor to get counseling.

Going it alone is not the answer.

All a counselor is is one who is trained to listen and help process the situation.

What's happening is you're becoming a heart person.

A person who is driven by the heart, and see people as more than statistics.

In a real sense this is a second conversion, but you're not even sure you were converted the first time.

Can you get stuck here?

Yes, sometimes you become consumed with self-assessments.

One person joked that so-and-so lives a half-life: lives half her life journaling and the other half actually lives.

We may enjoy the spiritual looseness.

Sometimes it feels good to wallow in discouragement.

Some folks really enjoy depression.

Some are immobilized by self-consumption

You may feel that nobody understands me.

Many stage 3 churches do not understand what the pastor is going thru.

But, with the help of a good mentor, you can move on to stage 5.

5. The outward journey

The mirror of stage 3...back out with fire, enthusiasm, fresh vision.

Now you go out to be successful again, to change the world for God.

The dark night was just a step on the way.

God takes you on the new point of contact, and heads you back out into the world.

Transformed people can transform others.

If the world is desperately searching for high level mentors, imagine the good this person can do.

You are venturing outside of self-interest.

Stage 3 loved the praise of success.

But Stage 5 is leaving self-interest behind.

Going out for the sake of others.

Skip Bell: stage 5 leaders are comfortable with the idea that most people won't know that people are crediting him/her for accomplishment.

Jesus was never elated by applause or depressed by setbacks.

Jesus cared about what God thought, not about what others thought.

Stage 5 and 3 are similar, but the motivation and drive are now different.

Healing has come in stage 4 and now you are eager to share.

The neat thing about it, when we give ourselves up, going out there for God, we are meeting our deepest desires.

We are going out there and finding joy in somebody else's agenda.

We are not focused upon success or reputation and but compassion for others.

We minister out of God-given love for others.

We can be patient, because it's not our problem.

Stage 4 already folks are becoming totally honest with yourself.

Stage 4 and 5 can be a pair, may move back and forth in stages.

If you're open to yourself, you can be open to other people.

Stage 2 and 3 are a pair, where you go back and forth.

Stage 4 and 5 are a pair too.

Paul said, I could be here or be at home with the Lord, but you need me here.

Stage 5 leadership may be smaller, humbler, riskier, or newer.

Have you noticed the vast number of church leaders that go back to pastor.

You may feel that the call of God is to step away from greatness and go back and pastor a 3-church district.

Nothing is more painful than retiring from the GC—one week you're in the know and the next week you are nobody.

These are not necessarily growing stages of popularity.

Can you get stuck here?

We may appear out of touch with everybody else.

Seem out of touch with practical concerns.

Mother Teresa, was she really practical.

Albert Schweitzer was number one in evaluation of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Dropped it all and spent 15 years in corner of Africa.

These people who are whole, selfless, and called by God are counterculture and out of touch with the world in a way.

They no longer fit in with the expectations of the world to fit in and win.

When you are touched by God at a deeper level, winning is no longer important.

Adventist Frontier Missions: Jon saw a people group coming in large numbers to God, it was a miracle of God what Jon saw: Pentecost.

Meantime, the seminary curriculum was on the line and he received an e-mail about revising it, but Jon stated to himself: I don't care. I have seen the hand of God.

Cross is the most stupid victory in history.

In eternity its value will be sealed.

People in stage 2 or 3 will say, He use to be successful, but I don't know what went wrong?

You will be far more criticized than in the earlier stages.

Stage 5 is attracted to stage 4 and think that stage 2 or 3 are idiots.

I was asked to share it in a context radically different from this.

It was an opportunity I had with a group of Islamic pastors.

Getting stuck means being out of touch.

Think about it: if you are an Imam and you're hearing this stuff, what is going to happen?

In the Koran you can pray anyway you want, but later in the chapter, God backed up because the devotees couldn't handle it.

You may seem careless, but ...

We are driven not by controversies and creeds and rules, but by God's will and direction.

You can move beyond to Stage 6 by seeing everything thru the eyes of God.

In a real sense, moving on from here, requires something of a no-care attitude.

God is in control and we trust where He leads.

Somewhere in here, the dark night comes again...where you recognize your journey has led you to less popularity and less usefulness.

I think of Abraham here, sacrificing his son.

Job, in his affliction, stage 5 person coming to a dark night.

Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane...

Whenever it comes, there is a temptation to go back to stage 4.

It's an opportunity to heal and grow.

Anytime you go thru the dark night, it's an opportunity to go forward and deepen your walk with God or go back and resist the temptation.

People at stage 1 and 2, there are a million mentors out there.

More and more time is given to mentoring.

6. Unconditional love

Where Jesus was.

Even those who spit on you, doesn't bother you.

Treat even the bitterest of opponents with respect and deference.

Matt. 18===servant who was forgiven 10,000 talents, no reason to call in debts from anybody else.

Stage 6 a person will be totally careless with time and money.

Unconditional love ends up loving people who hate each other.

6T 121, 122 Treat even the bitterest of opponents with respect and deference.

Matt 25 the sheep treat everyone as if they are Jesus.

Treat everyone as if they are Jesus.

Compassion even under extreme hardship.

God's love flows out thru us to other human beings.

Reach out to people who have hurt you in the past.

People who use to repulse you, you reach to them.

By stage 6 the troubles of stage 5 no longer bother you.

You allow God to change how you respond to others.

You can forgive someone for 12 years and still not feel it.

Jon's wife: for 6 years no communication with her mom.

Hadn't cried for 30 years.

Jon has an example in his own home from the recovery of his wife.

She cried for 5 hours in forgiveness.

You can't forgive by trying.

The day comes when you do and then you are free.

When you are truly free, then you can even love them.

Arab Imam: let God love you and in his time.

You may not renounce material things, but you are content with what God has told you.

No ambition to be noteworthy or spiritual as such in recognition.

It may seem like you are wasting your life, but Jesus stated, “He who gives up His life, will truly find it.”

You know what the Bible has taught all these years, you can actually see it.

Mal. 4 – reconciliation at the end of time.

The Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit—depressed.

Blessed are those who mourn that go thru the dark night of the soul.

Blessed are the meek, inherit the earth.

Scott Peck had this to say...

“We are attracted to somebody who is one stage ahead of us. But we are perplexed by a person that is two stages ahead of us. And if someone is 3 stages ahead of us, we will kill him.”

That is what happened to Jesus.

Can we still make a difference, yes we can be in more than one stage at a time.

You cannot go forward or beyond where God has brought you.

Rejoice where you are at.

Love your enemies: this statement will not be understood if you haven't experienced it.

Good news: you can go back and minister to folks in an earlier stage.

God meets people where they are.

Paul said, To the Jew, I became one like them, to those under the law, I became like that one.”

You can go back and succeed at a different level.

You will also be more authentic to the folks that perceive you are hiding out.

Not an absolute guarantee against martyrdom to go back...

Key to leadership is recognizing where the people are that you are trying to lead.

2 Cor is Paul relating...

All these stages are good, as long as you don't get stuck there.

Like plants and children, you want to keep growing.

If you have the mentors, you will keep growing.

Criticism: at every stage criticism will come.

1. charge of insecurity
2. accused of fanaticism
3. accused of overconfidence
4. charge of selfishness
5. charge of naiveté
6. accused as crazy or a puzzle or nuts!

Couple of thoughts:

Finding your value before God...

1. know that you are precious
2. unique
3. capable

Stage 1 you realize you are precious to God.

Stage 3 you realize your competent

Stage 4 you realize your are unique

Finding a true sense of self-worth you will move beyond insecurity

People in stages 2 and 3 will think stage 4 is losing his faith.

If you're judging in terms of institutions and standards, seems to be slipping.

Stage 4 thinks of 2 and 3 as narrow and judgement

3 things crucial to move thru relationship

1. acceptance
2. approval
3. confrontation

Acceptance means that you appreciate the person's existence.

They feel welcome in my life.

Approval: means that the other person has done something that has made my life better.

You have made a difference in my life.

Confrontation: some things you are doing that has threatened our relationship.

If these things don't stop, it may cause a crimp in our relationship: like Jon's wife and mother's situation.

Now, think about this in terms of church discipline, it's important.

When we enter into discipline, the problem is because of lack of acceptance and approval.

First, they must know they are completely welcome because they have made investments in the community.

If you don't have a relationship, confrontation will not be good.

90% of the time when I went to confront somebody, I chickened out.

I didn't understand.

Instinctively I realized the person knew what I was doing, and you didn't say anything.

That person felt accepted and approved.

If you have a sense it is not time, confrontation must come in a time of a deep sense of acceptance and approval.

This process is good for redeemable situations, but some aren't redeemable.

Pastors need to distinguish between problems and situations.

Problems you can solve, but situations are to be managed.

See Robert Guelich on the Sermon on the Mount

Hagberg was influenced by Guelich

