

Lead 2 NextStage

How we meet people where they are, understand them, and accompany their next step



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Status:	released
Version:	1.2.1 (build 145)
Date:	2026-07-16
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OrgIQ Manifest: Passion for People builds Systems for Success

OrgIQ—Organizational Intelligence (Quotient)—is a framework that redefines how we see organizations. At its heart lies a simple but profound shift: to think from the perspective of the individual. Every person experiences their own reality, shaped by their network of relationships. Each perspective is unique. There is no single right or wrong.

An organization is the superposition of all these *Networks*. This is complexity. We can never fully model or control it—but we can give it direction and purpose. Intelligent organizations embrace this complexity rather than ignore or oversimplify it.

When we focus on human complexity, the range of possible solutions expands dramatically. Business practices and structures can be brought into harmony with the natural dynamics of human relationships, psychology, and social interaction.

Our manifesto is rooted in lived experience. We have seen the transformative power of genuine connection, individuality, and purpose-driven leadership. OrgIQ helps create environments where empathy, understanding, and mutual respect thrive—where people feel seen, heard, and valued. This sense of emotional safety is the foundation on which individuals and groups reach their full potential.

We believe in value over control. Control breaks perspective, creates overhead, and breeds mistrust. Relationships and trust, on the other hand, unleash extraordinary productivity and fulfillment. Purpose is not measured by words, but by results.

Join us in redefining organizational excellence. Let's build intelligent systems, embrace complexity, and make space for purpose and joy. **Welcome to OrgIQ—where the true potential of your people becomes the strength of your organization.**

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Idea

One of the core ideas of Tribal Leadership is that real leadership meets people where they are. With OrgIQ and beyond, however, we often carry a vision that is far away from the current situation. That frightens people instead of reaching them. This applies to us, but ultimately to everyone else as well.

beyond—experts for the next step. where ever you are.

That is why we need good tooling. Sensitivity, but also a guide that helps us recognize where someone currently stands, what our story does to them, what their reactions will be — internally and externally — and what they actually need as their next step. In coaching, in families, in schools, in teamwork. That is why it should be light and clear. Easy to understand and, with high probability, accurate.

And **free of judgment!** It is so important to understand that the stages are not a status ranking; they describe a lived reality. If I am at a higher stage, it is more a matter of privilege. If I grew up lovingly, that is a privilege. And we have often seen that wealth usually produces the opposite effect. I am never truly seen and remain in an injury and a futile search. So the stages are not an evaluation; they describe the lived reality of the past. And yes, perhaps we can go so far as to say that human beings are made for Stage 5, but our current Western society is not.

That is why it is also important to understand what the next step can be: how to meet people where they are and accompany them into the next step, so that we can understand, accept, and use resistance. Resistance shows an incoherence in the system — and that incoherence may lead to improvement.

Core idea: Every stage as a solution strategy

“People do the best they can with the awareness they have.”

Virginia Satir

This means: Every stage is not a mistake, but an **intelligent response to perceived insecurity or overwhelm**. The system tries to restore safety — emotionally, socially, or existentially.

Only: the strategies are limited. What once was a solution later becomes a limitation. We will see that in a moment, but first we need to clarify the biological frame.

Deep dive: The brain and Tribal Leadership

You can skip this part if you are skimming quickly. It is helpful for assigning the stages to our fear patterns (or trauma patterns) and basic needs, but it is a deep dive.

To understand this a little better, we want to bring our brain and Tribal Leadership together: to understand the pain, why the stages are the solution, and why we do not need to judge them. Of course, the stages describe a kind of recovery process — or, you might say, an inner fitness level.

If you look at the Tribal Leadership book, the stages are presented rather strictly. I have a worldview, and there is a linear development.

These simplified models have their charm because they are easy to grasp. Linearity is helpful because it provides direction, and the world is once again neatly sorted into boxes. Our brain loves such “chunks”: little bites of information that can be stored easily. Our **Neocortex** loves that. Our **Limbi** is more diffuse. It can also handle complexity.

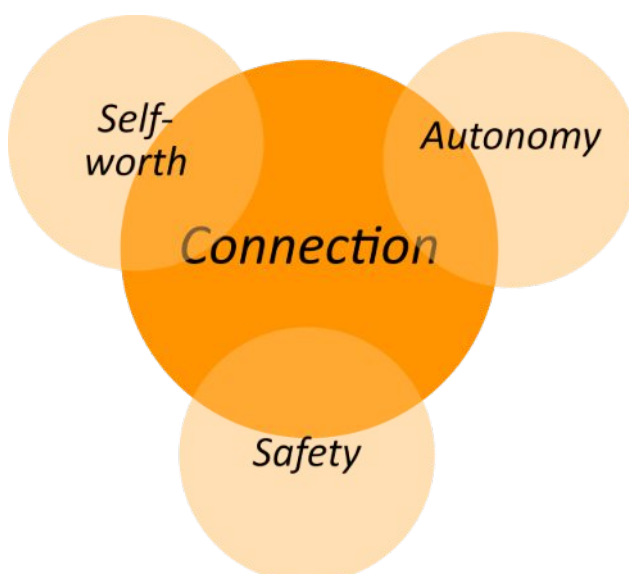


Figure 1: Our 4 psychological basic needs1

Here, however, we want to understand a little more deeply what stands behind the stages and what we can do with them. To do this, we want to connect it with the Gecko and the basic needs. We have already treated the Gecko in detail in a separate DeepDive (see downloads), but we include the quick overview again here so we can see what we are talking about.

9 Levels of Established Fear

(Established: Stuck in Unresolved Fear over a Long Period of Time)



Level 9 <i>Physical and Psychological</i>	Heart diseases; Burnout	Gastrointestinal, Insomnia; Anxiety, Depression, Boreout	Fatigue, Immune system; Depression, Dissociation
Level 8 <i>Environment (Style, Goals, Stress Pattern)</i>	Assertive/Leading; Power/Status; Control	Avoidance; Stable Environment; Procrastination	Waiting for assignments; Routine; Inactivity
Level 7 <i>Worldview and Beliefs</i>	World is Hostile; Seeking Power	World is Dangerous; Seeking Safety (Protection)	Meaninglessness; No hope/Control
Level 6 <i>Personality Development</i>	Dominant Personality Style, Impulsivity	Avoidant Personality Style, Low Self Esteem	Passive Personality Style, Helplessness
Level 5 <i>Social Interactions</i>	Conflict with others, Low empathy	Social withdrawal, Distrust	Social Passivity, Communication Difficulties
Level 4 <i>Behavioral Patterns</i>	Aggression, Dominance	Avoidance, Withdrawal	Speechlessness, Inactivity
Level 3 <i>Cognitive Processes</i>	Focus on threat, Impulsive decisions	Overthinking, Catastrophizing	Mental blankness, Confusion
Level 2 <i>Emotional Reactions</i>	Anger and Aggression, Frustration	Fear and panic, Anxiety, People pleasing	Overwhelm, Shame
Level 1 <i>Physiological Reactions</i>	Cardiovascular Activation, Tension, Adrenaline	Increased Breathing Rate, Sweating, Dilated Pupils	Reduced Heart Rate, Shallow Breathing, Numbness

Fight
moving towards
threat

Flight
moving away
from threat

Freeze
feeling stuck,
unable to move

Base Fear/ Stress Patterns

Figure 2: Our Gecko has the three fear modes: fight, flight, freeze. Often we create socially compatible roles on that basis and only show fear patterns in "fawn mode." But that already happens in the neocortex. The basic program remains in place and still becomes visible under pressure and stress. (That is also the purpose of interrogations and assessment centers: creating situations in which we fall back into our basic patterns.)

The other part of the brain we need here is our basic needs. We usually use Gerald Hüther's definition: the basic needs are connectedness and agency. In other words: I need my pack, but I also need to express myself and be able to influence the world.

Here, however, we want to use a slightly expanded model. It simply looks one level deeper. Because ultimately the question is: What constitutes connectedness or attachment? What do we learn through it?

If life were always like this for all people, or if we moved into repair after injuries, then we would all be at Stage 5. That is why it is also important not to see the stages as status, but as descriptions of lived realities. And shame is usually part of the injury, although there is no reason for it. Because when this happens to us as children, we truly are victims. Even if our parents did not act with malicious intent, but simply passed on the only form of love they themselves had ever known.

If you are at a high stage, then that is an undeserved privilege. Enjoy it, and help others move forward.

But here is one more thought about injury. In general, there are many different forms of irrelationship that then trigger injuries at the level of attachment.

Most of the time, there is a chain reaction. Here we see the example of overprotection. What is interesting is that self-determination is injured only indirectly — unlike what one might assume. In fact, behind overprotection there is the parents' fear of loss. So what is transmitted is fear instead of safety: "The world is dangerous." Of course the parents actually want the opposite, but that is their world and therefore also their communication.

But it also contains the message: "You cannot do it, because only we know better." That too is meant as care, but it takes away self-worth. And the effect of both is that my self-determination is also restricted. Of course, there are also cases of overprotection where direct external control occurs — including through violence. Then self-determination is directly disturbed there as well.

And now we arrive at the exciting perspective: Gecko, basic needs, and the stages are only different perspectives on the same situation.

Stage 1 stands for freeze, and that is injured safety.

Stage 2 stands for flight, and that is injured self-worth.

Stage 3 stands for fight, and that is injured self-determination.

So the strategy of each stage is to deal with the injury and compensate for it. But they all come from fear.

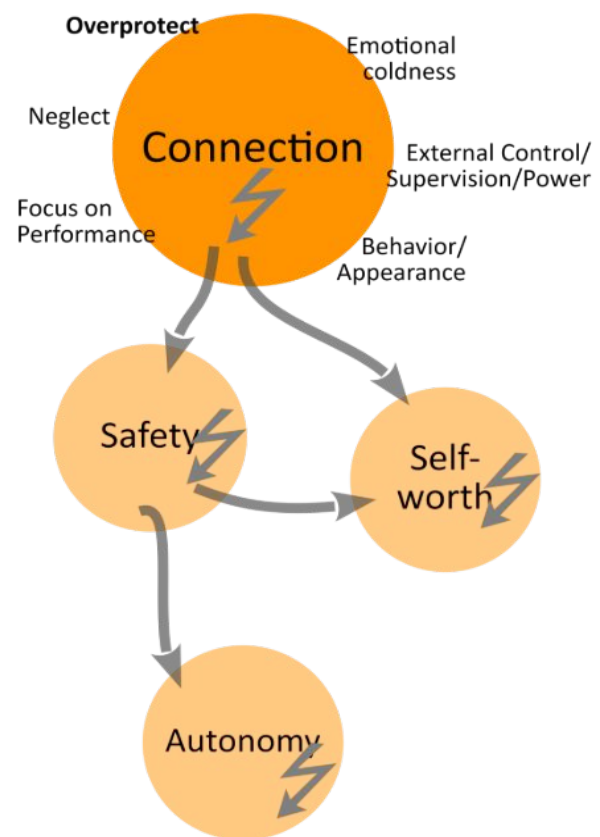


Figure 3: Chain reaction of injury

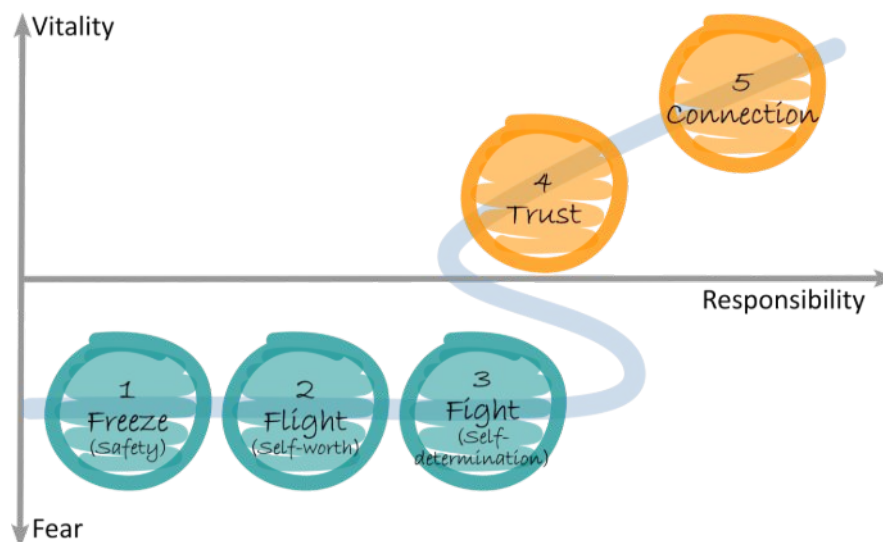


Figure 4: The dimensions behind Tribal Leadership

That is why the stages are not quite as linear as one might think at first glance. Stages 1–3 are fear patterns (Gecko), but they can have different levels of intensity. What is actually linear is the increasing responsibility within the patterns. Fight is more active than freeze. Still, we can move from all patterns into trust. We do not have to follow the blue line. It is an obvious option, but in complexity everything is allowed. What matters is that we become aware that the shift from fear to aliveness in our lives is a major paradigm shift. (Feel free to also look at the paper on relationships.)

Of course our life becomes better through this, but first we have to give up everything familiar. That still feels like a loss. If all I know is hunger and illness, then that is my safety. **And as rationally foolish as it may be, it is emotionally logical that we feel fear of loss there.**

The step into Stage 4 is important, beautiful, but also critical.

In coaching and also in therapy, many people are therefore kept permanently in Stages 1–3 if they were there before, because we can create a left-right movement and sell it as progress. But these are only changing forms of coping. I remain sitting in the same mess, but hold different air fresheners under my nose so it does not smell quite as bad.

And one more aspect: a strict assignment to one stage does not do people justice either. Stages 1–3 are people in trauma — with different severity and in different forms. And yet every person also carries a piece of Stage 5 within them. Some 10%, and some perhaps only 2.3%. But even in trauma we carry the hope that we will wake up and it never happened. That is why stage tests should always look at the proportions of all stages. Ultimately, only one world-view, one belief, has the say. But hope is always there too.

Neurobiological foundation: fear systems & stage dynamics

Mapping to the Gecko:

Biological system	Behavior	Main emotion	Corresponding stages	Goal for integration
Freeze	Withdrawal, numbness, resignation	Powerlessness, hopelessness	Stage 1	Safety & grounding
Flight	Search for recognition, adaptation, avoidance	Fear, abandonment	Stage 2	Self-worth & support
Fight	Control, dominance, devaluing others	Anger, pride	Stage 3	Trust & cooperation
Social Engagement (ventrovagal)	Connection, compassion, co-regulation	Joy, connectedness	Stage 4–5	Creative aliveness

This means:

- ▷ The first three stages are **fear modes**.
 - ▶ Each seeks stability in its own way — through withdrawal, adaptation, or control.
- ▷ Stage 4 only emerges when the system is **safe enough** to let go of fear and allow relationship again.
- ▷ Stage 5 is then not a new “achievement,” but the natural **aliveness** that emerges when fear patterns have been integrated.

So yes and no: We can use it in the classical linearity of “1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5,” because that linearity is not only cognitive but **biologically cyclical**. Still, from any state we can also move into the “less fear” mode.

As we can see in the table, each fear pattern addresses a specific basic need that comes from relationship: self-worth, self-determination, and safety. Development moves from fear → fulfilled basic need (connectedness in the form of self-worth, self-determination, safety) → joy.

Test

In addition to the detailed description, we also use a quick test. It works well for teams, families, or school classes. Everyone rates everyone else. The point is not to assign someone to one stage, but rather to indicate which proportions we perceive.

Example of a rating: Stage 1: 30%; Stage 2: 10%; Stage 3: 50%; Stage 4: 10%; Stage 5: 0%

After that, a self-assessment can also be added.

The ratings are averaged per person and also compared with the self-assessment. The self-assessment is not included in the average.

Here, too, the point is not to assign stages to people, but to understand which stages need to be met. In other words: what is the need of the family, the team, or the school class?

Love, self-love, acceptance, relationship, and rubber bands

If we are already talking about basic needs and fear, then we can include another aspect: everything that has to do with acceptance and love.

Love never had anything to do with romance. Love is the social competence of bringing systems into their best natural state. In other words: “What is best for the system?”

Neurologically, we can say: “an unconditional interest in the unfolding of the person we love.” That includes ourselves.

What are the prerequisites for this? We have to be far enough out of our own pain, hamster wheel, or survival mode to have capacity and interest at all. Survival mode in particular traps us in a very small field of perception. We can barely see our own feet; even the next step is far away. And in that energy, we have no headspace for others at all — except when they are useful to us in some way.

So love is what can be, and **acceptance** is the unconditional yes to what is. Acceptance and love usually create tension, depending on the size of the distance between them. And in our society today, that distance is often large. That is our inner tension.

One trick for relaxing is simply to ignore the potential. I stay stuck in “today” and become resigned. Resignation is the belief that there is no potential for me. More on that later.



Figure 5: A simple model showing the distance between the current situation and potential. The greater the distance, the greater the inner tension.

With this simple image or model, we can already explain a few terms. Seeing potential as a possible reality is love. So love focuses on that state and wants to make it possible.

Acceptance means seeing and accepting today unconditionally. Of course, this creates tension with love, especially when the distance is large. That is why both parts matter: the “yes” in the now, but also hope and belief in possibility.

Acceptance, even unconditional acceptance, does not mean that I approve of everything. It is the deep understanding that the current situation is the best — and only — place for this life story right now. And acceptance gives complete freedom to remain exactly there. We do not have to choose love; every person also has the right to choose their own unhappiness.

Worldview

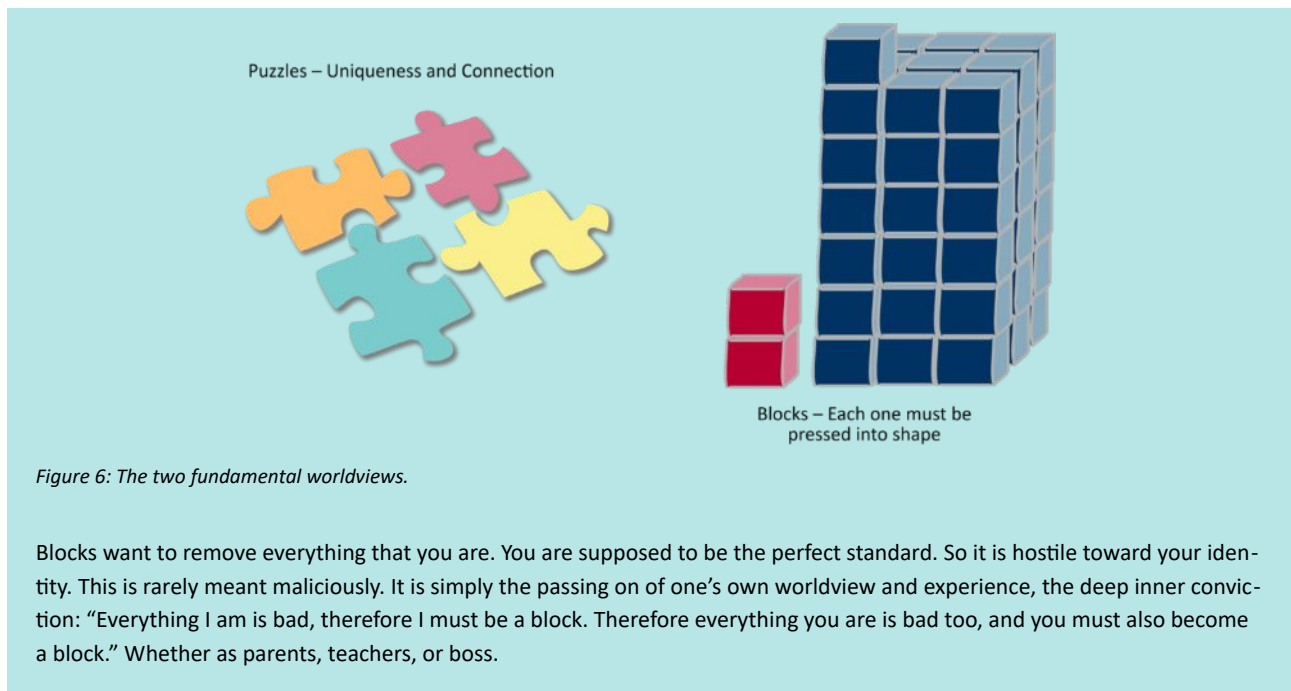
To understand this better, we need one more simple image for the fundamentally different worldviews. Following W. M. Marston, we distinguish between an environment perceived as friendly and an environment perceived as dangerous or hostile. In short, we speak of a friendly or hostile worldview.

Two concepts lie underneath the image: puzzle or blocks.

At the moment, we live in a blocks world. The idea behind it is that human beings — and our biology — are flawed, so I must constantly work against them. I must overcome everything “that I am” and fit myself into a norm, a standard. These are the basic concepts of education: “Do not be you; be like this.” These are the roles we then learn or become.

The puzzle world fits neurology and biology better: we are born with healthy variance. Everyone has their uniqueness. Like a puzzle piece, I have my place, I am part of the picture, and I have connections to my neighbors. Here we also see the basic needs: connectedness and agency.

The worldviews are friendly or hostile in relation to one’s own identity. The puzzle embraces one’s own identity and wants it to develop and unfold.



Acceptance and love do not yet have anything to do with relationship. These are three different things. Relationship presupposes acceptance and love. We understand each other in our today, and at the same time we have a shared goal. And we have the capacity for connectedness. (Here the worldview matters again: for puzzle pieces, all three are much easier than for blocks. For blocks, it is almost impossible.)

For people in a blocks worldview, self-love is difficult. Self-love means: I see my potential and believe in a path toward it. But through "Do not be you; be like this," at every point where they showed something of their personality, there is no reality outside their trained roles. They are stuck in the "today" box. And their feeling is that all around it there is an abyss that will swallow them as soon as they leave their box.

The longing for their true identity — their potential — remains, but the path toward it is impossible. And there are different strategies for dealing with this hopelessness: distraction or numbing, resignation, or simply declaring my current state to be my potential.



Figure 7: People in a hostile worldview see no path from today into the future. Standstill — and therefore coping — is the only option.

When the path is impossible, self-love is missing. I cannot see a path for myself. There is no solution or healing; I remain trapped in coping. Coping means: "I make my pain more bearable."

Unconditional acceptance gives us complete freedom. We decide what we want. Love shows options. And relationship can be a shared path.

And every person has different “rubber bands,” with different strengths, that pull them toward potential or hold them in today.

Basic needs pull us toward potential. Fear pulls us toward “today.” Once we are older than about 16, our brain is also reluctant to rebuild itself again. It wants to save energy. That, too, is a very strong rubber band that holds us. In this way, we can scan the entire environment. Many relationships, systems, and old structures hold us.

If we want to live love, then we will try to strengthen the rubber bands that pull toward the future and potential, and weaken the rubber bands that hold us in today. In general, we want less tension: reduce distance and save energy.

Because this inner tension is an energy drain. When the tension is high — when many rubber bands are pulling us — we can easily use up to 90% of our energy just managing those rubber bands. That makes us tired and robs us of all strength. The less tension, the fewer rubber bands, the more energy remains for real life.

Still, it is only an offer. Acceptance and love must remain in balance. We never make the decision for someone else. We only create an option, a path, so that people have a real choice. They have the option to walk the path. Whether they do so is their decision.

Companies

Whether human being or company, the same basic principles apply. There, too, we have rubber bands — perhaps even more of them. The more we want to move our company into the future — product, service, and organization — the more rubber bands will hold us in the old world.

Many systems and standards come from the old world and old thought patterns, from tax issues to legal aspects. They are all protection systems, and they are rigid. For all of that, too, we would need alternatives suited to a friendly worldview. The alternative to protection is then safety. We turn toward one another and create it together.

STAGE 1 –“Life sucks”

Existential alienation & loss of connectedness

Where they come from:

From deep injury, loss, or disappointment. The system has learned: “Closeness is dangerous — life hurts.”

Why this feels like a solution:

- ▷ Withdrawal and cynicism protect against further hurt.
- ▷ No hope = no disappointment.
- ▷ Control through refusal (“I am no longer playing this game”).

Subjectively experienced benefit:

- ▷ Calm in the chaos.
- ▷ No risk of being hurt.
- ▷ A feeling of superiority (“At least I see it clearly”).

Biological level:

Freeze → save energy, secure survival.

Resistance to development:

Safety in isolation; trust feels dangerous.

1. Overview

People in Stage 1 experience life as hostile or meaningless. Connectedness appears dangerous; closeness means loss of control or pain. The person withdraws emotionally, socially, or physically.

They survive — but they do not live.

This stage is rarely visible in organizations, but often present at the margins: people who “drop out,” “feel nothing anymore,” or “stop fighting.” In relationships it appears as inner absence or cynicism.

At the core there is not malice, but deep exhaustion and disappointment.

2. Worldview & basic assumptions

Level	Description	Language patterns	Scale (0–10)
Worldview	“The world is dangerous, meaningless, or broken.”	“Everything is fake.” / “It won’t make any difference anyway.” / “I’m out.”	0 = complete hopelessness 10 = first moments of meaning are tangible
Self-image	“I am powerless, invisible, or flawed.”	“I do not belong here.” / “Something is wrong with me.”	0 = complete self-devaluation 10 = first self-respect
View of people	“People use or hurt each other.”	“You cannot trust anyone.” / “Everyone looks after themselves.”	0 = total alienation 10 = first spark of compassion
Basic emotional tone	Numbness, anger, shame, existential fear.	“I don’t feel anything anymore.”	0 = emotional dust 10 = first emotional movement
Body perception	Frozen or overstimulated; body as enemy.	“I’m just tired.”	0 = dissociation 10 = contact is tangible

3. Relationship level

Aspect	Description
Closeness	Experienced as a threat; leads to withdrawal or attack.
Distance	Creates perceived safety. Emotional walls, cynicism.
Attachment	Often fragmented and fragile. Earlier injuries are active.
Communication	Either silence or verbal sharpness; no real “we.”
In groups	Marginal position, oppositional stance, sometimes silent despair.

4. Defense & protection logic

Mechanism	Description	Language signals
Splitting off	Separation of feeling and consciousness; emotional numbness.	“I don’t know what I’m supposed to feel.”
Cynicism / nihilism	Everything is devalued to avoid disappointment.	“It is all just a show.”
Isolation	Avoidance of closeness as self-protection.	“I don’t need anyone.”
Projection of blame	The world or “the system” is to blame; victim/perpetrator logic.	“Those people up there...”
Self-devaluation	Underlying shame, disguised as indifference.	“I’m not worth it.”

5. Core fear & deepest longing

Category	Description
Core fear	Meaninglessness, abandonment, complete devaluation.
Protection strategy	Control through withdrawal, inner distance, mockery, coldness.
Hidden pain	“I was never held.” / “I am too much.”
Longing	To be seen without having to explain oneself. A safe space where nothing is expected except being there.
Physically tangible as	Heavy chest, pressure in the belly, inner emptiness, insomnia, or apathy.

6. Recognition scale (0–10)

Area	0–3 (blockage)	4–6 (ambivalence)	7–10 (integration)
Self-reference	Self-hatred, guilt, hopelessness	Cynicism, detached humor	Self-compassion begins to sprout
Relationship	Withdrawal or aggression	Need for closeness, but mistrust	Capacity for small trust
Meaning / future	No belief in change	“Maybe something is possible after all.”	First moments of meaning are felt
Body perception	Numbness / freezing	Fluctuation between numbness and restlessness	Body can again be experienced as a resource
Communication	Silence / aggro	“I don’t care.”	“I wish I could believe...”

7. Guidance & intervention

Attitude

- ▷ Absolute non-judgment.
- ▷ Presence instead of method.
- ▷ No “rescuing,” no “motivating.”
- ▷ Slowness, safety, predictability.

Language that opens

- ▷ “I can see that you have endured a lot.”
- ▷ “I will stay, even if you say nothing.”
- ▷ “You do not have to do or be able to do anything right now.”
- ▷ “I do not know how you managed it — but you are still here.”

Language that closes

- ▷ “You just have to think positively.”
- ▷ “You mustn’t get so worked up about it.”
- ▷ “Come on, pull yourself together.”
- ▷ “Everything will be fine.” (too early)

Concrete intervention impulses

Category	Intervention
Body / presence	Grounding, breathing, rhythm; reconnecting with the body. Walks, nature, silence.
Social	Micro-encounters without demands: doing something together, not talking.
Emotional	Mirroring emotion without analysis: “That sounds lonely.”
Cognitive	Slow reframing impulses: “Perhaps not everything is lost.”
Symbolic / meaning	Stories of getting back up — not as instruction, but as resonance.

Goal of guidance

From isolation to safe resonance.

Not “pulling someone out,” but “accompanying them until contact becomes possible again.”

8. Example dialogues

Client: “I don’t see any meaning anymore. The world is broken.”

Coach: “It sounds as if you have tried to cope with this alone for a very long time.”

(Pause — no solution offered, only presence.)

Client: “That’s just how it is.”

Coach: “Maybe. And still you are here — which means one part of you believes that something may still be possible.”

👉 *Goal: not to give hope, but to make visible that it already exists.*

9. Development focus toward the next stage

Transition to Stage 2	Direction
From nihilism to victim awareness	When the person can say “I am suffering” again, that is progress. Pain replaces emptiness. This is the first step toward self-perception.
Typical sign	Anger, complaining, searching for someone to blame → this is life returning.
Attitude of the guide	“Good that you are angry. It means you can feel again.”
Key message	“You are not alone in what you are experiencing.”

10. Short profile Stage 1

Dimension	Key points
Essence	Alienation, emptiness, loss of meaning
Relationship pattern	Withdrawal, cynicism, avoidance of contact
Core fear	Meaninglessness, abandonment
Longing	Safety, being seen, being held
Defense	Cynicism, numbness, withdrawal
First opening	Anger or pain may become tangible
Guiding impulse	Presence before solution
Next step	Self-compassion through resonance

♥ STAGE 2 –“My life sucks”“

The valley of disappointment: longing for worth and justice

Where they come from:

From unstable attachment — sometimes closeness, sometimes rejection. The system believes: “I am only safe if someone likes me.”

Why this feels like a solution:

- ▷ Adaptation and emotional sensitivity keep relationships alive.
- ▷ The victim role brings care or attention.
- ▷ Passivity protects against mistakes and rejection.

Subjectively experienced benefit:

- ▷ Belonging through neediness.
- ▷ Permission to be weak.
- ▷ Responsibility remains with others.

Biological level:

Flight → constant search for safety through attachment.

Resistance to development:

Self-responsibility is experienced as danger (“Then I will lose love”).

1. Overview

In Stage 2, life is no longer meaningless, but unfair. The person feels again — but the feeling is: “I don’t stand a chance.”

They experience themselves as a victim of circumstances, other people, or the system. Stage 2 is shaped by resignation and underlying envy, often disguised as irony or realism. It is the world of “yes, but...,” of restrained hope that no longer dares to truly hope.

At the core lies an injured longing to be seen and recognized — and the fear that appreciation will never come, no matter what one does.

2. Worldview & basic assumptions

Level	Description	Typical language patterns	Scale (0–10)
Worldview	“Life is unfair.” — Others are lucky; I am not.	“I’m just unlucky.” / “The world is unjust.”	0 = total victim stance 10 = first self-responsibility
Self-image	“I try hard, but it is never enough.”	“I’m doing my best, but nobody sees it.”	0 = self-devaluation 10 = first self-efficacy
View of people	“Others are better off or get preferential treatment.”	“They always get what they want.”	0 = envy / mistrust 10 = emerging compassion
Basic emotional tone	Frustration, resentment, disappointment, sadness	“Why is it always me...” / “Whatever.”	0 = bitterness 10 = hope begins to sprout
Body perception	Heaviness, pressure in the chest, tiredness	“I am simply drained.”	0 = exhaustion 10 = new energy is tangible

3. Relationship level

Aspect	Description
Closeness	Sought, but with expectation: “Finally, someone should understand me.”
Distance	Emerges when the need is not met — withdrawal into injury.
Attachment	Ambivalent: needy and mistrustful at the same time.
Communication	Complaining, gossiping, irony. A lot of “yes, but...”
In groups	Passive energy, hidden resistance, underlying cynicism.

Central dynamic: need for connection, but fear of disappointment → therefore complaint rather than real opening.

4. Defense & protection logic

Mechanism	Description	Language signals
Self-pity	Gives short-term control (“I can’t do anything”).	“Poor me...”
Rationalization	“I am just being realistic.” — protection from new hope.	“That’s just how it is.”
Projection	Blame is shifted outward.	“If only the others would...”
Passive-aggressive control	Resistance through not joining in.	“I told you so.”
Irony / sarcasm	Protection from real vulnerability.	“Of course, I’m laughing my head off.”

5. Core fear & deepest longing

Category	Description
Core fear	Being overlooked, being insignificant. “I could disappear completely and nobody would notice.”
Protection strategy	Complaining, withdrawal, silent resistance — to force closeness without showing oneself.
Hidden pain	“I do so much — why is it never enough?”
Longing	Appreciation, resonance, belonging. Someone who notices that I am trying.
Physically tangible as	Heavy legs, tears behind resentment, emptiness after conflict.

6. Recognition scale (0–10)

Area	0–3 (blockage)	4–6 (ambivalence)	7–10 (integration)
Self-reference	Victim role, self-devaluation	Anger about injustice	Self-efficacy begins to sprout (“I can do something”).
Relationship	Needy & demanding	Longing, but fear of closeness	First self-opening becomes possible
Meaning / future	“Everything is against me.”	“Maybe things will get better someday.”	Realistic hope
Body perception	Heaviness, withdrawal	Exhaustion, crying	Energy flows again
Communication	Complaining, sarcasm	quiet “I want to be understood”	Ability to name needs

7. Guidance & intervention

Attitude

- ▷ Empathy first, responsibility later.
- ▷ Do not correct; understand.
- ▷ No pressure toward “positive thinking” — otherwise withdrawal.
- ▷ Mirror until self-compassion emerges.

Language that opens

- ▷ “I can see that you give a lot — and that it often does not pay off.”
- ▷ “That sounds really frustrating. You wish someone would finally see it, right?”
- ▷ “I believe you are tired. And you are still here — that is strong.”
- ▷ “What would be one small step that counts only for you?”

Language that closes

- ▷ “You are just too negative.”
- ▷ “Pull yourself together.”
- ▷ “You simply have to try harder.”
- ▷ “Other people have it bad too.”

Intervention impulses

Category	Intervention
Emotional	Validate the disappointment (“Yes, that hurts.”). Not consolation, but recognition.
Cognitive	Ask about the sphere of influence: “What is in your hands?”
Social	Small cooperation tasks with clear feedback (“That was helpful — thank you.”).
Symbolic	Recognition rituals; making appreciation visible (e.g., reflection cards, journaling).
Body	Movement, activation, small experiences of success in everyday life.

Goal of guidance

From victim stance to self-efficacy through resonance.

Do not say: “You can do something,” but:

“I can see that you are already doing something — and that it counts.”

8. Example dialogues

Client: “I always try hard, but it is never enough.”

Coach: “It sounds as if you are fighting — and nobody sees it.”

Client: “Exactly! Everyone else gets everything, and I get nothing.”

Coach: “That feels unfair. And still you want to belong, right?”

👉 *Goal: to make the need beneath the complaint visible.*

When the person says “yes,” the door is open — not to action, but to contact.

9. Development focus toward the next stage

Transition to Stage 3	Direction
From victim awareness to self-efficacy	The person realizes: “I have influence.” Performance replaces powerlessness; pride replaces shame.
Typical sign	New energy; anger becomes productive: “I’ll show them!”
Attitude of the guide	“I believe you can do more than you currently trust yourself to do.”
Key message	“You are not a victim — you are a person who has endured a lot.”

10. Short profile Stage 2

Dimension	Key points
Essence	Disappointment, victim role, hidden resentment
Relationship pattern	Needy, but mistrustful
Core fear	Being overlooked / not being important
Longing	Appreciation, belonging
Defense	Self-pity, irony, projection
First opening	Anger & frustration may be shown
Guiding impulse	Validation before responsibility
Next step	Small, visible successes — strengthen self-efficacy

♥ STAGE 3 –“I’m great (and you’re not)”

Self-efficacy, control, and the fear of insignificance

Where they come from:

From the pain of having been small or dependent. The system says: “Never again will I be powerless.”

Why this feels like a solution:

- ▷ Control creates safety.
- ▷ Performance creates respect — and avoids humiliation.
- ▷ Dominance protects against weakness and emotional dependence.

Subjectively experienced benefit:

- ▷ Pride and self-respect.
- ▷ Influence, clear identity.
- ▷ Feeling: “Now I decide for myself.”

Biological level:

Fight → attack as protection strategy.

Resistance to development:

Letting go of control feels like losing control.

1. Overview

In Stage 3, life becomes manageable again — finally. After the powerlessness and disappointment of Stage 2, the feeling now awakens: “I can make something happen.”

People at this stage define themselves through performance, competence, and control. They are proud of what they achieve, but deep inside they fear that everything will collapse if they stop functioning perfectly even once.

Relationship becomes a stage: you show what you can do, but not who you are. Recognition is sought; love is avoided. At its core, this is not about egoism, but self-protection: performance replaces closeness, control replaces trust.

2. Worldview & basic assumptions

Level	Description	Typical language patterns	Scale (0–10)
Worldview	“Life is a competition — and I want to win.”	“If I don’t do it, nobody will do it properly.”	0 = total competition mode 10 = beginning cooperation
Self-image	“I am strong, smart, competent — but always under pressure.”	“I have to function.”	0 = self-worth tied to performance 10 = worth independent of performance
View of people	“Others are useful or obstructive — rarely equal.”	“I can only rely on myself.”	0 = mistrust 10 = first recognition of equality
Basic emotional tone	Driven energy, irritability, pride, exhaustion	“I don’t have time for this kind of thing.”	0 = overload 10 = self-reflection becomes possible
Body perception	Tension, overdrive, energy, sleep problems	“I cannot switch off.”	0 = constant stress 10 = balance possible

3. Relationship level

Aspect	Description
Closeness	Dosed in a controlled way: too much closeness = loss of control.
Distance	Used to secure autonomy.
Attachment	Functional, not necessarily emotional. Loyalty is based on performance.
Communication	Directive, rational, often convincing — rarely vulnerable.
In groups	Alpha roles, competition for recognition. Teamwork is disrupted by status issues.

*Central dynamic: “I need you in order to prove myself —
but I must not show it.”*

4. Defense & protection logic

Mechanism	Description	Language signals
Overcompensation	Strength as armor against vulnerability.	“I have everything under control.”
Devaluing others	Weaknesses in others trigger one’s own insecurity.	“He just cannot handle pressure.”
Control	Feelings and situations must be mastered.	“I cannot stand chaotic people.”
Rationalization	Emotions are explained away.	“I am simply being objective.”
Perfectionism	Flawlessness as existential security.	“Mistakes are not an option.”

5. Core fear & deepest longing

Category	Description
Core fear	Loss of control, weakness, devaluation. “If I am not strong, I am nothing.”
Protection strategy	Overcontrol, performance, distance.
Hidden pain	“I am only liked when I function.”
Longing	Authenticity, trust, closeness without performance. Someone who stays even when I am not perfect.
Physically tangible as	Tension, pressure, inner restlessness, “never enough.”

6. Recognition scale (0–10)

Area	0–3 (blockage)	4–6 (ambivalence)	7–10 (integration)
Self-reference	Self-optimization, overwhelm	Pride, but first doubts	Self-worth independent of performance
Relationship	Distance / control	Longing for trust	Closeness possible without fear
Meaning / future	Success as standard	“What is all this for?”	Meaning beyond performance
Body perception	Constant tension	Exhaustion becomes tangible	Letting go succeeds
Communication	Lecturing / argumentative	reflective	honest / vulnerable

7. Guidance & intervention

Attitude

- ▷ Respect first, feeling afterwards.
- ▷ Do not take control away — offer safety in presence.
- ▷ Appreciate performance without feeding it.
- ▷ No confrontation with weakness — first stability, then depth.

Language that opens

- ▷ “I can see that you take responsibility — perhaps even too much.”
- ▷ “You do not always have to be strong to be respected.”
- ▷ “What would it be like to let yourself be carried for once?”
- ▷ “I believe that you can do a lot. And I believe you are also allowed to feel.”

Language that closes

- ▷ “You are too controlling.”
- ▷ “You have to learn to let go.” (Triggers shame & defense)
- ▷ “You are only looking for recognition.”
- ▷ “You are not as strong as you pretend.”

Intervention impulses

Category	Intervention
Cognitive	Ask meaning questions: “What are you doing this for?” — not “why.”
Emotional	Emotional mirroring: “That sounds exhausting,” instead of “You are stressed.”
Social	Cooperation tasks where trust can be experienced.
Symbolic	Transition rituals: sharing responsibility, not giving it away.
Body	Breathwork, slowing down, conscious pauses (first physical, then emotional).

Goal of guidance

From performance to authenticity.

Not “breaking strength,” but “making safety beyond strength experienceable.”

8. Example dialogues

Client: “I simply cannot rely on others.”

Coach: “That has probably hurt you often, hasn’t it?”

Client: “I just cope better when I am in control.”

Coach: “Yes. Control gives you safety. And perhaps one part of you wishes you did not have to hold everything for once?”

👉 Goal: to appreciate the protection (“control”) — and then make the longing beneath it visible (“safety without pressure”).

9. Development focus toward the next stage

Transition to Stage 4	Direction
From ego to cooperation	Learning that connectedness is not weakness, but multiplication.
Typical sign	Joy in team performance; trust in others grows.
Attitude of the guide	“You can lead without being alone.”
Key message	“Real strength shows itself in connection.”

10. Short profile Stage 3

Dimension	Key points
Essence	Performance, control, competition
Relationship pattern	Functional, controlled, selective
Core fear	Loss of control, devaluation
Longing	Trust, closeness without performance
Defense	Overcompensation, rationalization
First opening	Doubt about the meaningfulness of control
Guiding impulse	Appreciation before opening
Next step	Experience cooperation as a new form of safety

♥ STAGE 4 –“We’re great”

Community, trust, and the fear of exclusion

Where they come from:

From the experience that trust heals and meaning is shared.

Why this feels like a solution:

- ▷ Cooperation reduces pressure.
- ▷ Belonging feels safe and meaningful.
- ▷ Responsibility is shared — less fear, more we.

Subjectively experienced benefit:

- ▷ Emotional safety.
- ▷ Joy in being connected.
- ▷ Stability through shared values.

Biological level:

Social Engagement → ventrovagal activation.

Resistance to development:

Fear of destroying harmony through too much individuality.

1. Overview

Stage 4 is the stage of real connectedness. After the performance and control of Stage 3, the feeling awakens: “Together we can do more.”

People experience meaning in relationship, cooperation, belonging, and mutual growth. They begin to trust others — and experience the value of diversity, empathy, and shared success.

But the new closeness also brings new fear: what if I no longer belong?

Stage 4 is the stage of belonging and loyalty — and at the same time the beginning of a new kind of identity conflict: “How do I remain me when we are we?”

2. Worldview & basic assumptions

Level	Description	Typical language patterns	Scale (0–10)
Worldview	“Together we are strong.”	“We are all pulling in the same direction.” / “Our team is different.”	0 = overemphasis on the group, devaluation of others 10 = unity without separation
Self-image	“I am part of something larger.”	“I can be myself here.”	0 = adaptation in order to belong 10 = staying true to oneself within the we
View of people	“Trust is worth it.”	“I know they mean well.”	0 = mistrust in groups 10 = trust with boundaries
Basic emotional tone	Belonging, enthusiasm, pride	“This feels right.”	0 = group pressure 10 = authentic cooperation
Body perception	Open, relaxed, warm	“I feel energy in being together.”	0 = inner tension under group pressure 10 = calm in connection

3. Relationship level

Aspect	Description
Closeness	Desired and nourished through trust and shared values.
Distance	Often experienced as a threat (“We are losing each other”).
Attachment	Strong, sometimes too strong — loyalty can lead to groupthink.
Communication	Open, supportive, but conflict-avoidant.
In groups	High team spirit, identification with culture and “we-feeling.”

Central dynamic: belonging becomes the new safety — and therefore a possible new dependency.

4. Defense & protection logic

Mechanism	Description	Language signals
Need for harmony	Conflicts are avoided in order to preserve community.	“We do not need to blow this up now.”
Groupthink	Overidealizing the we; devaluing other groups.	“They just do not understand how we do things.”
Idealization	Team or partner is idealized; shadows are ignored.	“Our team is simply perfect.”
Overadaptation	Independence is sacrificed in order to belong.	“I’d rather not say anything.”
Subtle control	Norm pressure through values — “This is how we do things here.”	“That simply does not fit us.”

5. Core fear & deepest longing

Category	Description
Core fear	Exclusion, isolation, betrayal. “I am losing my home.”
Protection strategy	Adaptation, harmony, loyalty.
Hidden pain	“I must not rub anyone the wrong way, otherwise I will lose everything.”
Longing	Deep, honest connection in which difference has room.
Physically tangible as	Width and warmth — but also pressure in the throat when one does not dare to be honest.

6. Recognition scale (0–10)

Area	0–3 (blockage)	4–6 (ambivalence)	7–10 (integration)
Self-reference	Adaptation, loss of individuality	Balance between one’s own and the we	Self-loyalty in togetherness
Relationship	Fear of conflict	Disagreement becomes possible	Real trust, even in conflict
Meaning / future	Loyalty as an end in itself	Value orientation	Openness to broader cooperation
Body perception	Tension when there is disharmony	Alternation between closeness and withdrawal	Well-being in diversity
Communication	“We” dominates, no individual voices	Conversation about needs becomes possible	Mature dialogue culture

7. Guidance & intervention

Attitude

- ▷ Reflect trust, honor diversity.
- ▷ Do not “disrupt,” but deepen.
- ▷ Safety through openness, not through consensus.
- ▷ Introduce difference as a quality of relationship.

Language that opens

- ▷ “I sense that community matters to you — what do you need within it?”
- ▷ “What may remain different so that the we stays alive?”
- ▷ “I like that you contribute — and I am also curious about what you see differently.”
- ▷ “Conflicts are not a risk to connection, but proof of trust.”

Language that closes

- ▷ “We all have to pull together.” (increases pressure to adapt)
- ▷ “The team is more important than you.”
- ▷ “You do not fit in here.”
- ▷ “We all agree, don’t we?”

Intervention impulses

Category	Intervention
Emotional	Foster authenticity: “I want to know what you really think.”
Cognitive	Perspective work: diversity = stability.
Social	Dialogue methods, feedback rounds, values clarification.
Symbolic	Rituals in which differences are celebrated (e.g. “diversity dinner,” role reversal).
Body	Breathwork in the team, movement in connection (e.g. synchronization exercises, co-regulation).

Goal of guidance

*From loyalty to integrity in community.
Not “unison,” but “co-sounding.”*

8. Example dialogues

Client: “I do not want conflict; it ruins the atmosphere.”

Coach: “I understand; harmony matters to you. And perhaps you also sense that honest conversations are sometimes the best way toward real closeness?”

Client: “Our team is great — all other companies are toxic.”

Coach: “That sounds like strong cohesion. I wonder how you live diversity when someone thinks differently?”

👉 Goal: to foster safety in difference — trust that can hold diversity.

9. Development focus toward the next stage

Transition to Stage 5	Direction
From community to wholeness	Learning that belonging is not possession, but flow.
Typical sign	Openness toward the unfamiliar, curiosity about the whole.
Attitude of the guide	“You are part of the whole — and the whole lives through you.”
Key message	“Real connection needs difference.”

10. Short profile Stage 4

Dimension	Key points
Essence	Trust, loyalty, shared values
Relationship pattern	Closeness, harmony, group belonging
Core fear	Exclusion, loss of belonging
Longing	Deep connection in which difference has room
Defense	Need for harmony, groupthink
First opening	Authenticity despite possible rejection
Guiding impulse	Honor diversity instead of forcing agreement
Next step	Experience connection as flow — not possession

STAGE 5 – “Life is great”

Creative connectedness & the art of embodying trust

Where they come from:

From the experience that separation is an illusion. Life is no longer experienced as a struggle, but as flow.

Why this feels like a solution:

- ▷ No longer reactive, but present.
- ▷ Peace beyond fear and control.
- ▷ Everything is allowed to be — including pain.

Subjectively experienced benefit:

- ▷ Freedom without flight.
- ▷ Love without condition.
- ▷ Meaning without a goal.

Biological level:

Full integration — flexibility between system states.

Resistance to development:

Almost none, at most a subtle flight into spirituality (“I am already beyond that”).

1. Overview

In Stage 5, the basic feeling is no longer struggle, control, or belonging, but unity. The person experiences themselves as part of a larger whole: life, humanity, nature, consciousness. This is no longer about the ego wanting to achieve something, but about life expressing itself through us.

People in Stage 5 are calm, present, creative. They seem effortless and inspiring because they no longer have to prove themselves or anyone else.

Yet even here a subtle danger lurks: spiritual inflation — the attempt to avoid pain by “standing above everything.” Growth consists in living humility and embodiment: not thinking the divine, but breathing it.

2. Worldview & basic assumptions

Level	Description	Typical language patterns	Scale (0–10)
Worldview	“Everything is connected; everything happens at the right moment.”	“There is no coincidence.” / “Life flows through me.”	0 = spiritual inflation 10 = embodied unity
Self-image	“I am an expression of life — neither more nor less.”	“I serve what wants to emerge through me.”	0 = dissolution of self 10 = grounded self-transcendence
View of people	“Everyone carries a piece of the whole.”	“We are mirrors for one another.”	0 = missionary 10 = compassionate and equal
Basic emotional tone	Peace, joy, quiet strength, spaciousness	“I feel carried.”	0 = avoidance of pain 10 = presence in everything
Body perception	Soft, awake, synchronized with breath and feeling	“I am at home in the body.”	0 = disembodied spirituality 10 = embodied aliveness

3. Relationship level

Aspect	Description
Closeness	Natural. Boundaries do not serve protection, but clarity.
Distance	Not experienced as separation, but as a different frequency.
Attachment	Freedom in connection; love without possession.
Communication	Authentic, without agenda, often quieter than words.
In groups	Co-creativity. Collaboration without hierarchy, carried by resonance.

Central dynamic: connection is no longer a goal, but a state.

4. Defense & protection logic

Mechanism	Description	Language signals
Spiritual inflation	“I am already beyond the human.” — flight from pain.	“I no longer have an ego.”
Abstraction	Withdrawal into philosophy in order not to feel.	“Everything is illusion.”
Retreat addiction	Need to protect oneself from the world instead of inhabiting it.	“I need a lot of withdrawal from other people’s energy.”
Pseudo-serenity	Suppressed anger disguised as equanimity.	“I am completely at peace.”
Over-responsibility	Feeling that one has to hold everything.	“I feel the pain of the world.”

5. Core fear & basic longing

Category	Description
Core fear	Separation, falling back into ego or pain.
Protection strategy	Transcending instead of integrating — “standing above it.”
Hidden pain	“I must never fall again.”
Longing	Full presence — feeling everything without getting lost.
Physically tangible as	Spaciousness in the heart, but often unconscious tension in the solar plexus (control).

6. Recognition scale (0–10)

Area	0–3 (blockage)	4–6 (ambivalence)	7–10 (integration)
Self-reference	Abstract spirituality	Conscious, but not embodied	Embodied presence
Relationship	Withdrawal under the label “consciousness”	Compassion with distance	Connection in everyday closeness
Meaning / future	“Everything is one, so it does not matter.”	“I want to serve, but I do not know how.”	Grounded impact
Body perception	Head-heavy, meditative	Cycle of openness & withdrawal	Whole-body awareness
Communication	Preachy, abstract	Reflective	authentic, open-hearted, humorous

7. Guidance & intervention

Attitude

- ▷ Humility & mirroring. No admiration, no resistance.
- ▷ Remind the person of the human.
- ▷ Support embodiment — everyday life, emotion, relationship.
- ▷ Ground spirituality instead of intellectualizing it.

Language that opens

- ▷ “How does this show up when you feel it — not when you think it?”
- ▷ “What does this mean for your lived now?”
- ▷ “Can you feel anger and love at the same time?”
- ▷ “How does life love you today — very practically?”

Language that closes

- ▷ “Wow, you are already enlightened.”
- ▷ “I do not understand you; you are too far ahead.”
- ▷ “Stay in love.” (when pain is present)
- ▷ “You simply have to let go.”

Intervention impulses

Category	Intervention
Body	Presence work: breathing, dancing, touch, grounding.
Emotional	Shadow integration: welcoming pain, anger, neediness.
Cognitive	Paradox dialogues: “What does unity look like when you are tired?”
Social	Co-creative spaces: shared impact without a goal.
Symbolic	Rituals of gratitude & surrender; conscious everyday life as prayer.

Goal of guidance

From transcendence to immanence.

Not standing “above” life, but shining within it.

8. Example dialogues

Client: “I feel so at peace that nothing affects me anymore.”

Coach: “How beautiful. And when something does touch you — where do you feel it first?”

Client: “I only want to serve now.”

Coach: “Yes. And who serves you?”

👉 Goal: from ideal to embodiment — humanity is allowed to move back in.

9. Development focus

Transition beyond Stage 5	Direction
From unity to the embodiment of unity	Living consciousness as everyday life, not merely recognizing it.
Typical sign	Deep calm without avoidance of pain.
Attitude of the guide	“I am with you — not below you, not above you.”
Key message	“Consciousness shows itself in touching, not in fleeing.”

10. Short profile Stage 5

Dimension	Key points
Essence	Unity, awareness, love as intelligence
Relationship pattern	Co-creativity, free attachment
Core fear	Separation, falling back into ego
Longing	Embodied unity, authentic love
Defense	Spiritual inflation, abstraction
First opening	Grounding and emotion are allowed again
Guiding impulse	Embodiment before explanation
Next step	Live consciousness as everyday practice

Overall developmental movement (overview)

One more brief overview. Once it is understood, the table is enough as a reminder.

Stage	Relationship mode	Core fear	Longing	Key to transformation
1	Isolation	Meaninglessness	Hold	Safe resonance
2	Needy dependence	Being overlooked	Appreciation	Validation + self-efficacy
3	Controlled distance	Devaluation	Real closeness	Cooperation + meaning
4	Loyally connected	Exclusion	Deep community	Integrity in diversity
5	Free connectedness	Separation	Co-creation	Embodiment + humility

The movement is not linear — but regulatory

- ▷ Stages 1–3 are survival states driven by fear.
- ▷ Stages 4–5 are life states carried by trust and joy.
- ▷ The transition does not arise through insight, but through relief:
- ▷ less threat, more safety → the nervous system can open → relationship becomes possible again → meaning emerges → joy follows.

One could summarize it like this: fear closes, trust opens. Development is not ascent, but relaxation.

Phase	Dominant feeling	Nervous system mode	Solution through	Main goal
Stage 1	Powerlessness	Freeze	Isolation	Safety
Stage 2	Abandonment	Flight	Adaptation	Recognition (actually: self-worth)
Stage 3	Shame / anger	Fight	Control	Respect (actually: self-determination)
Stage 4	Trust	Social Engagement	Cooperation	Connection (creates self-worth, self-determination, and safety)
Stage 5	Joy / peace	Integration	Surrender	Unity

Do not forget basic needs

Although the movement points in a different direction, it is important that we also view such models in the context of basic needs. Here we simply use connectedness and agency. (Connectedness includes attachment, self-worth, and safety, while agency is self-determination.)

So what is the individual wound of each Stage, what is the inner reaction when we encounter the unmet basic need, and what can a path back into fulfilled basic needs look like?

Stage 1 – “Life sucks”

Wound: loss of safe connectedness & complete powerlessness

How the basic needs were wounded

- ▷ **Connectedness: early emotional coldness, abuse, loss, violence, or existential loneliness.**
→ “The world does not hold me.”
- ▷ **Agency: complete powerlessness; no control over pain or meaning.**
→ “No matter what I do, it changes nothing.”

When connectedness suddenly appears

- ▷ At first: mistrust, fear, overwhelm.
- ▷ Real closeness is experienced as a threat: “What do you want from me?”
- ▷ The system expects disappointment.
- ▷ Afterwards: freezing or anger (defense against the feeling of dependency).
- ▷ Only when safety is experienced consistently does grief appear — as a sign that contact is possible again.

Path back into fulfilled needs

1. **Safety & predictability: routine, no pressure, no mission.**
2. **Physical contact with reality: breathing, walking, feeling gravity.**
3. **Mini-resonances: small, honest encounters without an agenda.**
4. **Emotion may appear: anger, tears, pain → signs of life.**
5. **First self-efficacy: “I can feel and live again.”**

Goal: trust that connection is possible and safe.

♥ Stage 2 – “My life sucks”

Wound: insecure connectedness & learned helplessness

How the basic needs were wounded

- ▷ **Connectedness:** closeness was conditional — love was given only for adaptation or performance.
→ “I am seen when I function.”
- ▷ **Agency:** one’s own impulses were ignored or punished.
→ “My influence does not count.”

When connectedness appears

- ▷ First feeling: longing and fear at the same time.
- ▷ “What if you see me — and then disappear again?”
- ▷ Reaction: testing, clinging, mistrusting.
- ▷ The system tests whether safety holds.
- ▷ Afterwards often: anger or complaint — “Why only now?”
- ▷ This is the return of energy (a good sign).

Path back

1. Being perceived without being corrected.
2. Validate feelings before demanding responsibility.
3. Create small choices: “What do you want today?”
4. Make successes visible: “You did that.”
5. Experience of effectiveness → self-respect → real relationship.

Goal: connection without condition, action without fear of evaluation.

♥ Stage 3 – “I’m great (and you’re not)”

Wound: connectedness as dependency, agency as a substitute for self-worth

How the basic needs were wounded

- ▷ **Connectedness:** closeness was experienced as weakness or threat (“feelings make you vulnerable”).
→ “If I open up, I lose power.”
- ▷ **Agency:** success brought short-term safety — so performance became a substitute for attachment.
→ “I am valuable when I win.”

When connectedness appears

- ▷ Reaction: ambivalence or withdrawal.
- ▷ “I want this — but I do not know how.”
- ▷ Emotions such as shame or loss of control appear.
- ▷ Sometimes: idealization (“You are so special”) → in order to avoid real closeness.
- ▷ When safety remains, new freedom emerges: performance becomes expression, not proof.

Path back

1. Recognition without evaluation: honoring the strength, not the success.
2. Room for weakness: being allowed to show oneself without loss of status.
3. Experiencing cooperation as gain: "Together we are stronger."
4. Felt belonging: trust emerges when control is voluntarily released.
5. Connection becomes a source again, not a danger.

Goal: balance of strength and vulnerability — power becomes creative agency.

♥ Stage 4 – "We're great"

Wound: loss of individual autonomy within attachment

How the basic needs were wounded

- ▷ Connectedness: belonging was safe — but only through adaptation.
→ "I may belong if I am like you."
- ▷ Agency: one's own difference was seen as a risk to the we.
→ "I lose love when I set boundaries."

When connectedness appears (again, more deeply)

- ▷ Reaction: joy + fear of dissolving.
- ▷ "How do I remain me when we are we?"
- ▷ Often: need for harmony, self-censorship.
- ▷ Real closeness is confused with agreement.
- ▷ When differences are allowed to be held → mature relationship emerges.

Path back

1. Appreciation for individuality within community.
2. Understanding conflict as strengthening relationship.
3. Celebrating authenticity instead of consensus.
4. Experience: being different does not separate, it expands.
5. "We" becomes a space, not a cage.

Goal: connection in which self-expression is allowed to bloom.

🌟 Stage 5 – "Life is great"

Wound: subtle fear of separation and falling back into ego

How the basic needs were wounded

- ▷ Connectedness: everything is one — but the human is devalued.
→ "I must no longer be needy."
- ▷ Agency: the I is rejected as illusion — action loses its ground.
→ "I am only an observer now."

When connectedness appears (human, concrete)

- ▷ Reaction: hesitation or inflation.
- ▷ “I am beyond that.”
- ▷ Behind it: fear of suffering again.
- ▷ Only when the human is integrated again can love become complete — as grounded, tangible presence.

Path back

1. Back into the body. Feeling, breathing, touching.
2. Welcoming pain and neediness.
3. Human relationship as spiritual practice.
4. Allowing action again: agency as an expression of the whole.
5. Grounding in everyday life, humor, sensuality.

Goal: embodied unity — consciousness and humanity as one.

Overall movement of return

Stage	Wound of the needs	First reaction to real connectedness	Key to return	Integrative goal
1	Total loss of safety & influence	Mistrust, defense, freezing	Presence & safety	Trust in life
2	Conditional closeness, learned helplessness	Longing + mistrust	Validation + choices	Self-efficacy & relationship
3	Closeness = loss of control, performance = love	Ambivalence, shame, idealization	Appreciation + cooperation	Strength in vulnerability
4	Belonging through adaptation	Fear of losing oneself	Authenticity in diversity	Integrity in community
5	Over-identification with transcendence	Distance, spiritual flight	Embodiment & emotion	Grounded wholeness

The journey back into fulfilled basic needs

1. Feeling safety again (Stage 1) → “I am held.”
2. Feeling value again (Stage 2) → “I matter.”
3. Experiencing agency (Stage 3) → “I create.”
4. Living authenticity (Stage 4) → “I belong because I am me.”
5. Embodying unity (Stage 5) → “I am life itself.”

This describes the full cycle of the five Stages — from existential alienation to conscious, embodied unity.

Quick test

STAGE 1 – “The world is against me”

- ▷ Seems tired, cynical, or withdrawn.
- ▷ Sees little meaning or hope.
- ▷ Distrusts others — “Most people only think of themselves anyway.”
- ▷ Often talks about problems, not solutions.
- ▷ Seems as if they are protecting themselves or shutting down inside.

🗣️ Typical sentences: “It won’t make any difference anyway.”; “People here just screw you over.”; “I just want to be left alone.”

♥ Core feeling: disappointment, powerlessness.

STAGE 2 – “My life is somehow unfair”

- ▷ Seems sensitive, sometimes sad or insecure.
- ▷ Often feels not seen or understood enough.
- ▷ Seeks closeness, but is easily hurt.
- ▷ Waits for someone to notice how hard they are trying.
- ▷ Tends toward self-doubt, compares themselves with others.

🗣️ Typical sentences: “Why is it always me?”; “I try so hard, but nobody notices.”; “I wish someone would simply listen for once.”

♥ Core feeling: longing for recognition.

STAGE 3 – “I’ll show you all”

- ▷ Seems strong, goal-oriented, independent.
- ▷ Likes clear results, performance, control.
- ▷ Likes to decide for themselves — does not need pity.
- ▷ Can seem dominant, but also inspiring.
- ▷ Feels good when they “rock” something or lead.

🗣️ Typical sentences: “If you want it done right, you have to do it yourself.”; “I made it — why can’t the others?”; “I always have a plan B.”

♥ Core feeling: pride, but also pressure to prove oneself.

STAGE 4 – “We can do this together”

- ▷ Thinks and feels in terms of we.
- ▷ Values fairness, trust, belonging.
- ▷ Enjoys working in a team — listens to others.
- ▷ Avoids conflict, wants harmony.
- ▷ Pays attention to shared values and meaning.

🗣️ Typical sentences: “We have to pull together.”; “It matters to me that everyone feels comfortable.”; “It only really works when we do it together.”

♥ Core feeling: community, sometimes fear of conflict.

STAGE 5 – “Everything is connected”

- ▷ Calm, open, serene.
- ▷ Seems peaceful, but clear.
- ▷ Sees patterns and connections.
- ▷ Listens without judging.
- ▷ Acts from conviction, not from fear or ambition.

 Typical sentences: “Everything has meaning.”; “I trust the process.”; “We are part of something larger.”

♥ Core feeling: connectedness and inner peace.

Application in teams or groups

1. Each person rates every other person on a scale of 0–100% per Stage.
2. (e.g. “With Lisa I see 20% Stage 2, 60% Stage 3, 20% Stage 4.”)
3. All feedback creates a profile for each person:
 - ▷ Average values
 - ▷ Range (how differently others see you)
4. Group overview shows:
 - ▷ Dominant Stages in the team
 - ▷ Development directions (where the energy is moving)
 - ▷ possible conflict axes (e.g. 3 ↔ 4)

Stage	Name 1	Name 2	Name 3	Name 4	Name 5	Name 6	Name 7	Name 8	
1	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
2	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
3	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
4	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
5	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	

Goal

The test is not a judgment, but a mirror. It shows the inner attitude from which people are currently acting — not who they are. Every Stage has its value and its task. Development means being able to use more Stages consciously.