

MRT® FREEDOM LADDER

Steps 13-16 - Evaluate relationship between inner self and personality
Step 12 - Choosing moral goals
Step 11 - Keeping moral commitments
Step 10 - Maintain positive change Step 9 - Commitment to change
Step 8 - Short-term goals and consistency Step 7 - Long-term goals and identity
Step 6 - Helping others Step 5 - Healing damaged relationships
Step 4 - Awareness
Step 3 - Acceptance
Step 2 - Trust Step 1 - Honesty

GRACE

Few persons reach this state where a person sees others as an extension of self. Reaching grace means one must give oneself to a major cause. In this stage, a person's identity fuses with others as well as a social cause. Doing the right things, in the right ways, is a primary concern. Value is placed on human life, justice, dignity, and freedom. Gandhi, King, and Mother Theresa are a few examples.

NORMAL

People who experience this state have incorporated their identity into how they live their lives. Thus, they have their needs fulfilled without a great deal of effort. To someone in this stage, work is not work. However, their identity nearly always involves the welfare of others, whether it is the welfare of their employees or family. They often become involved in social causes and have genuine concern for others. They give great consideration to their own conduct and are not quick to judge others. They attempt to keep all their relationships on honest, trustworthy levels where they are held accountable. It is clear that people in this stage have chosen the right identity (set of goals). Moral judgments are based about half and half on societal and ethical principles.

EMERGENCY

A sense of urgency in completing goals dominates this stage because the individual is totally committed to fulfilling their personal goals. The goals of a person in this stage are more broad and include the welfare of others rather than goals being narrow and self-serving. They feel in control of their lives, but often feel that they have over-committed and are in risk of failure if they slow down. Most of their decisions are based on what is best for society and their organization, but they show much higher, idealized ethical principles as well. In addition, they sometimes 'slip' to lower levels of reasoning and attempt to rectify this as soon as they realize it.

DANGER

The major distinction between danger and non-existence is that those in danger have committed to long-term goals. They feel the risk of danger and have communicated their desires to others. They feel a definite direction in life and see relationships as necessary, important, and satisfying. They usually gain their identity from their long-term goals and recognize the requirements of situations quickly. Most of these people make their moral judgments from the societal contract level and law and order. Many of them 'slip' to lower stages of reasoning and feel a sense of personal letdown when this occurs.

NON-EXISTENCE

Those in non-existence do not have a firm sense of identity and do not feel connected to the world. They often feel little purpose in their life, but do feel responsible for what happens to them. While they feel somewhat alienated, they can have satisfying relationships. Moral judgments can be made from law and order, pleasing others, reciprocity, or pleasure/pain.

INJURY

People in this stage know when they have hurt others or themselves and feel responsible for it. Low self-esteem, guilt, and feelings of inadequacy often predominate. While they seem to 'let down' others and self frequently, they recognize that they are the source of the problem. This is the first stage that positive relationships can occur. People in injury have trouble following through on their goals and commitments. Moral judgments are based on pleasing others, pleasure/pain, and reciprocity.

UNCERTAINTY

A person in this stage may lie, cheat, and steal, but they are uncertain if they should. They typically have no long-term goals and usually don't know if there is a direction that is right for them. They show rapidly changing beliefs and a basic uncertainty about other people. They say 'I don't know' a lot and sometimes are uncertain whether they should or can change. This stage typically doesn't last long. Their moral judgments are based on pleasing others as well as pleasure/pain and reciprocity.

OPPOSITION

People in opposition are quite similar to those in disloyalty. However, those in opposition are somewhat more honest about it; they pretend less. Those in opposition tend to blame society, the rules, or the unfairness of others for their problems and state in life. They are in open opposition to established order. They tend to be rigid and unadaptable and are more confrontational, hostile, and openly manipulative. Constant conflict is often seen. Moral judgments come from pleasure/pain and reciprocity.

DISLOYALTY

The stage of disloyalty is the lowest moral and behavioral stage in which a person can function. Lying, cheating, stealing, betraying, blaming others, victimizing, and pretense (pretending) are the behaviors characterizing it. Negative emotions including anger, jealousy, resentment, hatred and depression dominate. Relationships are exploitative. People in disloyalty view the world as a place that cannot be trusted and believe that everyone else lies, cheats, steals, and feels negative emotions. Moral judgments are made on the basis of pleasure/pain and reciprocity.