

# A MOVEMENT MODEL OF SOCIAL CHANGE: FOUR STAGES

Parker J. Palmer

## THE STAGE

## FEATURES OF THE STAGE

### I. *Divided No More*

- Isolated individuals reach a point where the gap between their inner and outer lives becomes so painful that they resolve to live “divided no more.”
- These people may leave or remain within institutions—but they abandon the logic of institutions and find an alternative center for their lives.
- These people do not hate institutions—they love them too much to allow them to sink to their lowest form.
- The logic of punishment is transformed: no punishment can be greater than conspiring in one’s own diminishment.

### II. *Communities of Congruence*

- Isolated individuals discover each other in groups that gather around declarations of personal need. In a world that regards the divided life as safe and sane, they sustain sanity by helping people develop a new narrative of their lives and their relation to the world.
- These groups give an experience of leadership and efficacy to people who have been denied that opportunity.
- These groups practice a fragile private language so it can grow strong enough to enter the rough-and-tumble public realm, and empower new leaders and new forms of leadership to emerge.
- These groups organize for Stage III using collective intelligence, distributed power, and social media, adopting non-traditional strategies and assessing success by non-traditional measures.

### III. *Going Public*

- Empowered by communities of congruence, movement advocates find public voice.
- Movement words, images and symbols become more visible, and converts are gained.
- Critics are also gained—the movement is scrutinized and critiqued and must be clarified and refined.

### IV. *Alternative Rewards*

- Movements develop—and become—alternative reward systems, thus transforming the sanctions that are the basis of every institution’s power.
- Some of the alternative rewards are external (jobs, income, status, colleagues), and some are internal (integrity, meaning, fulfillment).
- The logic of rewards is transformed: no reward can be greater than living “divided no more.”
- Energies that began in abandoning the logic of institutions come full circle to alter the logic of institutions (e.g., service learning).