



Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning

James W. Fowler

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Dr. James Fowler has asked these questions, and others like them, of nearly six hundred people. He has talked with men, women, and children of all ages, from four to eighty-eight, including Jews, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, and atheists. In many cases, the interviews became in-depth conversations that provided rare, intimate glimpses into the various ways our lives have meaning and purpose, windows into what this book calls *faith*.

Faith, as approached here, is not necessarily religious, nor is it to be equated with belief. Rather, faith is a person's way of leaning into and making sense of life. More verb than noun, faith is the dynamic system of images, values, and commitments that guide one's life. It is thus universal: everyone who chooses to go on living operates by some basic faith.

Building on the contributions of such key thinkers as Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg, Fowler draws on a wide range of scholarship, literature, and firsthand research to present expertly and engagingly the six stages that emerge in working out the meaning of our lives--from the intuitive, imitative faith of childhood through conventional and then more independent faith to the universalizing, self-transcending faith of full maturity. *Stages of Faith* helps us to understand our own pilgrimage of faith, the passages of our own quest for meaning and value.

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