

## What Do I Do Now? Thriving through the seven phases of adult life

**Stephen D. Miller**

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*In this clear, well-organized book, a physician explains the seven phases of adult life.*

It was Stephen D. Miller's midlife crisis that motivated him to learn how to "live life with a longer view," which led to his writing *What Do I Do Now?* Both instructional and motivational, his book explores the seven phases of adult life, which he identifies as Needs and Wants, Role, Control, Compassion, Self-Development, Dance, and Unity. Miller writes that the seven phases are described in various forms in religions and by psychologists, but this book represents the author's personal take on them.

The book is logically broken into four parts, each of which builds upon the other. In part 1, Miller introduces the seven phases and offers several examples of individuals who are "stuck" in particular phases. This section immediately relates the phases to real people. The second part of the book delves deeply into each of the seven phases. In addition to providing comprehensive descriptions of each of the phases, the author includes an interesting chapter that effectively cross-references the phases with the world's major religions and the most prominent psychological theories. In so doing, Miller demonstrates how most religions and psychologies describe seven similar life phases.

Part 3 addresses transitioning from one phase to another. Here Miller discusses such concepts as the fears and desires that keep individuals in a phase, how people sometimes get stuck in one phase too long, how transitions are motivated by internal and external experiences, and what it takes to make transitions. The last part covers "next steps and implications"; while intended as a wrap-up, at little more than one page of text, it feels incomplete. The book's appendixes, however, include additional valuable material, such as a section on the motivations of each phase.

*What Do I Do Now?* is written in simple language, with each phase clearly delineated and described. The book is enhanced by numerous excellent charts; one chart, for example, succinctly compares the attributes of the phases, while another outlines the fears and desires related to each specific phase. At times, the writing seems a bit dry and academic, but the book makes excellent use of cartoons at the beginning of each chapter to add just the right touch to lighten up the text. The front cover also makes use of a relevant cartoon, and the inside of the book is easy on the eyes.

The author writes in his introduction that the book will be especially helpful to people in their thirties, forties, and fifties. Still, *What Do I Do Now?* should offer helpful guidance for readers at any stage of life who are looking for comfort and reassurance.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (September 11, 2015)

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