

6 Important Stages You'll Go Through if You Carry a Joseph Anointing

In 1994 I was married, had built a successful ad agency for 12 years in Atlanta and had enough money in the bank to retire comfortably. I was leading Bible studies in the workplace, giving money to Christian causes and thought I was a model Christian business leader.

However, that would all change in the spring of 1994. My world began to fall apart that spring, and within three months, several things began to happen: I went through a marriage crisis, lost over \$500,000 overnight in a "Bernie Madoff" scam whose leader fled the country with my money. Soon after, my largest ad client, who represented 80 percent of our business, refused to pay a \$140,000 bill and fired us as their ad agency. And just a short time later, my vice president came to me and said he was leaving the company. What he did not say was that he was taking my second largest account with him. My wife divorced me a few months later.

In three short months, my life shifted drastically—I would lose my family, my wealth and my business. This would usher me into a seven-year season of adversity. Most psychologists say any one of those events is enough for the average person to commit suicide; I certainly felt like life was over for me. The fact that I was a Christian only compounded the shame and guilt I felt from these failures.

I would struggle to make sense of my adversity for the next two years. Then one day a friend sent me an audiotope from a man named Gunnar Olson. On that tape, Gunnar talked about a "Joseph Calling." He suggested that there are many who were going through adversity in their business and personal lives

today because of a unique calling that comes from God. I had never heard of the concept of a “Joseph Calling” before, and so I felt like I must meet this man in person.

Gunnar was from Sweden. He was founder of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce, which operated in 75 countries at the time. He agreed to meet with me when he came to Washington for their international conference, which would be two months away. And so I flew to Washington to meet with him. He was so gracious; he invited me to his suite and listened to my story.

After listening to my story, he and his board member began to chuckle. I was taken back by their response to my crisis, but Gunnar quickly responded by saying, “Os, we are not trying to be rude. It’s just that we have heard such similar stories from so many other marketplace leaders that it is uncanny to us. Os, you have a Joseph calling on your life.” He then went on to explain, “A Joseph calling is a marketplace call that a man or woman goes through in order to become a spiritual and physical provider to others. You become known, just like Joseph became known, by the adversity you have gone through. It is a marketplace call.”

He then took out a napkin and drew a diagram. Gunnar said, “Os, this is where you are currently. As you begin to press into Jesus with all your heart, he will guide you to this next destination (spiritually speaking). You have probably made some mistakes during your process, but what you need to remember is your call is greater than the mistakes you have made. You have a marketplace call upon your life. Yes, you probably have made some mistakes along the way. But what you need to realize is the call is bigger than your mistakes.” That day changed my life forever. Gunnar would become my spiritual father in the marketplace for the next 22 years.

That day I walked into his hotel room as a shamed and defeated Christian businessman, but I walked out with an understanding

that I was in a process of a call to the marketplace. That day Gunnar became my spiritual mentor and father. Now, twenty-five years later, I have spoken and ministered to men and women in the marketplace in 26 countries and written 18 books, including a daily devotional that is read in more than a hundred nations (). God turned my Valley of Achor (trouble) into a door of hope for me and for many others (Hosea 2:15).

Since that time, I have discovered there are six unique stages that “Josephs” will go through to fulfill their assignment as a Joseph. I have reviewed these in detail in my new book, *The Joseph Calling*, being released this month. These six stages can be seen in almost every major leader God has used in the Bible and even modern-day Christian leaders.

Here is a brief overview of the six stages “Josephs” go through in order to understand, navigate, and fulfill their purpose in life:

1. The Recruitment Stage. There is usually a crisis in the life of the leader that ushers them into their larger story.
2. The Character Development Stage. Like Joseph and David, there was a season of character development to remove pride from the leader's life.
3. The Isolation Stage. God often isolates the leader to turn his mess into a message and make him a messenger.
4. The Cross Stage. God often allows betrayal to take place in the leader's life to see if he will wash the feet of his “Judas”.
5. The Problem-Solving Stage. Josephs are problem-solvers. God uses their adversity to make them a problem-solver in culture.
6. The Networking Stage. God uses networks. Joseph had the 12 tribes. He uses networks to accomplish his assignment.

Every Joseph will go through these six stages in order to

fulfill the call of God on his or her life. {eo}

Os Hillman is president of Marketplace Leaders and author of 18 books. This article is an excerpt from his new book, *The Joseph Calling*. To read the first chapter free and download a free 12-week *Joseph Calling Bible study*, visit .