

# OF TIGERS AND TERMITES:

## Introduction to the Summit Advance Model and the Road to Significance



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**ON THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO OZ**, Dorothy fearfully and famously uttered, “lions, and tigers and bears, oh my!” as she linked arms with the Tin Man, Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion. The road to Oz was full of hidden dangers, obstacles, unknown evils, and unexpected surprises – even flying monkeys. The yellow brick road is life itself. It leads not to Oz, but to a large mountain—and a life altering choice.

On the road of life there will no doubt be a few, perhaps many, encounters with tigers—those unexpected issues that threaten our journeys, our careers, and perhaps even life itself. These “tigers at the door” require immediate attention, before we become their next meal. One peek out the window of our comfy “living rooms” reveals the *fangs of life*—those things that will shred the door to devour us. Tigers are fearful, awesome looking and notoriously vicious beasts that have a less-than-subtle way of commanding our attention.

***Whatever their form, life is full of tigers.***

What may not gain our immediate consideration, however, *but will result in the same destructive end*, is a very social, hardworking critter that goes about his business with great focus, but usually without much fanfare. By the time we are aware of his work, it is usually too late. Meet the termite, working feverishly in your “basement” to devour, albeit slowly but with dedicated fervor, the very timbers of your constructed house of “being.”

The tigers are those crises in life that rush in, looking large and fearful, requiring you *do something now*. The termites are the less noticeable, less pressing issues, but will ultimately have the same destructive effect. They are, however, easier to overlook, ignore or put off. Since the tigers get our attention in dramatic ways, they become the priorities. But put off dealing with the termites too long, and that door you thought might keep out the tigers will crumble into dust and a pile of useless wood shavings.

**Tigers and Termites.** We will encounter them both throughout our professional and personal lives. Either will bring us to the place we call the “burning platform” - *the moment when we must change what we do, and sometimes even who we are*. Successfully handling these tigers and termites demands excellence in *personal* leadership. Significance in personal leadership then leads to being Significant for others, and igniting the flame of inspiration in others. In other words, inspiring others to follow - *the truest definition of leadership*.

### **It is time for a Summit Advance**

Your yellow brick road will dead-end, not in Oz, but at the base of a mountain. You have a choice. Climb the mountain, ascend to the summit, or run circles around it at the base, chased endlessly by tigers and termites. Unfortunately, that seems to be what many in the world today are doing, including our so-called leaders.

We currently live in a leadership vacuum. It is obvious, no matter where we look, that true leadership is a lost art, and real leaders are few and far between. There is a glut of leadership models, books, formulas and so-called “thought leaders” in this area. So why are we experiencing such a crisis in leadership? The answer is simple.

**It is not about *what we’re doing*.  
It is about *who we are*.**

## *Becoming better leaders requires becoming better people.*

Being better, period. And, yes, this requires that dreaded “C” word – change. Some may argue that we cannot change who we are. *Yes, we can. In fact, we must,* if we want to right what is wrong, first in our personal world, and then in the world at large. It requires a climb up that mountain, resulting in personal transformation that sparks a chain reaction in others. The first step – the hardest step – is making the decision to go UP, to make a Summit Advance.

The mountain in front of us represents *the highest form of ourselves*. It is the finding and living of purpose and passion that will yield true Significance. UP is the direction of humanity’s finest pursuit, and Significance is the hope of every soul on this planet. ***Great leadership is only accomplished by great leaders, those who pursue and live for Significance.*** There have been many books written, many models developed and many words spoken about Significance. It is a very elusive commodity and an even harder one to define and describe, yet we still seek it.

Significance, the kind that changes the world and shapes great leaders, can be defined simply as *life that supports and serves others with the gifts and resources given to us*. It is not a mere word entry in a dictionary, nor is it being the biggest mountain in the world, or the most famous climber. *Significance is a “plus mark” on the face of the world, judged by those who benefit by it.* True significance is not for self, it is for others. It’s time for us to pursue something greater than ourselves...**It’s time to shed self, and pursue Significance.** It is time to climb the mountain and make a Summit Advance.

## **Tigers and termites are unavoidable.**

Seeking Significance will not eliminate the terrible tigers and the tenacious termites, but it will certainly put them in their proper place, behind us and no longer driving or undermining us. Seeking Significance is the only way we will fill the leadership void today. Filling that void requires understanding the most basic of definitions for *leadership*. Leadership in its purest unclassified, uncategorized form is simply ***inspiration that motivates others***. In the definitions for both significance and leadership, there is a single word, one which embodies a major concept, common to both. This little word is what keeps us on the path to the top. Leadership and Significance is about ***others***.

There is one additional concept that is also at the heart of our mountain climb, and at the heart of the Summit Advance Model. It is what can be called “self” or “personal” leadership. *Personal leadership* is the development of ever expanding views, experiences, skills, knowledge and abilities, aligned with passion and purpose, and utilized to lead *ourselves* well, *so that we can lead others well*.

**The Summit Advance™ Model**, a plan for achieving Significance, was developed first as a systematic leadership assessment process to target high potential and at risk performers, then enable leaders to develop their own personal leadership to move from sometimes a survival mindset to success and into significance. It is built upon the concept of scaling a mountain with three main levels: **Survival, Success and Significance**. Significance is the top level of the mountain. And for those who dare and dream and believe, there is one place even higher...The Summit.



These levels can be considered “life zones,” as the experiences, views and climate – life itself – are vastly different in each level. Mountains also boast differences from one side to the other, and so does this model. The left side of the mountain model reveals life and pursuits more about self than others. The right side of the model is where those pursuing real significance will head, toward serving others more than self. *Self is the “great separator” between the left side and right side of the model.* The right side leads to enduring Significance, and enduring leadership.

Each of the three levels, and two zones for each level, have differing characteristics, and are viewed and

experienced differently by people at each level. Each level has *identifiers*, those things commonly experienced by people at the various levels and sides, and are referenced as “attitudes and motivators.” Each level has been assigned a number of identifiers, then the top ten behaviors and attitudes common in these levels have been polarized from one side to the other, in order to demonstrate shifts that occur in thinking and motivation to travel from left to right. The number of these “attitudes and motivators” differs for each level. The total for all levels is 120. Together these serve as a personal self assessment, leading to the creation of a “map” and guide for development—a path to Significance, the *prerequisite for great leadership*.

### The Survival Level: Victim and Victor

The lowest level of the model is where most of our efforts are directed at merely staying alive, existing and surviving rather than advancing. On the left side are the **Victims**, where life and work are somewhat self-contained, dominated by events of the past (*either “good” or “bad” in nature*). The one who dwells here literally feels and acts like a victim. Leaving this side of the model requires more determination and commitment than moving out of any other side or level. Those living and working on the right side are the **Victors**, those who have successfully traversed from “victimhood” to overcomer. These people are positioned to rise to the next level of Success. The Survival Zone can be encountered just about any place on the mountain, especially when something happens to alter our status quo. Our true character is often revealed in Survival, and sometimes it is not very pretty. But it is usually the place we likely learn our hardest – and best – life lessons. The Survival Level lists fifty (50) attitudes and motivators.

### The Success Level: Fame and Mastery

The Success level is about achievement, regardless of how achievement is defined. Success can be a moving target, and personal definitions may change, or may be elusive. An individual only reaches the Success level when that person truly *feels* successful. The left side of this mountain is the territory of **Fame** – the place where the “*Limelighters*” live. For these people, life is all about achieving goals, racking up “points” and striving toward whatever success looks like for them. It is all about excitement, adventure, public recognition and visibility. On the other side of this mid-mountain level is **Mastery**, the right side of expertise and excellence in chosen pursuits, rather than recognition and prizes. Here you find the “*Masters*” who have dedicated the requisite thousands of hours to achieve not just suc-

cess, but endurance and lasting mastery. This level provides the next forty (40) assessment markers.

### The Significance Level:

#### Best IN the World and Best FOR the World

Significance is where the hard lessons of Survival combine with the achievements of Success and together are thoroughly mixed with the added ingredients of inspiration, purpose and passion. Again, there are two types of dwellers here. On the left, the “*Top Guns*” are truly **Best In the World** at what they do. They have the power and expertise to be significant, but their motives are mixed and generally are self-oriented. On the right side a quantum shift in life purpose marks this territory, where the “*Sherpas*” who live here have a true desire to live their purpose, being true to personal passions and inspiring others to do the same. Life and work here is in service to others, not self. These people are **Best For the World**. Others, not self, drive their inspiration and motivation. The last thirty (30) attitudes and motivators are found here, rounding out the 120 total assessment points.

### The Climbing Process

In addition to the Summit Advance Model map, those who have chosen to climb, rather than cower at tigers and termites, are provided two comprehensive and powerful tools. The first is the “**Three A’s**,” a process model that is the engine behind traversing from side to side and level to level. This 3-phase process encourages the climber to first *acknowledge*, then *align*, and lastly *advance*, leading to real transformation (*yes, change!*). The Three A’s help climbers blast through obstacles, hurdle over fences and serve as ongoing momentum past difficult places on the trail.



The second tool is the “**7-Step Coaching Process**” to take someone from where they are to where they want to be, with a business and leadership focus (*though applicable to anyone, anywhere*). This “climbing process” begins with self awareness, moves through the stages of transformation and progresses to understanding how to self-motivate and keep your personal pilot light ignited. The seven steps work in tandem with the “Three A’s.” The Three A’s will be used almost daily, and are

the basic fuel of climbing. The 7-Step Climbing Process is the overall map to the top, walking you through the levels and bringing you to the potential of the summit of Significance. These processes keep in mind the fact that a Summit Advance is not a day hike. *It is a life ascent.*

### And then...the Summit

There is one more level, a higher step beyond the zone of typical Significance. It is the flag planted on the very apex of any peak. All the levels leading to this point so far are conquerable by mere mortals. To go to the summit, however, requires something more. This is a spiritual place. It means – quite literally – that you will only achieve the summit with divine inspiration. This climber relies on his or her “higher power,” to borrow a well-worn phrase. Not everyone will opt for the summit. But for those who know there is something more, the summit calls. This last place of Significance, the highest possible, is only for those who are ready to listen and follow the Caller. The Summit is a unique place, different than all the other levels. In the other levels we have aligned our minds and hearts to seek our passion and purpose. In this last place, we seek to align our spirits as well. The Summit Advance model does not attempt to rigidly define this place or what it looks like. It is powerfully different for each climber. The model merely acknowledges that the summit exists, and extends the invitation for climbers to seek it.



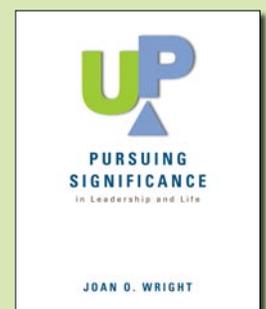
## The 7-Step Climbing Process

The Summit Advance experience is not just for those sudden or one-day events, burning platforms, and moments of truth. It is not just about tigers and termites. It is a lifetime pursuit of significance, fulfilling a life of purpose. **THIS IS THE STUFF OF GREAT LEADERS.**



**Joan O. Wright** is President of O'Sullivan Wirhgt, Inc. a leadership consulting firm serving Fortune 500 companies and entrepreneurial businesses. OSW specializes in Executive Coaching, Leadership Development, Succession Planning, Talent Management Strategies, Team Success Facilitation, Coaching Skills for Managers, Executive Mentoring Initiatives, and Long-Term Growth and Sustainability.

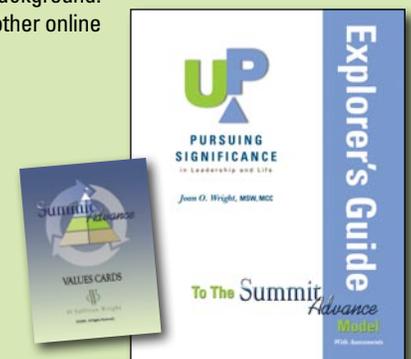
Joan has masterfully presented her Summit Advance Model in the new book ***“UP: Pursuing Significance in Leadership and Life.”*** (ISBN 978-0-9825505-2-6) The book is loaded with real life stories of real life people who have personally experienced tigers and termites and have chosen to climb the mountain up to Significance. It is full of detailed descriptions of the trail upward, including hazards like backsliding and mountain beasts, and valuable tips and tools to motivate and advance every climber, from any background. The book is available now through amazon.com, Barnes & Noble online, and other online booksellers.



### SUPPORTING MATERIALS ALSO AVAILABLE

**Explorer's Guide** *An introduction to the Summit Advance Model, including detailed assessments and development plan guides.*

**Values Cards** *A card deck with all the values and motivators for each of the three Summit Advance Levels. Includes instructions for use.*



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