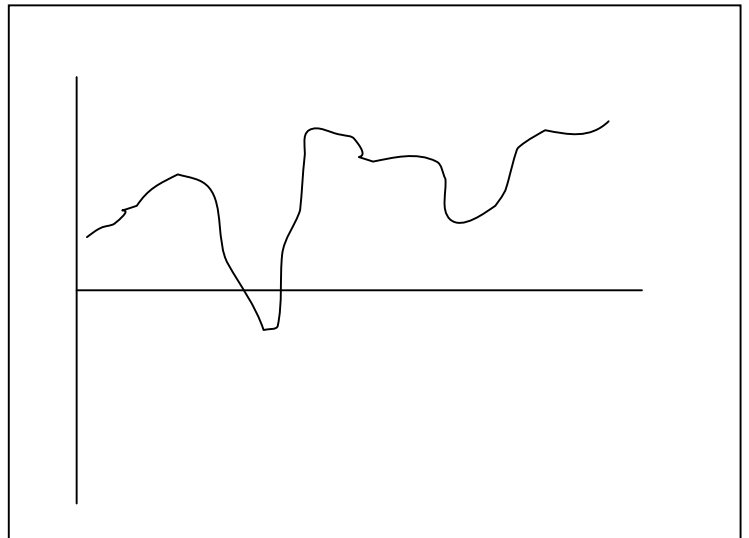


## The Lifeline Exercise

This exercise can be done alone and will take a minimum of 30 minutes. This exercise is designed to help you reflect on your life and identify stories that shaped who you are today, the values you have as a person and your motivations in learning and leading.

- 1) Get a blank A4 sheet of paper
- 2) Draw a horizontal line across the middle of the long part of a page. Draw a line at the left edge of the page and write



“happy, satisfied, fulfilled” at the top of this line, and “unhappy, frustrated, unsatisfied” at the bottom of the line. Now write a zero at the junction of the two lines, and your current age at the far right of the horizontal line.

- 3) Now draw your lifeline – as you move from birth to your current age, what are the significant events and relationships? Take time to note the significant changes in your life. Place each roughly in the place corresponding to your age, and above or below the line corresponding to whether you felt “happy, satisfied, fulfilled” or “unhappy, frustrated, unsatisfied” at the time. Connect the dots with a line.

- 4) Take time to capture the key moments. Make notes of “turning points” – events or relationships in which you learnt something that changed who and how you are as a person.
- 5) Select four of these “turning points”. Robert J. Thomas calls these moments the crucible moments of your life. For each of these crucible moments answer the following three questions:
  1. What was your insight from the crucible?
  2. What resources helped you get through? (People, Ideas, Finances, Institutions, etc.)
  3. How did you learn?
- 6) Now, look at your crucible events as a whole and ask yourself the following three questions:
  1. What do your crucible moments have in common?
  2. What differences were there in the support resources that helped you get through?
  3. How would you conclude that you learn important things?

This exercise is adapted from The Entrepreneurs' Organisation Lifeline exercise for forum groups and material from Robert J. Thomas “Crucibles of Leadership”.

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