

BUILDING TRUST

River of Life

This playful method creates a powerful shared picture of moments in your life. The big purpose of this tool is to create more vulnerability with each other. Teams that are vulnerable with each other have high trust. And trust is defined as our belief that the intentions of another person, for our success, is high. They are not trying to catch us doing something wrong, or criticize us. We practice vulnerability by sharing difficult times we have experienced in our lives. By using the metaphor of a river this activity supports participants to think differently about how they are feeling and builds trust when shared.



TIME FRAME

30-60 min



GROUP SIZE

2-40



FACILITATION LEVEL

Beginner



MATERIALS

Pens/Markers

Flipchart or Whiteboard

Step 1:

On your flip chart, draw a river winding from the lower left corner to the upper right corner. Label the lower left “Birth” and the upper right “The Present.”

Step 2:

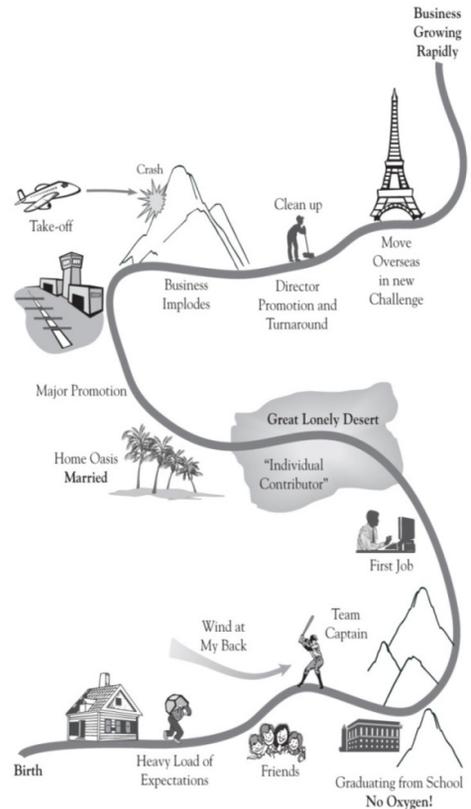
Get creative. Break the rules! When you draw your river, let its shape and features represent what’s special about your life. We’ve seen swamps, bridges, waterfalls, forked rivers, circular rivers, etc.

Step 3:

Cast your mind back over your life. Draw islands in the river, each representing places you’ve lived, key people you’ve known or who’ve influenced your life, and any other “landmarks” along the river of your life (e.g., key companies, projects, etc.).

Step 4:

Along each side of the river, add tributaries representing challenging and affirming moments from your life. Think of those events, decisions, and turning points that taught you something, that made a lasting impact on who you are.



REFLECTION

What patterns of trends do you notice?

What experiences and people were especially significant?

How do you relate these to how your values have formed over time?

How would you relate what you see in your river to the approach you take as a leader?