



Leadership Journey Mapping Exercise¹

You are a primary contributor to your own development as a leader. Yet, you are also shaped by the circumstances, ideas, and individuals who have impacted and influenced your life. Awareness of this co-created process – between you and the world around you - contributes to clarity about your leadership agenda and identity. In other words, your values, beliefs, sensibilities, and capacities are shaped by your history and experiences.

Your personal history contains the seeds of who YOU are as a leader. Leaders must take time to recall, appreciate, and gather strength from that history. This personal mapping exercise gives you a chance to reflect on the events, experiences, and other influences that have shaped you in your leadership journey. Such awareness sheds light on your responses to different situations, and provides grounding for your continued leadership.

You will be sharing your journey map with your peers today. This provides an opportunity to dispel stereotypes, to get to know each other on deeper levels and identify commonalities. Typically, the journey that someone else has taken is not exactly what we might expect given our perceptions of their ethnicity, gender, geographic or class background. The sharing of maps allows us to hear the truth about each other's journeys, rather than project our assumptions on one another.

OVERVIEW OF EXERCISE

In this activity each of you will:

- Draw a personal Journey Map
- Engage in personal reflection
- Share your Journey Maps and insights in a small group
- Collectively debrief the experience

DIRECTIONS

Pick up paper, crayons, and colored markers to use to draw your journey map. This map will depict your personal journey around issues of leadership. You can use a combination of timelines, images, and words. Note that this is not about fine art!

Start your map at whatever point you feel is the beginning of your journey into leadership. See below for some questions to spark your memory about the influences that have been important to your leadership journey. You may start your map with the day of your birth; a specific moment in your personal history; or from historical events that happened to your community, your ancestors, or your cultural group.

¹ Adapted from THE LEADING BY EXAMPLE PEER NETWORK: Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity in Community Foundations (Resources & Tools For Change, California Tomorrow. Copyright 2004)



Leadership Development Program

Take note of the moments and events when you first began to be aware of or recognized a pull towards becoming a leader, and what created that pull. Perhaps it was a perceived need in your family, an event in your community, or times when you witnessed or experienced something so powerful you were moved to respond personally. Include in your maps people who had a major influence on you, and those whose shoulders you stand on today.

HERE ARE SOME PLACES TO LOOK:

- Cultural themes
- Ancestral stories or themes
- Family of origin experiences
- Historical events
- People of influence
- Personal experiences
- Relationship experiences
- Adult family role and experiences
- Professional experiences
- Experiences in leadership programs

As your map comes together, look for metaphors and archetypal themes: are you playing the role of provider, healer, nurturer, community builder, instigator, or restorer of justice? What else shows up in your map?

REFLECTION

Take a few moments to collect your thoughts about the themes, issues, and insights that this activity has surfaced for you.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Share your map and story with the others in your small group. You will have 7 minutes each, then 3 minutes to discuss any themes or insights that emerged for you about the group's maps.

What themes stand out in your journey?
What new insights are you having?
What have you relied on during your journey?

LARGE GROUP DEBRIEF

We will share reflections and insights gained in this exercise.