

## Participant Instructions for the Life Journey Activity (adapted)

Many of the strengths, values, and behaviors we express in our day-to-day response to the demands of our environment have their roots in the lessons we learned from experiences faced throughout our lifetimes. This activity will provide you with an opportunity to examine some of these life lessons by creating a visual representation of a significant period of time in your life journey.

Think of a significant period of time in your life (e.g., senior year in college, when you began a new career, the years of your undergraduate education, etc.). Use a sheet of paper as a canvas to create a map of the journey that you followed through that period of time. Allow yourself to be expressive. Like your life, the map will probably be filled with twists and turns rather than neatness and linearity. Feel free to use color to convey the emotion and impact of different experiences. Let your memory be your guide.

This exercise should be fun—it is not an art test! Just use the opportunity to communicate visually, to discover and represent some things about this significant period of time in your life that might not come across otherwise.

Below are some examples of ways that the picture of your journey might communicate important messages both to you and others:

- Peak experiences that punctuated this period of time and caused you to grow
- Forks in the road where you had to choose what to pursue and what to let go of
- Hardships and obstacles that tested your resiliency
- Significant people who impacted you (for well or ill) at various stages in your journey
- Bumpy spots and unpaved roads where the going was slow and uncertain
- Sudden shifts that took you by surprise and tested your ability to navigate
- False starts and dead ends—places where you had to back out or make a U-turn
- Situations in which you opted to accelerate or to apply the brakes
- Close relationships—important people who entered this period of time or left you along the way
- Roadblocks and detours—stressors placed in your path by others
- Communities you joined—places where you felt connected and committed
- Situations in which you derailed, ran out of gas, or collided with someone
- Significant milestones and achievements—key destinations reached
- Roads not taken—appealing avenues that you avoided or failed to explore
- Times when hindsight left you wishing you could have a do-over

List inspired by William Bridges, *The Way of Transition*, 2001.

Adapted from: McCauley, C., DeRue, S., Yost, P., & Taylor, S. (2014). *Experience-driven leader development: Models, tools, best practices, and advice for on-the-job development*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.