

Creating a Personal TimeLine

Point of the Assignment: To map out your life (past and future) on a line to see where you have been and where you want to go.

You will be using this exercise to map out your life to see what events in your life have shaped who you are today, and what dreams and goals you have for your future. This exercise helps people to clarify significant life events. Significant life events are anything that was meaningful to you – either positive or negative and can include things such as parent’s death or divorce, abuse, victim of a crime, moving to new neighborhood, gaining a new friend, developing a spiritual life, yours or a loved one’s major illness, etc. Future dreams and goals can include anything you envision for your future such as marriage, children, college degree, career, own a home, own your own business, travel, live an active life in retirement, become President of the United States, etc.) Your goals should also include at approximately what age you want to achieve them. (For example: Do you want to marry at 22 or 40 years old?)

These significant life events often are the foundation for a person’s values and passions, which often contribute to individuals finding their life purpose. **Please note, that it is highly possible that you have not yet experienced some or more of those significant life events that will shape your life purpose. The younger you are, the more likely this is true.** If this is the case, then you should simply focus on future dreams.

“Is the life I am living the same as the life that wants to live in me?”... “Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent. Vocation does not come from willfulness, no matter how noble one’s intentions. It comes from listening to and accepting “true self” with its limits as well as its potentials.... vocation is not a goal to be achieved but a gift to be received. (Excerpts from book cover of: Palmer, P. J. (2000). Let your life speak. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.)

- 1) On the next page, mark the left side of the line with the year you were born.
- 2) Mark the right side of the line with the year you think you will die. (I.e. how long do you want to live? 60, 70, 80, 120, etc.)
- 3) Mark somewhere on the line that represents today (or this year).
- 4) Between the marks of the year you were born and today, indicate (including the year) those significant events in your life that have brought you where you are today (circumstances, blessings, problems, values, priorities, desires, and dreams).
- 5) Between the marks of today and the year you anticipate that you will die, indicate (including the year) those significant events that you expect will lead to the dreams, desires, and goals you have for your life.
- 6) Stand back and look at your timeline.
- 7) Go to the last page and answer the reflection questions:

TimeLine

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Year of Birth:

Year of anticipated Death:

TimeLine

My timeline reveals the following about me: _____

I have made the following discoveries: _____

What I have discovered will affect how I look at the world by:

I am going to do the following with this enlightened observation:

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: *(Write down your response after completing this assignment.)*
