

MY LIFE PATH

(*"Where have I been in my life"*)



The previous exercise enabled you to reflect on where you are *now* in various areas of your life— what's happening in these areas, as well as the emotions and thoughts that you experience in these areas. In the following exercise, you will look at the path you have taken in your life as a whole up to this present period. The purpose in this exercise is to help you reflect on the times of your life where you may be experiencing "unfinished" emotional business.

If you consider your life as a journey, it is obvious that you started your journey somewhere. That time was your birth, the time when you came into the world; and many things have happened since your birth up to this present period. You have gone through childhood, you have closed chapters, and you have lived out scenes. There were people who were important to you along the way in one way or another. While some periods of your life are certainly closed, there are other events and experiences which occurred within these times that may be left open possibly because of emotional wounds that have occurred or because there is something more to be fulfilled. This exercise will give you an opportunity to reflect back on "where you've been" in a broad sense and open up the possibility of identifying and releasing emotions that are carryovers from the past.

The periods or chapters of your life are generally marked off by significant events and last for a period of time. These periods can be long or short depending on your unique experience. This could be a period of attending a certain school, a period of living with a stepfather, a period of struggling with a certain illness, a period of living in another country, a period of being in a certain relationship or perhaps a period of living in a certain house. These periods are the "times" of your life and are your own subjective experience of how your life has been structured. If your life were a story, these periods would be the various "chapters" of your life.

In this exercise, you will be listing in sequential order from the time you were born a maximum of about 9 broad periods, chapters or times that stand out for you when you reflect on the course of your life. You are limiting yourself to about 9 so that you choose the most significant periods; the number can be fewer or a little more. For each period, mark the age range that you were during these periods and then describe the time or period with just a few brief one-sentence or one-phrase descriptions. A good phrase to begin your sentence is, "*The period of...*" and then go ahead and describe the time. Begin your listing by starting with this *present* period and then working *backwards*. Also write the names of the people who were important to you, positively or negatively, who were present in your life during these times.

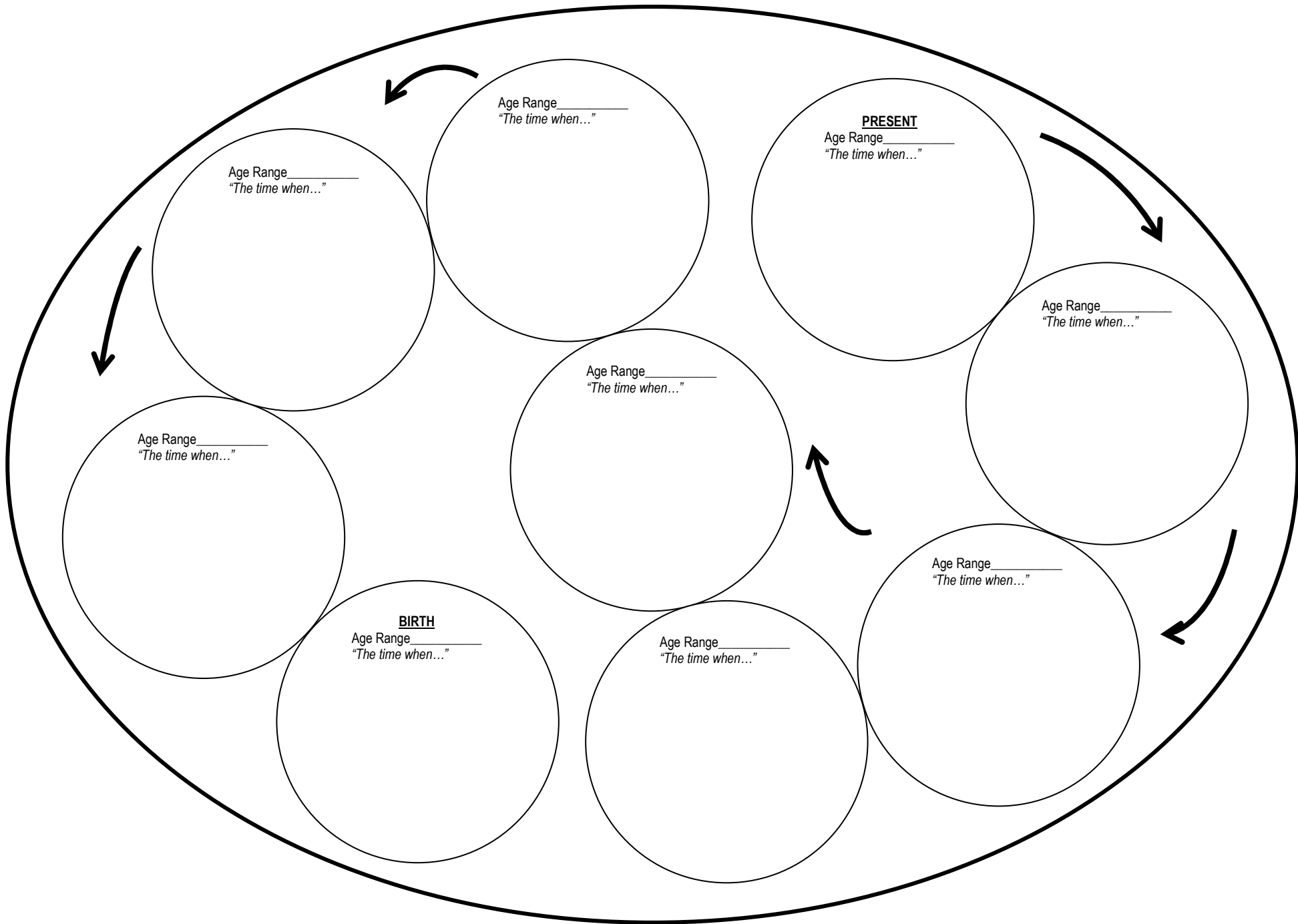
Next, choose a time or period that stands out for you as a significant or defining time in your life. It is a time, perhaps, where something happened to you, where you struggled, or a time that appears to have a significant impact on your life. It could be a time where a major shift in your life took place or where you made a critical life choice. It may have been a time when you came to view yourself in a new way either positively or negatively. Take that period of your life and go to the large circle on the following page and write a description of that time in the space provided. Then, take awhile to reflect on this period and allow yourself to *freely* recall some of the *specific* events, places and people within that period. These are specific memories that occurred during this time. Write down as many as come to mind without prejudging whether or not it was significant or important in your life. The fact that you recall an incident is enough in itself. And some of these memories may be pleasant as well as unpleasant.

After reflecting on this period of your life, answer the questions that follow to help you evaluate how this period of your life has contributed to the person you are today. These questions address:

1. How you have come to view yourself—your self-image.
2. How you have come to view others—your world view.
3. The pivotal people during this time period who have had a major impact on your life.
4. The decisions and choices you made.
5. Your internal dialogue.
6. The emotions that are still “running” in your life.

Each period of your life may contain some defining moments that influenced your life in several ways in terms of the choices you made and beliefs you developed about your personal or professional life, your family, education, relationships, social life and spiritual fulfillment. Repeat the exercise with other “times” or events of your life that seem to contain some emotional “charge”.

My Life Path



Memories

Period of Life/Age Range:
What are the events that stand out for me?

The time when...

A Critical Event in my Life Path

During this period of my life, the event that appears to have the greatest impact on my life was the time when _____

The people who were pivotal in my life around this time were _____
Name the people

Some of the major emotions I felt *during* this event were _____
Name the feeling words.

Specifically, the *physical sensations* that I felt when I felt those feelings were

Describe these *sensations* you felt in various parts of your body. Or describe your *physical posture* or *expression*

When I felt those feelings my inner conversation went something like _____

From that point on I came to see myself as _____

And I came to see others as _____

The mask I learned to wear was _____

If I could name my mask in a few words it would be _____

One of the critical choices that I made in my life during this period was _____

My biggest *fears* in sharing my feelings are _____
