

# WHO AM I?

Being Vulnerable to Share Your Story in Order to Become a Leader People Trust

People follow others because they understand who those leaders are, what they stand for, what is behind the decisions they make, and why they are asking followers to take their lead. The quickest and most scalable method for letting people know who the leader is, is the use of the "Who am I?" story.

But to tell a revealing personal story takes a willingness to reflect, which can only happen after you do the work to unearth the stories that have shaped you.

## **Uncovering Your Leadership History**

List the key events or people from your past that have shaped the leader you are today. These people and events could be positive or negative. At this point, there is no reason to exclude, just write freely. Then in the second column, explain how that person or experience influenced your leadership qualities.

IMPORTANT PERSON OR EVENT	IMPACT ON YOUR LEADERSHIP	+/-

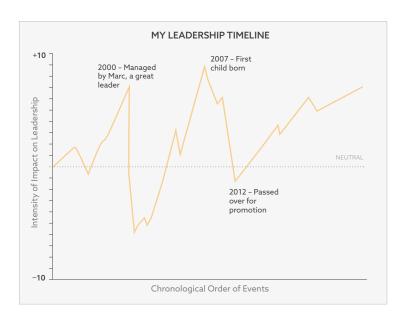


Now rate each of the above people or events as positive (+) or negative (-) by marking it with the correct symbol.

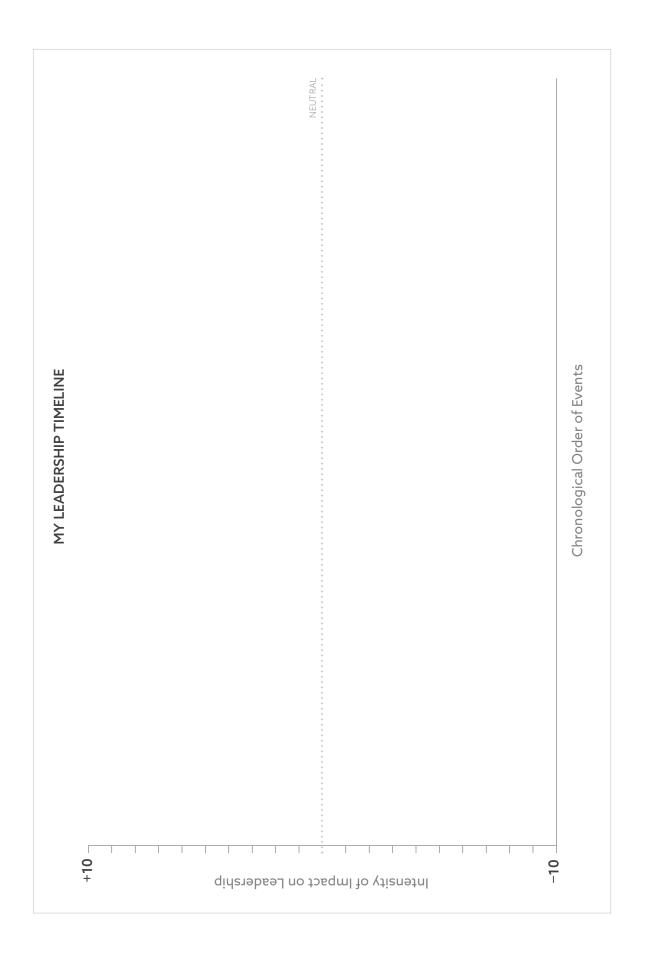
# **Building Your Leadership Timeline**

- 1 Using the graph on the next page, plot the people and events as points above and below (based on intensity of positive/negative influence) the neutral line in chronological order. For an example, see the graph below.
- 2 Draw a line that follows each of these points chronologically to form a line graph: "My Leadership Timeline."











## **Constructing Your Leadership Principles**

As you look back on the people and events that inform your leadership ability, you should see a portrait of yourself and the leader you strive to be. You have a unique set of leadership priorities that make you powerful in the lives of others. Take a moment to list this set of *Leadership Principles* in the space below. What are your goals? How do you aim to help others through your leadership? What makes your leadership different from other leaders? What can you share with the world from your distinct perspective?

1	
2	
_	
2	
3	
4	

## **Brainstorming Your Leadership Narrative**

Choose two of the most influential points from your *Leadership Timeline* (these will probably be some of the lowest or highest points on your graph). Circle these two points on your timeline. Consider the reasons these particular experiences are important to you, what they taught you, and what you hope to teach others by sharing this story. Complete the chart below to begin planning your *Leadership Narrative*.

#### **EXPERIENCE**

Include key details such as time, place, emotions you felt

Example: When I was 11, my father lost his business. He never gave up and rebuilt it in a new city.
We suffered as a family, losing our house and being without him for a time, but a few years later we were able to buy

# PRIORITY VALUES

How the event influenced a specific value that you can name

Example: Perseverance, hard work, gratitude, and appreciation of family

#### **PRINCIPLES**

What the event or persor taught you

Example: Failures teach you much more about how to be successful than success can. There is no shame in loss. Loss can bring positive things you would not have gotten if it were not for the loss. It can be very creative.

Title: Life Success from Failure



EXPERIENCE	PRIORITY VALUES	PRINCIPLES
Title:		

EXPERIENCE	PRIORITY VALUES	PRINCIPLES
Title:		

## Reflecting on Your Leadership Influences

Before actually writing, take another moment to reflect on each of the possible narratives you will share using the questions below:

- 1 What happened just before this event?
- 2 What smells, music, and sounds do you associate with this event?
- 3 What were the emotions you or others had at the time?
- 4 What happened just after this event?
- 5 What events were occurring in the larger world around you?
- 6 What fuzzy memories do you have in and around this event?
- 7 Chronologically list all of the important moments involved in this experience.



## Writing Your Leadership Narrative

Now allow yourself to be vulnerable, honest, and inspiring! Write your narrative. Your final narrative will be a creative product unique to your life story, the audience, and the circumstances. However, using the questions that follow as a guide will make it easier for you to get started.

- 1 Your history—how did your earliest experiences shape who you are?
- 2 What two to three events or influences in your life called you to leadership, and what values and principles do you live by and aspire to emulate?
- What is your developmental edge—what are the key leadership questions you are grappling with at this time? What help would you want from a mentor or advocate within your company?
- 4 How do you appeal to people's logic and intelligence?
- 5 How do you know what emotions people are feeling (or want to feel) and how will you acknowledge, evoke or mirror these emotions?
- 6 How do you bring new thoughts into people's minds—allowing them to imagine new possibilities? What metaphors can give people a new way of thinking about the group?
- 7 How can you incorporate sensory details in order to pull in your audience by appealing to their five senses?

Share	your	story!
Share	your	power!

Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives—the power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change—truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts.

SALMAN RUSHDIE

