

Steppingstones

*Everything that happens to you is your teacher...
The secret is to learn to sit at the feet of your own life and be taught by it.*

– Polly Behrends

The purpose of this exercise is to provide an opportunity for you to reflect on how steppingstones in your life have influenced you and in turn the program you lead. It is also an opportunity for you to begin to establish a sense of trust within the learning community by sharing your reflections with the group.

Step 1: Feel free to select a few stones from the centerpiece on your table which represent milestones or markers in your life. Take about 10 minutes on your own to write a brief reflection based on the following instructions:

- List five or six significant choices, milestones, and markers that you consider to be steppingstones to where you are now in your profession and life. Not all stepping stones are positive and they may be events that “tripped” you up along the way such as closed doors or detours.
- Add to your list, if you wish, people and mentors, and places of significance.
- Reflect on how these steppingstones in your life have influenced you and your values.
- Now, think about how these relate to the environment of your program. How do the indoor and outdoor environments reflect you, your professional journey, and your values? (For example, if you were someone who was raised on a farm and always enjoyed spending time outdoors, your program might have plenty of outdoor space, curriculum centered around nature, or a garden—all reflective of your values.)

Step 2: Reconvene your small group and take turns sharing reflections. Do this in round robin fashion, allowing 2- to 5-minute turns per person as you go around the circle. Each person has the right to pass or request that you come back to her/him later. The group should use this time to engage in deep listening.

Adapted from the Center of Courage and Renewal

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