



Career Development



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Myths

Objectives

- To identify myths from childhood that have implications in adulthood
- To examine childhood myths as they affect adult beliefs and behaviors
- To demonstrate that people share common experiences

Uses

This activity is useful to help individuals understand how their early childhood experiences might affect their current views, expectations, and behavior. It is not intended to be any type of valid psychological analysis and should be kept on the light side. The activity can also be used for getting acquainted.

Audience

All levels

Time

Sixty minutes

Handouts, Materials, and Equipment

- Paper and pencils for all participants
- A flip chart and markers

Procedure

1. Ask the participants to think of a myth or fairy tale that they identified with in childhood.
2. Give them paper and pencils and have each of them spend ten minutes writing a paragraph on the impact that the myth or fairy tale had on their young lives.
3. Divide the group into pairs or trios and ask them to share what they have written with one another for about ten minutes.

4. Now give the pairs or trios twenty minutes to discuss with one another how any of what they have written may have carried over into adulthood and their careers, answering the following questions:

How might these myths or fairy tales have influenced your choice of career?

What differences and/or similarities in reactions or feelings have you experienced later in your life as a result of reading the fairy tale or myth as a child?

Has the influence been positive or negative overall?

Discussion

Bring everyone together in the large group for about twenty minutes; ask for volunteers to share what some of their discoveries were. Write some common thoughts that emerge on the flip chart. Discuss the differences between what they thought as children and what actually happened in their lives.

Variation

Use a movie star or cartoon character instead of a myth or fairy tale.

Source

Doris J. Shallcross

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Objects

Objectives

- To help people gain insight into their careers
- To encourage people to take career risks

Uses

This activity can be used for career-development training, team building, or as an exercise in risk taking.

Audience

Small groups of people who are at mid-career

Time

Sixty minutes

Handouts, Materials, and Equipment

- A flip chart and paper for each subgroup
- Markers for each subgroup
- Two different objects for each subgroup, one representing something “safe” (e.g., a towel, pillow, or eraser) and one representing something “dangerous” (e.g., a razor blade, knife, or a pair of scissors)

Procedure

1. Divide participants into subgroups of three or four and give each subgroup one “safe” object and one “dangerous” object. (*Note:* Each subgroup should have a different object.)
2. Give each subgroup a flip chart and markers and ask them to spend fifteen minutes examining their “safe” objects and listing all the characteristics and features it has on the flip chart, e.g., soft, fluffy, supportive, lightweight, uses a slipcover, comfortable to sleep on, or colorful.

3. When they have finished, instruct each group to spend fifteen minutes describing all the characteristics and features of the “dangerous” object, e.g., sharp, metallic, thin, used to cut, needs sharpening, or comes in different sizes.
4. Now have the individual group members use descriptive words from their lists to write sentences about times they have taken the “safe” route in their careers; for instance, “One of my jobs was kind of ‘fluffy’ because I really didn’t have that much work to do” or “I was able to ‘cover up’ my lack of experience and get by.” Give them five minutes to write down several responses.
5. Next have the individual group members use descriptive words from their lists to write sentences about times they have taken the “dangerous” route during their careers; for instance, “I cut some corners to save money and could have lost my job if they’d found out.” Give them five minutes to write down several responses.

Discussion

Ask the participants to discuss their reactions to the activity. Ask questions such as:

How do you feel about some of the “safe” choices you have made in your career?

How do you feel about some of the “dangerous” choices you have made in your career?

What did you learn from looking back at your choices?

Could you have taken more chances?

How can you use this information to plan the rest of your career?

Variation

The topic can be changed to focus on a particular training area such as leadership or creativity.

Source

Arthur VanGundy



Occupational Grab Bag

Objectives

- To explore career-development opportunities
- To help participants assess their career strengths and weaknesses

Uses

The activity can be used for career development or general team building.

Audience

Any level, any size group

Time

Thirty to sixty minutes, depending on group size

Handouts, Materials, and Equipment

- At least five sheets of paper for each participant
- Pens or pencils for participants
- One *Occupational Grab Bag Job Titles List* for each participant

Procedure

1. Distribute one copy of the *Occupational Grab Bag Job Titles List*, five sheets of paper, and a pen or pencil to each participant. Read the instructions on the handout aloud to the group, asking them to follow along.
2. When everyone has finished, ask them to write the four job titles they have chosen (favorable or not) at the top center of the sheets of paper, one per sheet, and to draw a vertical line down the center of the paper under the job title. Tell them to label the left-hand column "Strengths" and the right-hand column "Weaknesses." Draw an example for them, if necessary.
3. Tell them to write down at least five abilities that they possess that would be either strengths (left-hand column) or weaknesses (right-hand column) for each of these occupations. Give as an example: "If you selected the occupation of Doll Maker, a

strength might be your ability to come up with a lot of creative designs; a weakness might be your inability to sew.”

4. When they have finished, ask them to examine their strengths and weaknesses for each of the occupations they have listed and to use these to brainstorm ways to improve their *current* jobs or careers. Give as an example: “The ability to devise creative doll designs might prompt you to think of incorporating more creative activities on the job or possibly a career shift into a more creative occupation. The weakness of not being able to sew might suggest delegating more activities or ‘stitching together’ your own consulting group and leaving the corporate world.” Be sure that everyone is clear on what to do and then give them about fifteen minutes.
5. Now tell participants to devise action plans to implement their new ideas. Be sure that they include a time frame, obstacles they may encounter, and ways to overcome the obstacles. Tell them to use the blank sheet of paper for writing their plans.

Discussion

To help participants focus on the next steps in their careers, ask the following questions:

What new insights did you gain about your job or career?

Did you gain more ideas from the “strengths” or from the “weaknesses”? Why?

What would you do differently in your career if you had the chance to start over again?

Are there any weaknesses you had earlier in your career that now are strengths?

Do job or career strengths vary in importance depending on the job? Can a strength in one job be a weakness in another or vice versa? Why?

Variations

1. Have small groups form and share their responses.
2. Use the responses from all participants to devise a general strategy for career development.

Source

Arthur VanGundy

Occupational Grab Bag Job Titles List

Instructions: Look over the list of occupational titles below. Select two (other than your own) that appeal to you and two that you would *not* like to do (you may also write in occupations not on the list). When you are finished, wait for further instructions.

Accountant	Actor	Ambassador
Architect	Artist	Astronaut
Athlete	Attorney	Auditor
Baker	Bricklayer	Bus Driver
Business Executive	Butcher	Butler
Cab Driver	Cabinetmaker	Candlestick Maker
Carpenter	Cleaner	Clerk
Coach	Computer Programmer	Cook
Copywriter	Counselor	Cowboy/Cowgirl
Dancer	Dentist	Dishwasher
Doll Maker	Editor	Electrician
Engineer	Farmer	Fashion Designer
Flight Attendant	Garbage Collector	Glassblower
Grave Digger	Jenitor	Machinist
Maid	Mason	Minister/Priest/Rabbi
Musician	Nurse	Pharmacist
Philosopher	Physicist	Physician
Professor	Pilot	Potter
Psychologist	Real Estate Broker	Researcher
Rocket Scientist	Salesperson	Secretary
Shoemaker	Soldier (Military)	Stockbroker
Tailor	Teacher	Telephone Operator
Therapist	Travel Agent	Truck Driver
Undertaker	Waiter/Waitress	Welder
Writer		



Road Maps

Objectives

- To help people explore their past, present, and future careers
- To help people find common past experiences or future desires

Uses

This activity can be used for career-development training, as an icebreaker for team building, or to build trust among members of a team in conflict.

Audience

Small groups from existing or newly-formed teams

Time

Ninety minutes

Handouts, Materials, and Equipment

- A flip chart with enough sheets of paper for each participant
- A variety of colored markers for each participant
- Paper and pencils for each participant
- One copy of the *Road Map Sample Handout* for each participant

Procedure

1. Hand out paper and pencils and instruct the participants to write down their answers to the following questions individually. (*Note:* You may wish to write them on the flip chart prior to the session.)

Where were you born and raised?

Who were your childhood friends?

What were your favorite childhood games?

What did you do especially well?

Which adults had the most influence on your life?

What was your first job?
What did you like about it? Dislike about it?
What are some other jobs you have held?
What were your favorite jobs and why?
What jobs did you dislike and why?
What have been your major career accomplishments? Why do you consider them to be so?
What have you been least proud of in your career? Why?
How happy are you with the direction your career has taken to this point, on a scale of one to ten?
What career goals do you have for one year from now? Three years? Five years?
What would your “dream job” be like?
What do you want to do when you retire?

2. After everyone has finished (about fifteen minutes), distribute a variety of colored markers to the participants and give each person a sheet of flip-chart paper.
3. Give everyone a copy of the *Road Map Sample Handout*. Tell the group that each of them will create a road map of his or her own career based on reflections of the past and hopes for the future that each of them has written on the papers. Post the following ground rules:
 - Use pictures only (no words).
 - Use at least five different colors.
 - You have thirty minutes.
 - Start at the beginning of your career and continue through retirement.
 - Have fun with this activity.
4. Call time after thirty minutes and have participants post their road maps in the “Art Gallery” for viewing. (*Note:* The facilitator may wish to create a road map of his or her own career and post it also.)
5. Ask each “artist” to explain his or her road map briefly to the rest of the group and to autograph the piece, just as any artist would do. Allow approximately five minutes per artist for sharing and autographing.

Discussion

Ask the participants to discuss their reactions to the activity. Ask questions such as:

How did it feel to make a road map of your career?
What did you learn from your road map?
What did you learn about others from their road maps?
How can you use this information to plan the rest of your career?

Variation

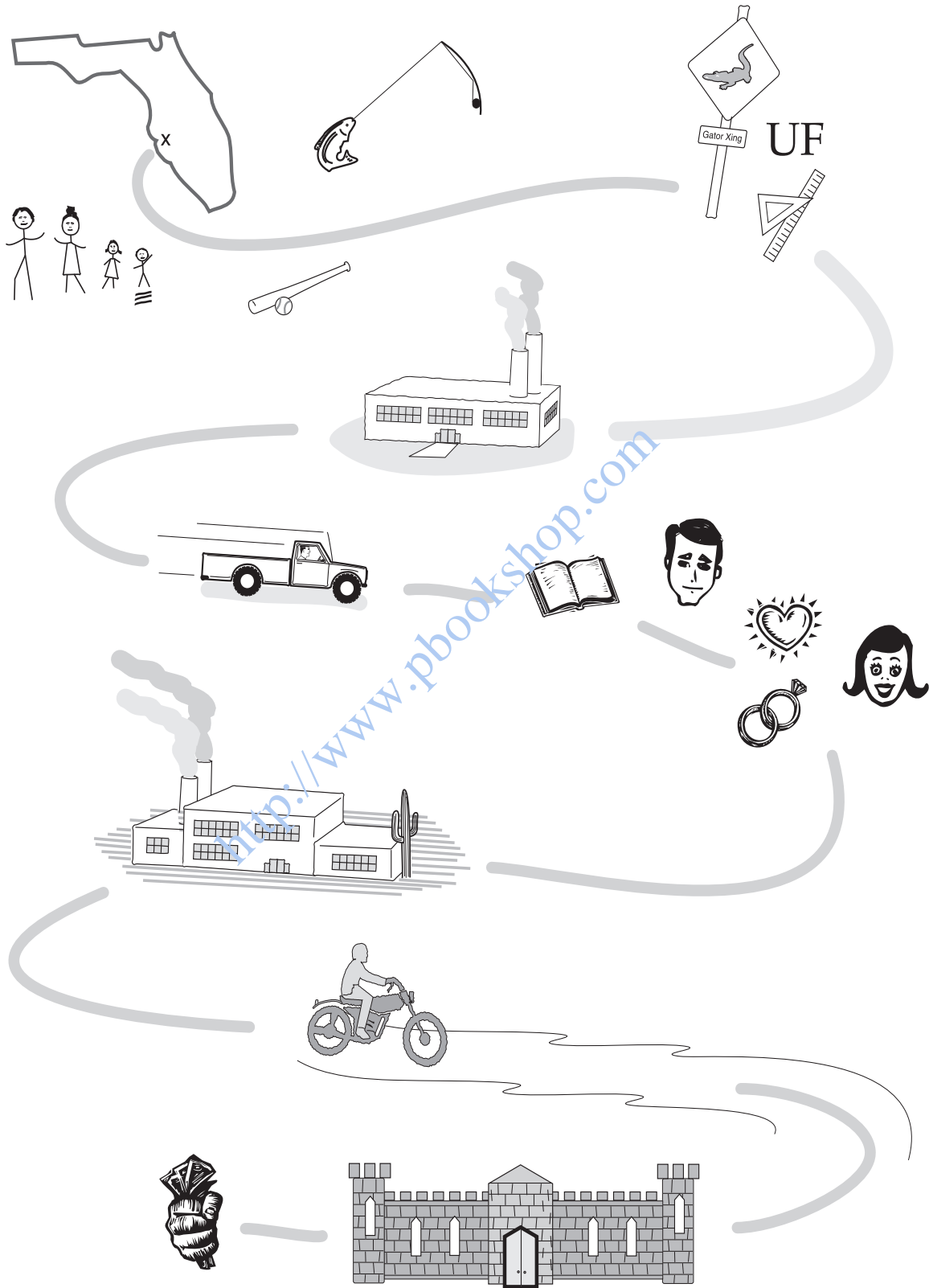
The topic can be changed from a focus on career to a particular aspect of training, such as leadership or creativity.

Source

Frank Prince

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Road Map Sample Handout



<http://www.pbookshop.com>