



Deeper
connections

Deeper connections

These exercises will last more than 30 minutes and are focused on sharing the “hidden window” with the group. You will discover things about yourself, such as: 5%, lifeline, five decisions in life, mentors and their learnings, and more.

1. Better know a Forum mate: Music edition
2. The angel walk
3. A secret
4. Take a step forward
5. Balance wheel (Wheel of Life) – Questions and facilitation
6. Coat of arms
7. How well do we know you
8. What I admire
9. Storytelling through music
10. Pick me up

1. Better know a Forum mate: Music edition

EO chapter	San Francisco
Shared by	Cory Levenberg
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	1 hour and 30 minutes
Objective of the exercise	This is a different way of getting to know your Forum mates. As members reveal the stories behind their choice in music, you will feel a stronger sense of connection to the group.
Outcome of the exercise	The information is quite revealing and unexpected. You will learn more about your Forum mates' musical interests.
Tools needed	Something to play the music on (eg, laptop, phone, etc.) A pen, pencil and pad to write down the list of songs and your guesses
Handouts and pre-work if any	Everyone must submit their song choices to a neutral party (usually a spouse of someone in the Forum) so that everyone can play.

Description of the exercise

This exercise is mostly done during retreats, especially if you have a couple of hours to kill on a road trip. Before the exercise, everyone in the Forum must submit three songs of significance—songs that changed your life in some way—to a neutral party (someone not in the Forum). The songs can reflect the genre of music you like; it can be a special song between you and your spouse, or a song from your childhood.

Bring the playlist with you to Forum. Also print out the list—alphabetically or in random order so everyone has a copy. We will shuffle through all songs. After each song is done, we will pause to guess who submitted the song and why. It is fun to try and match the song to the member. After submitting your guess, the member will reveal themselves and share a story about the song and why it's important to them.

*Note: There are bragging rights for those who guess the song correctly. This is a fun game to play on a long trip or over dinner and drinks.

Step-by-step instructions

1. All Forum mates submit three songs to a neutral party before the meeting.
2. A neutral party will create a playlist of all the songs in no particular order.
3. During the meeting, each song is played and everyone has a chance to guess who submitted the song.
4. After the song, the member will reveal themselves, and share a story about the song and why they chose it.
5. At the end of the exercise, we will tally the number of correct guesses for member bragging rights.

2. The angel walk

EO chapter	San Francisco
Shared by	Cory Levenberg
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	20 to 30 minutes
Objective of the exercise	To create an environment of deeper sharing and connection
Outcome of the exercise	A deeper connection to Forum mates
Tools needed	None
Handouts and pre-work if any	None

The Angel Walk – Originator – Philip Kristianson, The Forum Whisperer (phil@theforumwhisperer.com)

Description of the exercise

As children, we are taught not to pry, to be polite and to reply cordially when some says, “How are you?” The typical response would be, “I’m fine, thank you.” We often don’t get to know the people around us as well as we could—and even those closest to us.

Social norms are hard to break, but there are some simple ways to create an environment for deeper sharing. One way is through role playing. The exercise below is designed to help you get to know someone you care about. It was introduced to me as “The Foetus and the Guardian Angel,” which describes it well but doesn’t inspire people to give it a try.

By adding a walk into this process, we can get some fresh air and a little exercise while talking to someone. This activity is called The Angel Walk.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Pick a partner. This should be someone you trust and want to get to know better.
2. Decide how long you want to walk. Typically, the walk will last about 20-30 minutes. You will walk away from the starting point for half the allotted time, and then walk back to the starting point.
3. Decide which person will assume the role of Guardian Angel and which person is the Foetus for the first half of the walk.

Instructions for each role

The Foetus is curious about what their life’s journey is all about and can ask any question of the Guardian Angel as long as it is phrased in the first person. For example, “Guardian Angel, will I have any brothers and sisters?” or “Guardian Angel, will I be born into wealth or poverty?”

The role of the Guardian Angel will be all-knowing, answering various questions posed by the Foetus in the second person. For example, “You will have three brothers and one sister,” or “You will be born into great wealth. But you will also experience poverty from age six to 10 when your father’s business fails after he is betrayed by his business partner.”

Note: All answers given by the Guardian Angel, even though they are in the second person, are actually about themselves.

Begin your walk with person A in the role of Foetus, and person B in the role of Guardian Angel. When you have walked for half the allotted time, switch roles so person A is the Guardian Angel and person B is the Foetus. You then walk around and then walk back to the starting point.

3. A secret

EO chapter	San Francisco
Shared by	Mike Simonsen
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	5 to 10 minutes per person
Objective of the exercise	A deeper understanding, connection and relationship
Outcome of the exercise	Fun team-building, group dynamics lessons
Tools needed	None
Handouts and pre-work if any	A little pre-work is useful to get the best secrets and to organize the anonymous list

Step-by-step instructions

1. In advance, each member writes anonymously a secret about themselves—something that no one in the Forum knows. It can be a story or a fact, but not a lie.
2. The facilitator takes all the anonymous secrets and compiles them into a list. Each one is read aloud, and the group debates openly whose secret it is.
3. Ultimately, everyone votes who they think it belongs to.
4. The facilitator tallies the votes.
5. After all the secrets are voted and shared, the owners reveal themselves.
6. The "winner" is the person with the fewest votes for their secret.

Debrief questions/notes

It is fascinating to see what characteristics we apply to people, and how we follow each other into voting.

4. Take a step forward

EO chapter	Oman
Shared by	Sami Macki
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Getting to know one another better
Time required for this exercise	1 hour
Objective of the exercise	The objective is for members to get to know one another better, fostering bonding which will lead to more sharing opportunities.
Outcome of the exercise	Better knowledge of each other and their personal story
Tools needed	Paper and pen A facilitator who is an EO member or a person outside the organization
Handouts and pre-work if any	Members may be asked to list questions to ask the group in an effort to get to know them better

Description of the exercise

During the exercise, you will stand in a line while the facilitator asks a series of questions. Those who answer the question correctly will take a step forward (with no communication whatsoever). You will be given time to reflect. The process provides each member with the sense of being alone. The fact that there is no communication stops the judgment and allows you to reflect on how your peers might feel. You can ask questions, beginning with surface-level questions and gradually moving to more profound, substantive questions.

Step-by-step instructions

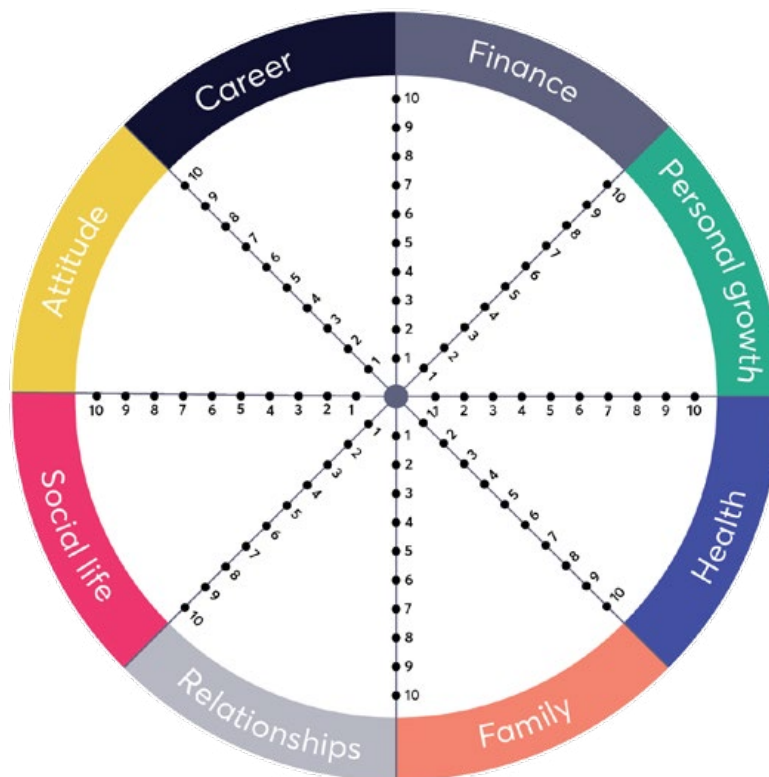
1. Stand in a line and the facilitator will ask you a series of questions (eg, take a step forward if you once cheated on an exam).
2. Members move (or not).
3. Members are not allowed to talk or communicate (no smiling, giggling, rolling eyes, etc.) other than look at each other. No judgment at all.
4. Time is given for self-reflection.
5. Everyone goes back to the start line and the process continues (questions can go one level deeper and the process starts again).
6. Questions have to be pre-designed and specific to the group with the best knowledge of the facilitator. Otherwise, members can contribute questions they feel are interesting to ask and the facilitator pulls questions from the lot and designs some deeper ones based on the lot.

5. Balance wheel – Questions and facilitation

Debrief question/notes

1. How did everyone feel when they were standing there alone?
2. What was the general feeling when the facilitator asked?
3. Do you feel like you've learned something new about each other?

EO chapter	South Florida
Shared by	Cesar Quintero
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Personal reflection
Time required for this exercise	The purpose of the Wheel of Life exercise is to ensure the whole of our life is balanced in all aspects. It helps you consider each area of your life in turn and assess what's off balance.
Objective of the exercise	The Wheel of Life is a powerful tool to visualize different areas of interest in your life, identify strengths and weaknesses and work on areas where you want to grow.
Outcome of the exercise	Wheel of Life sheet
Tools needed	Members have to complete the balance wheel pre-work
Handouts and pre-work if any	



5. Balance wheel – Questions and facilitation - continued

Description of the exercise

The Wheel of Life gives you a visual representation of the way your life is currently, compared with the way you'd like it to be. It is called the "Wheel of Life" because each area of your life is mapped on a circle.

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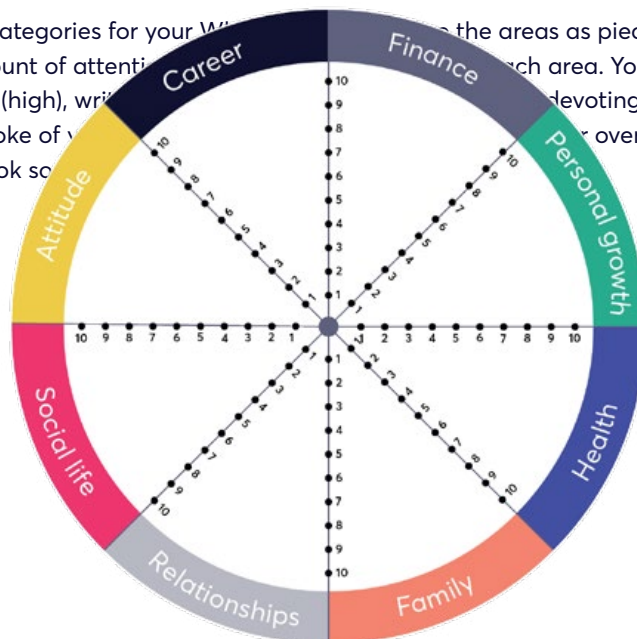
Step-by-step instructions

Start by brainstorming the six to eight dimensions of your life that are important for you.

The Wheel of Life categories include:

- **Health:** Physical health and wellbeing (can also include emotional health).
- **Relationships:** Includes your primary intimate relationship, family and friends.
- **Social:** Includes religious/spiritual communities and other group activities.
- **Financial:** Your ability to manage your money effectively, save, budget and invest.
- **Professional/business:** This is for the work category, which can break out into a Wheel of Business.
- **Personal growth:** Area of focus for personal development.
- **Spirituality:** This can be a category or simply the driving force behind all areas of focus.
- **Adventure/fun:** This can be your interests/passion.
- **Significant other:** Spouse/life partner.

After you've identified the major categories for your Wheel of Life, divide the areas as pieces of a pie. The next step is to assess the amount of attention you're currently devoting to each area. You need to consider each dimension in turn. On a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high), write down your current score for each area. Mark each score on the appropriate spoke of the wheel. The wheel shows your current overall life balance, and each piece represents a different area of focus. It might look something like this:



- Now connect the marks around the circle. Does your life wheel look and feel balanced?
- Think about your ideal level and plot the ideal scores around your life wheel. *Continued on next page ...*
- Now you have a visual representation of your current life balance and your perfect life balance. Where are the gaps?

The gaps can go both ways. There are almost certainly areas that are not getting as much attention as you'd like. However, there may also be areas where you're putting in more effort than you would like. These areas are sapping energy and enthusiasm that may be better directed elsewhere.

5. Balance wheel – Questions and facilitation - *continued*

- Review/discuss the terms to ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of each category on the Wheel of Life, or will rename theirs to a name more suitable for them.
- Discuss between two members of the group (round robin).
- Meet in pairs and for 45 seconds, state where you currently rate the first area (Family).
- Rotate pairs, and repeat for the second area (Health).
- Continue rotating and discussing a new area until participants have shared on each category of the wheel.
- Create a flip chart with the following questions:
 - Are there any surprises for you?
 - How do you feel about your life as you look at the wheel?
 - How do you currently spend your time?
 - Are there any surprises in store for you?
 - How do you currently spend time in these areas?
 - Which of these elements would you most like to improve?
 - How could you make space for these changes?
 - Can you effect the necessary changes on your own? What help and cooperation from others do you need?
 - What would it take to achieve a 10?

*Do not show the questions until the exercise has started.

*The gaps are the areas of your life that need attention.

Debrief

- Note that some categories might actually be in contrast with each other (eg, spending more time with friends might take away from time with your spouse or affect your health. Look for ways where you can work on multiple areas at once).
- If this is your "unicycle of life," is it a smooth ride? Or is it pretty lumpy and lopsided? How balanced are you?

6. Coat of arms

EO chapter	South Florida
Shared by	Cesar Quintero
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	30 minutes
Objective of the exercise	To integrate new members
Outcome of the exercise	
Tools needed	Flip chart, paper, pen
Handouts and pre-work if any	

Step-by-step instructions

When integrating new members, the challenge is how to create inclusion and connection without going over the same exercises and covering the same ground as before.

On flip chart paper or A4 paper, each person will draw a coat of arms and answer at least three of the following questions (dependent on how much time you have):

1. At one o'clock – Life growing up
2. At five o'clock – The paths you have followed
3. At seven o'clock – Those who have influenced me
4. At ten o'clock – What matters now
5. The scroll at the bottom – A fact that few people know about me
6. The crest at the top – My credo and my life motto

Allow two to three minutes for participants to gather their thoughts per segment.

7. How well do we know you?

EO chapter	South Florida
Shared by	Cesar Quintero
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Deeper connection
Time required for this exercise	
Objective of the exercise	To assess how well you know your Forum mates
Outcome of the exercise	
Tools needed	Paper, pen
Handouts and pre-work if any	

Description of the exercise

This exercise is all about asking Forum members a list of questions to assess how well you know your Forum mates. The response to each question will help us evaluate the group's level of sharing and understanding. The questions are in two sets: 5 percent sharing and 95 percent sharing.

Step-by-step instructions

95 percent:

1. When is _____'s birthday?
2. Who are _____'s siblings and what is their birth order?
3. What kind of car does _____ drive?
4. What are _____'s children's name and ages?
5. What is _____'s favourite sport? _____'s favourite sports team?
6. What does _____ do in his/her spare time?
7. What religion does _____ practice?
8. What profession did _____ want to be as a child?
9. What is _____'s hobby?
10. Can _____ play an instrument? Which one?
11. Name one place _____ hasn't visited.

5 percent:

1. What is _____'s strongest talent?
2. What is _____ most proud of?
3. What is _____ most fearful of?
4. What would _____ like to change about themselves?
5. What would _____ want their life to be like in 10 years?
6. What are three core values held by _____?
7. Who does _____ look up to/admire?
8. What could _____ give a 40-minute presentation on with absolutely no preparation?
9. What matters most in _____'s life?
10. What did _____ used to worry about, but doesn't anymore?
11. What is _____'s "why"?

8. What I admire

EO chapter	Idaho
Shared by	Jim Escobar
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Team-building
Time required for this exercise	60 minutes
Objective of the exercise	Engage in a bonding experience where everyone spends a focused amount of time on each person in the Forum.
Outcome of the exercise	Increased bonding among members
Tools needed	None
Handouts and pre-work if any	None
<p>Description of the exercise</p> <p>As noted, you will write a paragraph or two (or highlights) about each member of your Forum and then share it with the group. For example, "It was just an awesome bonding experience. I thought it would be more awesome to recognize others, but I found tremendous joy in what was given to me. What others see in us isn't always what we see in ourselves. This exercise was incredible; it was a truly bonding experience."</p>	
<p>Step-by-step instructions</p> <p>We explain what we admire about person A: How they have made an impact, what we respect, what has shocked us, etc. Then we move on to the second person and so forth.</p>	

9. Storytelling through music

EO chapter	San Diego
Shared by	Michel Kripalani
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	30-60 minutes (or more)
Objective of the exercise	Use a musical prompt to have people share deep, personal stories from their life. This is a lightweight exercise that is easily done after a meal or over a bottle of wine as people are relaxing and bonding. It provides a framework for deep conversation and storytelling.
Outcome of the exercise	Deep, personal stories that are tied to the songs that trigger them.
Tools needed	A Bluetooth speaker and audio device that has access to a large music library
Handouts and pre-work if any	None
<p>Description of the exercise</p> <p>Forum members will gather in the living room, around the Bluetooth speaker. An iPhone (or similar device) with access to a large music library is passed from member to member. One by one, each member searches for and plays a song from the device. After the song plays for a while, the Forum member explains the song's significance, providing the backstory for context.</p> <p>Certain songs can trigger deep memories or hold important meaning to people. Using music, this exercise is designed to encourage you to tell deeply impactful stories from your past.</p> <p>For example, "This is the song that was playing when I knew that I had to walk away from that relationship," or, "This was the song that was playing during the birth of my son/daughter."</p>	
<p>Step-by-step instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure you have a Bluetooth speaker and a device that can play music to it (with a large library of easily searchable music). 2. Place the speaker in the centre of the group. 3. The first person finds a song, plays it for the group and tells their story. 4. Pass the device to the next Forum member. 5. Do as many rounds as time allows. 6. (Bonus) Have someone create a Spotify playlist from the songs for distribution to the entire Forum afterward. 	

10. Pick me up

EO chapter	San Diego
Shared by	Michel Kripalani
Type of exercise (icebreaker, team-building, closing, etc)	Connection
Time required for this exercise	60 minutes
Objective of the exercise	Provides an opportunity for Forum members to express just how much they appreciate each other.
Outcome of the exercise	Each Forum member walks away with an audio file that they can listen to any time as a "pick-me-up." This has proven to be a very deep bonding exercise.
Tools needed	None
Handouts and pre-work if any	An iPhone (or similar) device that can record audio conversations

Description of the exercise

One by one, each Forum member steps away from the group conversation. While they are away, the remaining Forum members discuss the member who has exited solely from a positive, grateful, thankful and uplifting standpoint. The audio of the conversation is recorded. In the end, everyone is given their audio recording as a keepsake.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Have the entire group sit at a table (or similar). The key is that the members are near to one another (so that the microphone can pick up their voices).
2. Ensure you have an iPhone (or similar) device that can record audio conversations. Place it in the middle of the group. On a dining room or conference room table works perfectly.
3. Spin one chair "away" from the group. In effect, the person sitting in this chair has their back to the group. It may be best to slide the chair away from the group a bit. The idea is to get them "outside of the circle" but still keep them in earshot (to hear the conversation).
4. One person sits in the chair that is turned away from the group.
5. It is recommended that a timer is set for each session. Three to five minutes seems to be a good duration to capture the comments.
6. Start recording. The rest of the group has a conversation about the member who has stepped "away," and they talk about how they (a) appreciate them, (b) have learned from them, (c) are inspired by them, etc. All comments are to be positive, grateful, thankful and uplifting.
7. It is critical that the person who is being spoken about does not interact. The group is to talk as if the person were not in the room. The person being spoken about should never react or speak.
8. Everyone will have three to five minutes to speak. Once the time is up, we will stop recording the comments and save it. The person re-joins the group. It is recommended that their only response to the group is a simple, "Thank you."
9. The next person sits in the "away" chair. Repeat the process from step four.
10. After everyone has had a chance to participate, the audio files are shared with the individual members.

Debrief questions/notes

1. What was it like having to sit quietly and listen to people speak about you?
2. What emotions did this bring up for you?
3. Do you have a different perspective of how people see you, relative to how you see yourself?