



## YOUR TEN DEFINING MOMENTS

Only you will know when and in what circumstances the defining moments of your life occurred. Take time to think through the various stages of the life you have lived so far. You may want to deal with only one age range in a single sitting. That's fine as long as you come back to the exercise again and again until you've completed it. Perhaps you will not immediately remember something from your youngest years, but an adolescent memory is uppermost on your mind. Push yourself to access the earlier years, but don't get hung up if defining childhood moments don't surface. Keep going. You can come back to the earlier time after you've explored some of the later experiences. The life stories you're about to tell are important because they have had consequences in your life. They deserve your full concentration and focus.

Promise



## Age Groups

## Characteristic Defining Moments and Memories

1 to 5 years old

- interactions with family
- playing games
- going to nursery school for the first time
- learning to sleep in the dark
- noticing people aging

6 to 12 years old

- grade-school years
- teacher replacing parent for the first time
- sibling types to cope with
- having to prove yourself in a new group

13 to 20 years old

- turmoil and frustration
- learning about being an adult
- breaking away from the family
- discovering the “big deal” about sex
- social relations taking on primary importance
- whether you belong to the “in” crowd
- love
- rites of passage or initiations
- thinking about the future



21 to 38 years old

- beginning life as a citizen of the community
- jobs
- responsibility for a family
- learning how to be a partner in life
- learning how to be a parent
- dealing with lack of knowledge, power, or self-discipline
- newfound admiration for our parents or other role models

39 to 55 years old

- beginning a new era of life
- settling into vocation and future expectations
- stable living situation
- paying more attention to yourself

56 years old on

- thoughts of retirement from work
- release from some family and community responsibilities
- losing some physical vitality
- confronting more limitations
- turning over responsibilities to others
- getting to know others in more intimate, less competitive ways



## Defining Moment #1

1. Where are you at this moment?
2. How old are you?
3. Who is there with you, or who is supposed to be there with you?
4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?
7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness



8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?

9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

2. What emotions are you having *now*?

3. What are you telling yourself about these events *today*?

4. What power and self-determination, if any, did you lose to this event, if it was a negative event? (If it was positive, what did you learn or gain)



## Defining Moment #2

1. Where are you at this moment?
2. How old are you?
3. Who is there with you, or who is supposed to be there with you?
4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be?

What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

2. What emotions are you having *now*?

3. What are you telling yourself about these events *today*?

4. What power and self-determination, if any, did you lose to this event, if it was a negative event? (If it was positive, what did you learn or gain)



### Defining Moment #3

1. Where are you at this moment?
2. How old are you?
3. Who is there with you, or who is supposed to be there with you?
4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?
7. What is your mental/physical experience?
  - State of mind
  - Smells
  - Tastes
  - Touch
  - Happiness/sadness
  - Strength/weakness
8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

2. What emotions are you having *now*?

3. What are you telling yourself about these events *today*?

4. What power and self-determination, if any, did you lose to this event, if it was a negative event? (If it was positive, what did you learn or gain)



## Defining Moment #4

1. Where are you at this moment?
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3. Who is there with you, or who is supposed to be there with you?
4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

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## Defining Moment #5

1. Where are you at this moment?
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4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

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## Defining Moment #6

1. Where are you at this moment?
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6. How would you change this situation if you could?
7. What is your mental/physical experience?
  - State of mind
  - Smells
  - Tastes
  - Touch
  - Happiness/sadness
  - Strength/weakness
8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

2. What emotions are you having *now*?

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## Defining Moment #7

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6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

2. What emotions are you having *now*?

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## Defining Moment #8

1. Where are you at this moment?
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6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

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## Defining Moment #9

1. Where are you at this moment?
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4. What is happening that makes this moment so significant?
5. What emotions or changes of emotions are you experiencing (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, confusion, joy, power, helplessness)?
6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

1. How do you feel *now* about this defining moment?

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3. What are you telling yourself about these events *today*?

4. What power and self-determination, if any, did you lose to this event, if it was a negative event? (If it was positive, what did you learn or gain)



## Defining Moment #10

1. Where are you at this moment?
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6. How would you change this situation if you could?

7. What is your mental/physical experience?

State of mind

Smells

Tastes

Touch

Happiness/sadness

Strength/weakness

8. If you could speak to someone at this moment, who would it be? What would you say?



9. What are you saying to yourself?

10. What do you need right now more than anything else?

Now bring yourself back to the present and answer the following questions.

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