

Exercise: Three Short Stories and Introductions**Dimension / TPI:** Trust, Diversity**Supplies:** None**Time:**

Give team members about 15-20 minutes for the one-on-one storytelling. Allow about 2 minutes, not more, for team members to do the introductions — then add about another 25% or so; it can be a little challenging to rein in team members when they are into storytelling mode.

Set-up:

- Team members are paired up (or there might be one group of 3) to share personal stories and given time for that.
- A close, enclosed circle of chairs is set up for sharing the stories with the team.
- This is an exercise that works well with the “interview” period during the lunch break, and the storytelling introductions for the team right after lunch, and of course, it could fit in other time slots as well.

Instructions:

Team members will find a partner — or two partners in case there is an odd number on the team. They will have some time to chat with each other. There will be three topics for the conversation.

Let them know, “When you come back you will introduce your partner by sharing some from the stories you heard. These will be short introductions — not more than 2 minutes (you could even say, “a minute and a half”). You can share short bits from each of the three stories you heard, or just from one.

“The context for the introductions is this: from the stories you heard, what would you like the team to know about this person? You are not being a journalist, reporting back all the details — you don’t need to take notes (unless that helps you).”

Here are the 3 topics

1. Tell me a story from your youth.
The person telling the story gets to define what age “youth” means, and of course, gets to choose the story. It could be an experience you had, exciting or scary or rewarding.
2. A lesson you learned in school that is still with you today.
Again, the storyteller decides which school — could be any grade level, and chooses the story — the life learning.
3. A life-changing experience.
Now we all know that being a parent is a life-changing experience. For the sake of the exercise pick the second thing on your list.

Before the introductions begin, make sure the circle is closed, just for the team, and close so it is easy to see and hear everyone; the tighter circle also helps create intimacy for the storytelling.

The introductions are short.

- The team will manage time (sometimes a team member volunteers to use a timer on their phone — however, the team manages time is fine and tells you something about the team).
- Go in any order. If one in the partner starts, the other partner is required to follow.

The coach should move out of earshot so as not to infringe on the team’s intimacy. This is an exercise just for the team. Stay in the room but at a distance.

Debrief:

Questions you can use for debrief:

- What is different on this team as a result of doing this exercise?
- What were some of the (character) strengths you heard in the stories? These are strengths on this team.
- What are you taking away?