

Highlights and Low Points

Mapping the shape of your life so far

Name _____ Date _____

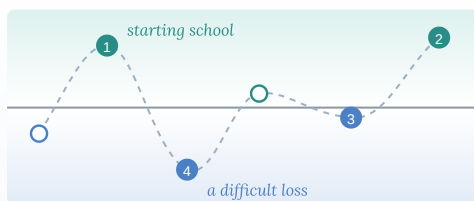
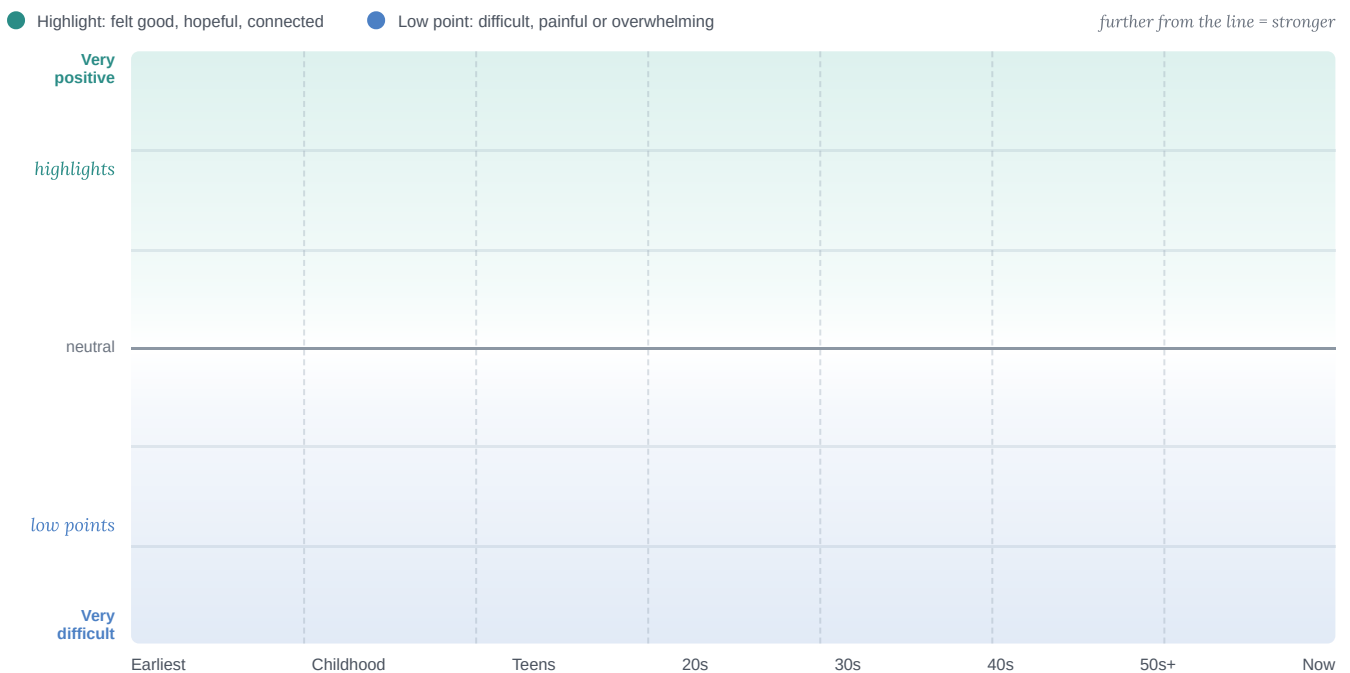
This exercise helps you notice the experiences that have shaped you: the periods and turning points that stand out, whether they were **highlights** or **low points**. A point doesn't need to be dramatic. What matters is that, looking back, you sense it affected your mood, your sense of self, or the way you moved through the world.

How to use this form

Start with whatever you remember; you don't need a complete history. Mark points on the graph roughly by age, and by how positive or difficult they felt. Then choose a few to write about on the next pages.

You are in control of what you share. You can mark a point without describing it at all, and you can leave anything blank.

01 The shape of it _____ your life graph



How to read it

Place a dot for each point: above the line for highlights, below for low points. Number the ones you'll write about (1–4), add a word or two if you like, then join the dots to see the overall shape. Relabel the ages to suit your life.

02 Choose your points _____ you don't need all four

- 1 A moment or period that stands out
It might be joyful, painful, ordinary or hard to name. When _____
- 2 A relationship or connection that mattered
Someone who shaped you, for better, for worse, or both. When _____
- 3 A change, loss, achievement or turning point
A moment when things shifted direction. When _____
- 4 A difficult, acutely stressful or traumatic situation
Share only what feels comfortable; a general note is enough. When _____

Highlights and Low Points

03 Looking more closely a few words can be enough

1 A moment or period that stands out

It might be joyful, painful, ordinary or hard to name.

Roughly when _____

This was a...

☒ Highlight☐ Low point☐ Both☐ Hard to say

What happened?

How did it affect you at the time?

What feels important about it now?

2 A relationship or connection that mattered

Someone who shaped you, for better, for worse, or both.

Roughly when _____

This was a...

☒ Highlight☐ Low point☐ Both☐ Hard to say

What happened?

How did it affect you at the time?

What did this teach you about yourself, other people or relationships?

Highlights and Low Points

03 Looking more closely

a few words can be enough

3 A change, loss, achievement or turning point

A moment when things shifted direction.

Roughly when _____

This was a...

☒ Highlight☐ Low point☐ Both☐ Hard to say

What happened?

How did it affect you at the time?

How did this affect your mood, confidence, expectations or sense of self?

4 A difficult, acutely stressful or traumatic situation

Share only what feels comfortable; a general note is enough.

Roughly when _____

This was a...

☒ Highlight☐ Low point☐ Both☐ Hard to say

You don't need to describe what happened. Writing "something happened, not ready to write about it" is enough. If strong feelings come up, pause, notice your feet on the floor and your surroundings, and come back only if and when you want to. We can talk it through together, at your pace.

What happened? *As much or as little as you like.*

How did it affect you at the time?

What helped you get through it, even a little?

Highlights and Low Points

04 More moments

optional

If more than one moment came to mind, or something new surfaced as you wrote, add it here.



Another point

Relates to

☐ 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐ New

What happened, and how did it affect you?



Another point

Relates to

☐ 1☐ 2☐ 3☐ 4☐ New

What happened, and how did it affect you?

05 Looking across the whole shape

bring this to your next session

Research suggests the meaning people make of their experiences is linked with wellbeing, although cause and effect are not yet clear. There is no "correct" shape, and memory is selective; this is simply a way of noticing what stands out.

When you look at your graph as a whole, what do you notice? *Repeated themes, periods of change, relationships, losses, or times your way of coping shifted.*

What helped me through the low points...

What the highlights suggest matters to me...

Something I'd like to talk about in my next session...

Looking after yourself

Looking back can stir up memories and feelings you weren't expecting. That is common, and it's okay to stop, take a break, or leave parts of this for session. Go gently, and return to it only when you feel ready.

Highlights and Low Points

06 The shape of it, a fresh copy

optional

You don't have to use this page. It's here if you'd like more room: to redraw your shape after reflecting, or to map one period of your life in more detail.

● Highlight: felt good, hopeful, connected ● Low point: difficult, painful or overwhelming

further from the line = stronger

	Earliest	Childhood	Teens	20s	30s	40s	50s+	Now
Very positive								
highlights								
neutral								
low points								
Very difficult								

age or period of life, from earliest memories to now

SOURCES

Clinician-developed reflective exercise, informed by life-graph and narrative identity approaches. It is not a diagnostic instrument or standardised measure.

McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 100–122. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.2.100>

McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(3), 233–238. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622>