Life’s Story Exercise
I broke out of the grip of Catholicism and made it through adolescence without killing myself in a car. I flunked out of college. I learned to play the guitar, lived on the beach, lived in the French Quarter, finally got laid, and didn't go to Vietnam. I got back into school, started a band, got a job on Bourbon Street, graduated from college, flunked my draft physical, broke up my band, and went out on the road solo. I signed a record deal, got married, moved to Nashville, had my guitars stolen, bought a Mercedes, worked at *Billboard* magazine, put out my first album, went broke, met Jerry Jeff Walker, wrecked the Mercedes, got divorced, and moved to Key West. I sang and worked on a fishing boat, went totally crazy, did a lot of dope, met the right girl, made another record, had a hit, bought a boat, and sailed away to the Caribbean.
I started another band, worked the road, had my second and last hit, bought a house in Aspen, started spending summers in New England, got married, broke my leg three times in one year, had a baby girl, made more records, bought a bigger boat, and sailed away to St. Barts.

I got separated from the right girl, sold the boat, sold the house in Aspen, moved back to Key West, worked the road, and made more records. I rented an apartment in Paris, went to Brazil for Carnival, learned to fly, went into therapy, quit doing dope, bought my first seaplane, flew all over the Caribbean, almost got a second divorce, moved to Malibu for more therapy, and got back with the right girl.

I worked the road, moved back to Nashville, took off in an F-14 from an aircraft carrier, bought a summer home on Long Island, had another baby girl. I found the perfect seaplane and moved back to Florida. Cameron Marley joined me in the house of women. I built a home on Long Island, crashed the perfect seaplane in Nantucket, lived through it thanks to Navy training, tried to slow down a little, woke up one morning and I was looking at fifty, trying to figure out what comes next.
What themes do you see in Jimmy Buffett’s life?
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Loves Music

Breaks Things
Was he a success? Why or why not?

- Rich
- Famous
- Healthy
- Happy Marriage
- Varied Experiences
- Doing what he loves
- Successful Business
- Best selling Author
Another story ...
Lessons from Howard Schulz?
Leadership is about managing energy,
first in yourself,
and then in those around you.
And your Life’s Story is the source of your Leadership Energy.

Are you willing to use it to influence others at Level Three?
Barriers to Level Three Communication
Distance in Leadership Communication
Language of Leadership: Two Key Translations

Experience & Feelings

Conscious Thoughts

Behavior: Say & Do

T1

T2
Can you find the words to be ...?

1. Clarifying?
2. Stimulating & Memorable?
3. Respectful?
4. Congruent & Authentic?

► Practicing in the shower, car, where ever.

The ability to articulate the “charter” is the language of leadership.
“Analyzing 3,000 pages of transcripts, our team was startled to see you do not have to be born with specific characteristics or traits of a leader. Leadership emerges from your life story.”

Life’s Story in 400 Words or Less
Does experience lead to wisdom?

“Most people do not accumulate a body of experience. Most people go through life undergoing a series of happenings which pass through their systems undigested. Happenings become experiences when they are digested, when they are reflected on, related to general patterns, and synthesized.”

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, quoted by Henry Mintzberg in “The Five Minds of a Manager” HBR 11/03
## Life’s Lessons

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<th>Key Event</th>
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<th>Lesson Taken Away</th>
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Life’s Story
Chart of Emotions

+5
0
-5
Jim’s Life’s Story
Chart of Emotions
Patterns in Life’s Stories
Your Story *created*
your Level Three VABEs

And your VABE’s
determine
your leadership style
So, are you willing to tell/share/use your Story?

► Peer examples...
What is your reaction to listening to these stories? What can we learn from this?
Common, Emotional Connections are most powerful...
The Importance of Being A Level Three Leader

1. Visible Behavior
2. Conscious Thought
3. VABEs (shoulds, oughts)

Level Three Leadership is more powerful and long-lasting.
Do you have a story to tell?

Strategic?
Organizational?
Personal?

If not ...