

LEARNING THROUGH TRIALS & CHALLENGES

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

Psalms 23:4

There is no doubt that pain, trials, and challenges shape our lives—both in healthy and unhealthy ways depending on how we have or learned to respond.

Consider athletes and the human body. Part of an athlete's training is strength and conditioning—lifting weights, endurance exercises, cardio, flexibility and more. As the body endures stress from these activities, it actually repairs and builds itself back up with greater strength and endurance in the rest between workouts (another message for another time!). In other words, the body will conform and build itself up in response to the intentional training and rhythms provided by the athletes and trainers.



Back to your story. You replaced yellow Post It notes with pink ones indicating times or incidents of pain, trial, and/or challenge in your life narrative. You had personal reflection time to revisit those pain points (using the imagery of steel being formed–Day 3 Morning) and to consider how you were formed and how you responded to these various challenges.

Revisit these pivotal teachers and formational moments.

FORMING Through Trials & Challenges

Going back to your Life Narrative Board, make a list (journal, document or spreadsheet) of the pain points in your life.

- *Are there any new challenges that come to mind or have transpired since the retreat?*
Write them down as well.

For each moment (or select several that you see as most formative to you), answer the following questions:

- *Was this moment a disruption (medium-sized that interrupted the flow of life), or a life-quake (major life moment, changing life from that point forward)?*

Looking back, describe how you responded to each incident.

- *How were you formed in and through these incidents (good or bad)?*
- *What are the lingering effects in your actions or attitudes you see as factors in your current story (good or bad)?*

Feel free to consider other questions you engaged in your retreat guidebook–Day 3 Morning.

- *As you reflect on all you wrote, what summary insights are emerging for you?*
- *How do you feel led to respond to what you have learned?*
- *Are there tangible next steps you can take to better reflect God's glory?*

Notes:

Some pain points in our story are deep waters that are still in need of redemption. You should handle these with care and honesty. If you feel stuck or sense the incident or trauma is beyond your understanding or still impacting your life, consider finding a counselor or therapist who can walk with you through the pain and help bring goodness to your soul.

If you would like to process with an Altar teammate/pastor, Eric and Steve are available upon request.
