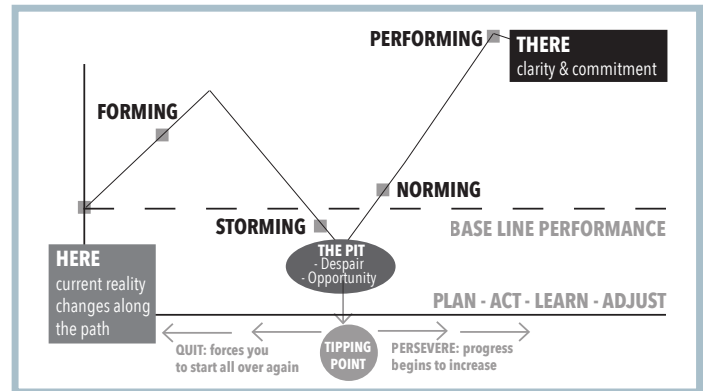


HERE TOOL PROJECT MOOD CURVE



The Mood Curve is the shape of the PATH. The trajectory between HERE and THERE. It is a tool for encouraging perseverance and perspective.

- Everything in life follows the structure of the Project Mood Curve
 - Nothing is immune to the Mood Curve. It is inevitable in every human relationship, project, and organization
 - The only difference between PATHs is the depth of the “the pit”

The Mood Curve Goes Through 5 Phases

1. FORMING

We begin a project (or relationship) with certain hopes and expectations for how it will end or the effect it will have on us. With the myriad of options available, we only choose to be involved with things if we expect to experience a benefit. Relationships go through the honeymoon phase, team members have the excitement of getting to know each other and begin a new project together, etc.

2. STORMING

Reality never exactly matches expectations. When this comes to bear, we enter the storming phase or the pit. The honeymoon is over, conflict begins to take place, and the challenges are underway. Although we try to avoid this phase, it is inevitable and even proves useful/necessary for developing intimacy and achieving vision. Our most meaningful learning happens here, intimacy is developed most pointedly. The pit is not just to be endured, but valued – we are refined by fire. When in the pit there are two options: quit or persevere.

3. QUITTING

We quit either because we are not committed to our THERE (it isn't worth the challenges) or because we have an inaccurate perspective that struggle means we have already failed. If we quit, we start another project and enter into the forming phase again. Quitting is not always the wrong choice – it invites us to reorient effort toward a better objective. In “The Pit”, despair or opportunity is a matter of choice. Quitting might be viewed as an opportunity to reset and start a better objective. Or it might be viewed as failure, together with a decision that we are worthless and should not try anything else.

4. NORMING

If we persevere, we enter the norming stage. We have learned, are resolving conflict, building trust, and growing in the ways only overcoming challenges can do. Roles become more clearly defined.

5. PERFORMING

We start to see meaningful successes that are, ironically, even higher than our imagined future in the forming stage because we have learned and adapted throughout the curve to refine our vision to meet reality and serve purpose. You don't stay in this stage forever; the Mood Curve is defined by momentum and will recycle itself (performing leads to a new level of expectations forming which restarts the curve).

Examples

- **Relationship Example:** Joey and Kylie started dating and felt the usual butterflies. They dreamed of happily ever after and how a life together would meet all the expectations each had (some subconscious) for marriage. After some time, they start to argue about toothpaste brands and the direction the toilet paper hangs on the rolls. They get on each other's nerves and enter into conflict. As they persevere, they figure out how to work through conflict, manage their expectations, and live in unity (developing intimacy in the process). As the years progress, they discover a meaningful and life-giving marriage beyond their initial fantasies.
- **Work/team Example:** Six coworkers are assigned a project at work. They each hope to impress the boss and one another, maybe earning a raise and some kudos. As the work begins, they encounter obstacles and fight the urge to blame one another, afraid the project is going to fail. After an emotional argument between three members, they recommit and come together around the project goal, they discover and lean on each other's unique strengths. They trust more and begin to see results.
- **Personal Example:** Annabel wants to run a marathon. She dreams of crossing the line, the feeling of accomplishment, and being in great shape. As she trains, the first day or two are exciting, she's doing it! A couple days later, she is struggling to make her goals, out of breath on the runs, and fearful she won't make the race. As she continues to get up and try, she gains endurance and confidence and learns how to push herself. When she finally crosses the finish line, the feeling of accomplishment is increased by the work she endured.
- **Quitting Example:** Jonathon decides he is going to work hard and make partner by the time he is forty. He dreams of the financial stability for his family and the adventurous traveling he can do. As he pushes himself, the work hours mount and he is being asked to do more and more, at the cost of time with his wife and two children. The family has an argument where his wife says, “You don't even know your kids!” Jonathan evaluates if his goal truly aligns with his value. Are financial goals more important than his children having a father that is present? He decides to quit his goal and commits to a new endeavor, being a more active presence in the life of his kids.



Mood Curve Misnomers

- **LIE:** *Everyone will be in the same zone at the same time.*
TRUTH: Our curves will all look different, even when we are walking down the same path together. Unity is not conformity – our individual values, beliefs and perspectives will highly influence our Mood Curve experience.
- **LIE:** *Quitting is never a good thing.*
TRUTH: While we need to learn commitment and how to persevere through difficult things, quitting is not always a bad thing. We need to make sure we are on the right path, and that the THERE we are pursuing aligns with our values.
- **LIE:** *Choosing to stay in the pit will keep you from quitting.*
TRUTH: Choosing to stay in the pit is the same as quitting. There is no place on the Mood Curve where you can set up camp, you will constantly be moving through the curve, and a refusal to do so is the equivalent of quitting. Your new project may be apathy or a “refusal” to do anything, but even that endeavor will follow The Mood Curve.
- **LIE:** *Performing is the final destination and the place worth living for.*
TRUTH: Life is full of ups and downs. As we learn, grow, and succeed, our potential for output gets higher and our pit is less deep. But The Mood Curve continues and recycles, always in motion.

Think of an endeavor you are currently committed to (a relationship, work project, or personal goal).

Where are you on The Mood Curve right now?

How committed are you to the vision?

How sure are you it aligns with your values?