

## Walk of Life: Power in Our Society Today

**Activity Location:** Craven Hall stairs (primary location), Academic Hall Stairs (alternative), Dome Stairs (alternative)

*Before heading to the stairs, Jennifer will set the tone for the activity.  
Will invite all to participate.*

### Activity Rules Discussion:

- Silent activity, No talking
- Connect to each other in some way
- Interpret the questions to your best ability. We will repeat questions however will not explain them

### Beginning Comments:

Take a look at the person to the left of you; take a look at the person to the right of you.  
Mention to participants to observe the movements of others throughout the activity.

## ACTIVITY

*Throughout the questions, participants will be reminded that the “Walk of Life” is a silent activity and to interpret the questions to their best ability. Questions will be read at a slower pace and louder tone. Questions should not be read in the order they appear. The number of steps taken can be altered to increase or decrease distance. This is important if the space available is minimal or hard for the speaker to project their voice and be heard.*

### Activity Questions:

- *Gender*
  - If you are male, step forward one
  - If you are female, step backwards one
  - If you were given less support than boys in your family for going to college or pursuing work goals because of your gender, take one step backward
  - If you received less encouragement in academics or sports from your family or from your teachers because of your gender, take one step backward
- *Ethnicity*
  - If you are not white, step backwards one
  - If you feel that your primary ethnic identity is "American" take one step forward
  - If most of your teachers have been of a different race, step back one
  - If someone has ever refused to date you because of your ethnicity or the color of your skin, take one step backward
  - If you have ever felt like you were being watched while shopping because of your ethnicity, take one step back
- *Age*
  - If you have ever been denied access somewhere because you were told you were too young or old, take one step back

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### ➤ *Social Class*

- If your family had more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up, take one step forward
- If you ever skipped a meal or went away from a meal hungry because there wasn't enough money to buy food in your family, take one step backward
- If you were taken to art galleries, museums, or plays by your parents take one step forward
- If one of your parents was ever laid off, unemployed or underemployed not by choice, take one step backward
- If you primarily use public transportation to get where you need to go, take one step backward
- If your parent/s own their own house, take one step forward
- If you grew up in a single parent household, take one step backward
- If, prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday you took a vacation outside of your home, take one step forward.
- If your family is a member of a country club or a parents have a lot of friends in high ranking jobs, take one step forward
- If your family has more than one care, take one step forward
- If at least one of your parents did not graduate from high school, take one step backwards
- If at least one of your parents graduated from college, take one step forward

### ➤ *Social Settings*

- If you were ever embarrassed or ashamed of your clothes, your house or your family car when growing up, take one step backward
- If you have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or other professionals, take one step forward
- If you commonly see people of your race or ethnicity on television or in the movies in roles that you consider to be degrading, take one step backward
- If you commonly watch television shows with people who portray your race or ethnicity, take one step forward
- If you studied the history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in school, take one step forward
- If you were told by your parents that you were beautiful, smart and capable of achieving your dreams, take one step forward
- If your parent/s encourages you to attend college, take one step forward.
- If you or someone in your family has ever been a victim of violence, step back one
- If you were teased as a child in school and your self-esteem suffered, take one step backward
- If you have ever shared a goal about your future with a family member and were told it was impossible or unlikely for you to achieve this goal, take one step back

### ➤ *Religion*

- If you are Christian, step forward one

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- If you are not Christian, step backwards one
- *Size*
  - If you regularly do not have a problem finding your size in clothing stores, take one step forward
  - If you have ever been told you are too fat, take one step back
  - If you have ever been told you are too thin, take one step back
- *Ability*
  - If you are able-bodied with no physical or developmental challenges, step forward one
  - If you are able-bodied with physical or developmental challenges, step backward one
- *Language*
  - If English is your first language, step forward one
  - If you speak English without an accent, step forward one
  - If English is not the primary language spoken at home, step backward one
- *Sexuality*
  - If you ever felt more comfortable because you are heterosexual, take one step forward
  - If you ever had to justify your sexual orientation take one step backward

### POST ACTIVITY

#### **Post Activity Explanation: (take place on the stairs)**

Have students look around and observe their position.

Indicate the idea of power and how it is attached to the position that one holds and not to the individual person.

Indicate how the participants have no control of these “positions” or “power”

Mention the idea of opportunity being at the front. Who would have reached it first? (*we will have poster boards with pictures of dream homes, dream job, and dream car*).

#### **Discussion Questions: (take place in the classroom)**

- How did you feel during the activity?
- Did those feelings change as the activity progressed? At the end?
- What questions were most difficult/easy to step forward/backward?
- Letting go of the persons you were linked to, how did you feel?
- What did you all see from where you stood?
- Relevance of the “walk of life” in real life?
- Was there a moment during the activity, which you were hesitant to either step forward or back on?
- Was there a moment during the activity, which you step forward and felt proud?
- Was there a moment during the activity, which you step backwards and felt embarrassed?