

# Birthday Line Up

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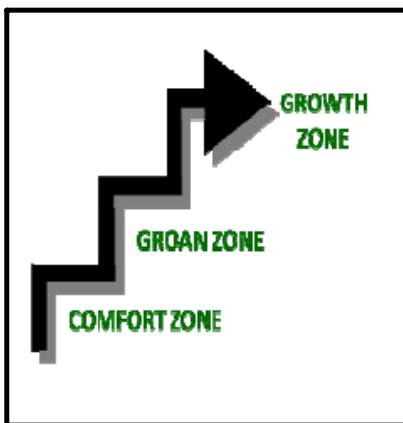
This is a great team building or ice breaker activity.

Inform that group that they can not talk from this point forward until you give them permission.

Have the group get in a line.

Tell them they must, in silence, get in order by height.

Once they successfully compete this challenge, you can give the following line up tasks: line up by birthday month, first name, # of years at camp, etc.



**Challenge with Choice** might be viewed as...

- moving from our “comfort zone” where we feel safe
- into our “groan zone” where the challenge is viewed as a threat on some level
- and finally into our “growth zone” where we are able to achieve success by integrating new knowledge and skills with what we already know how to do.

Your “growth zone” will become your “comfort zone” as we develop new skills and confidence with them.

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### Mine Field

Description of a Communication & Relationship-Building Activity

[Wilderdorn Store](#)  
 gear, books, kits

#### Mine Field

- A popular and engaging game involving communication and trust. The task is very flexible, works for groups of various types and sizes, and can be adapted to youth, adults, corporate, etc.
- Select an appropriate area. Go outside, if possible. Can be done inside, even in rooms with fixed furniture (which can become objects to be avoided).
- Distribute "mines" e.g., balls or other objects such as bowling pins, cones, foam noodles, etc.
- Establish a concentrating and caring tone for this activity. Trust exercises require a serious atmosphere to help develop a genuine sense of trust and safety.
- Participants operate in pairs. Consider how the pairs are formed - it's a chance to work on relationships. One person is blind-folded (or keeps eyes closed) and cannot talk (optional). The other person can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch the person.
- The challenge is for each blind-folded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the "mines", by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners.
- Allow participants a short period (e.g., 3 minutes) of planning time to decide on their communication commands, then begin the activity.
- Be wary of blindfolded people bumping into each other. The instructor(s) can float around the playing area to help prevent collisions.
- Decide on the penalty for hitting a "mine". It could be a restart (serious consequence) or time penalty or simply a count of hits, but without penalty.
- It can help participants if you suggest that they each develop a unique communication system. When participants swap roles, give participants some review and planning time to refine their communication method.
- Allow participants to swap over and even have several attempts, until a real, satisfied sense of skill and competence in being able to guide a partner through the "minefield" develops.
- The activity can be conducted one pair at a time (e.g., in a therapeutic situation), or with all pairs at once (creates a more demanding exercise due to the extra noise/confusion).
- Can be conducted as a competitive task - e.g., which pair is the quickest or has the fewest hits?
- The facilitator plays an important role in creating an optimal level of challenge, e.g., consider introducing more items or removing items if it seems too easy or too hard. Also consider coaching participants with communication methods (e.g., for younger students, hint that they could benefit from coming up with clear commands for stop, forward, left, right, etc.).
- Be cautious about blind-folding people - It can provoke trust and care issues and trigger post-traumatic reactions. Minimize this risk by sequencing Mine Field within a longer program involving other get-to-know-you and trust building activities before Mine Field.



#### Variations

- Minefield in a Circle: Blindfolded people start on the outside of a large rope circle, go into middle, get an item ("treasure", e.g., a small ball or bean bag), then return to the outside; continue to see who can get the most objects within a time period.
- Metaphorical Framing: Some set ups for minefield get very elaborate and metaphor-rich, e.g., hanging objects which metaphorically reflect the participants' background and/or issues. For example, items which represent drugs, peer pressure, talking with parents about the problem, etc. have been used in a family adventure therapy program (Gillis & Simpson, 1994).
- Participants can begin by trying to cross the field by themselves. In a second round, participants can then ask someone else to help them traverse the field by "talking" them through the field.
- To increase the difficulty, you can have other people calling out. The blindfolded person must concentrate on their partner's voice amidst all the other voices that could distract them from the task.

## Processing Ideas

- How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the start?
- How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the end?
- What is the difference between going alone and being guided by another?
- What ingredients are needed when trusting and working with someone else?
- What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure?
- What could your partner have done to help make you feel more safe/secure?
- What communication strategies worked best?
- For some more ideas, download [Minefield in a Circle - Debrief \(.doc\)](#)

#### Equipment

- [Mine Field Kit with Activity Guide & Facilitation notes](#)
  - View
    - Markers or lengths of rope to indicate the boundaries (e.g., 50 yard rectangular field)
    - Bowling pins or many soft objects, such as larger [throwables](#) - the more the better
    - Blind folds (can be optional)

#### Summary

- Objects are scattered in an indoor or outdoor place. In pairs, one person verbally guides his/her partner, whose eyes are closed or blindfolded, through the "minefield".

#### Time

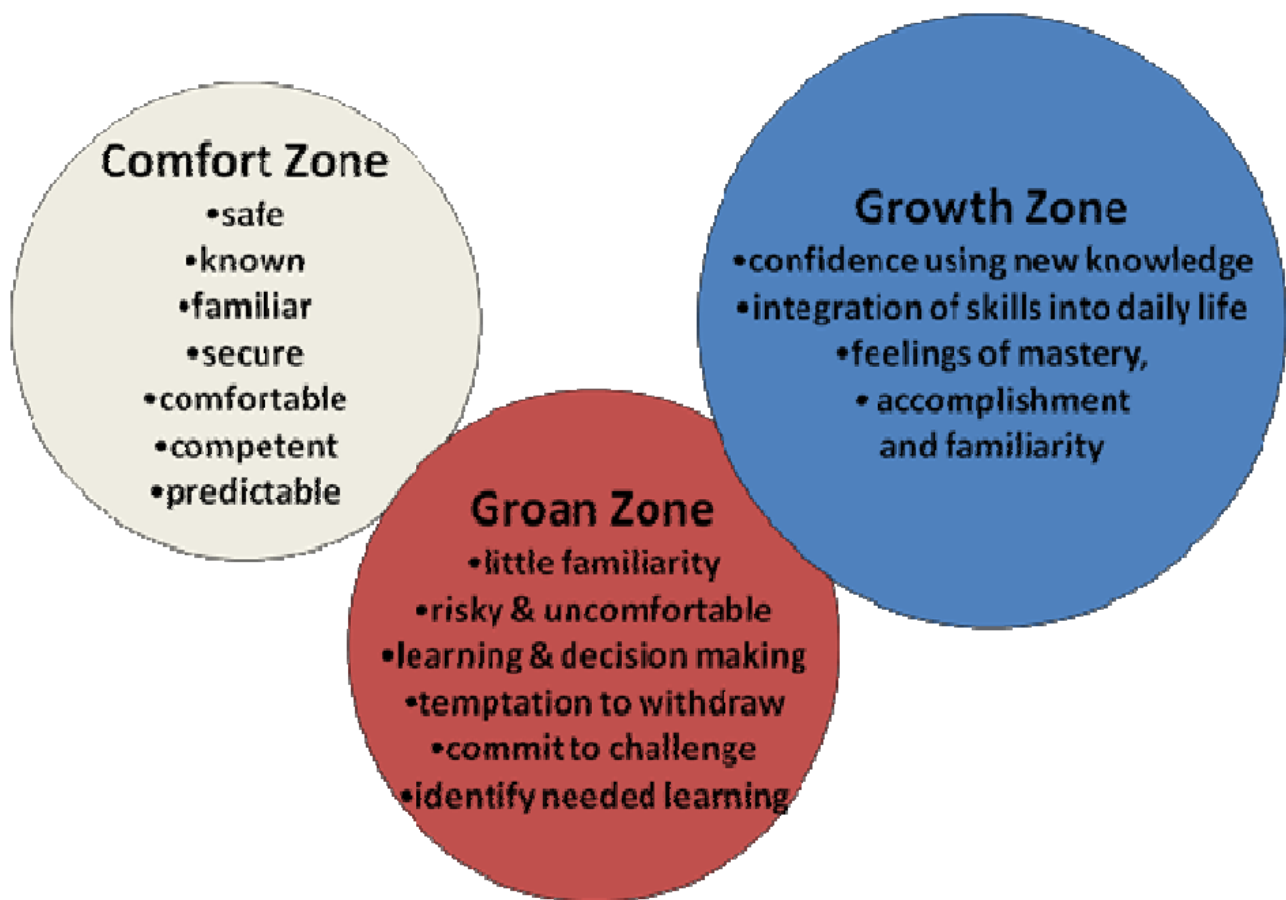
- ~20 minutes to set up
- ~5-10 minutes to brief
- ~5 minutes planning/discussion
- ~15-30 minutes activity
- ~5-30 minutes debrief

#### Group Size

- 2 to 30 is possible; works well with larger groups e.g., 16 to 24.

#### Links to other descriptions of Mine Field

- Karl Rohnke is usually credited with this activity (p.24 [Silver Bullets](#)).
- [Minefields](#) (useful detail and variations) (Rob Benson, First Steps Training & Development)
- [3D minefield teambuilding activity](#) (uses suspended rope indoors to represent "poisonous vines") (teambuildingUSA.com)
- [Working with substance abuse adolescents through Project Adventure](#) [Minefield is the last activity described before the conclusion] (Lee Gillis & Cindy Simpson, 1994)



# Building Trust

Physically and emotionally trusting one another is a prerequisite for many adventure activities. Without an operating level of trust within a group there is little chance of achieving group goals. The following activities are presented in a particular order as we feel it is essential to progressively develop trust just as we would any other type of skill.

## **Holding Hands...**

Purpose: To determine how safe the group feels with each other.

Procedure: Ask the group to:

- hold hands around a circle and lean back
- link elbows around a circle and lean back.

## Back to Back...

## Debriefing Questions



Purpose: To develop trust with a partner, and then extend this trust to a group.

Procedure: Starting out in pairs (progression to 4 then 8 then potentially the full group).

With a chosen partner, put your backs together while interlocking your arms at the elbows. When partners are ready, slowly begin to interlocking your arms at the elbows. When partners are ready, slowly begin to move your feet forward (away from your partner) until you are sitting down on the ground. Please note that you do not want to fall on to the ground, but instead that you want to walk out slowly until you are sitting with your back forward your partner on the ground. After sitting attempt to get back to the standing position by leaning against your partner's opposing force until you are standing in an upright position.