



Doors Closed Doors Open

 Mindset

 Exercise

 10-12 min

 Client

 No



Goal

The goal of this exercise is twofold. First, the exercise can make clients aware that the end of something is also the beginning of something new. The end of something positive is not only negative but can also create room for something positive again. The exercise can help clients become aware that this requires a shift in perspective from focusing on things that are not there anymore to seeing the potential of the future. Second, the exercise can help clients become aware of what currently prevents them from adopting a more optimistic outlook when doors close. This insight can be used to develop a more positive outlook for future “closing door events.”



Advice

- Talking about important things that no longer exist can be an emotional exercise for clients. Make sure to acknowledge the pain and the difficulty that they experience(d) because of the loss. If a practitioner moves on too fast to the positive side of a closing door, the client may feel misunderstood. Explain that the goal of the exercise is not to downplay the negative event but to create awareness of the positive potential that arises as a result of the closed door.



References

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. Vintage Books.



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Instructions

Think about a time in your life when someone rejected you, when you missed out on something important, or when a big plan collapsed. These would be points in your life when a door closed. Now think about what happened after: What doors opened after? What would have never happened if the first door didn't close? Write down these experiences in the spaces below (write as many experiences as possible that come to mind).

The door that closed on me was:

The new door that opened for me was:



Now, reflect upon your experiences and respond to the following questions:

- What led to the door closing? What helped you open the new door?
- How long did it take you to realize that a new door was open?
- Was it easy or hard for you to realize that a new door was open?
- What prevented you from seeing the new open door?
- What can you do next time to recognize the new opportunity sooner?
- What were the effects of the door closing on you? Did it last long?
- Did the experience bring anything positive?
- Which character strengths did you use in this exercise?
- What does a closed-door represent to you now?
- What did you learn from the door closing?
- Is there more room for growth from these types of experiences?
- Is there a closed door that you still wish to see open?

Now think of all the people who have helped you open doors in the past. What did they do to help you? What could you do to help others?