

Turning a Bad Experience to a Good One

Purpose

Use this exercise to motivate people and help them to view an experience differently. This exercise is fairly simple to execute and yet quite effective. The essence of the exercise is to show that even the most negative experiences can be quite educational and useful in the long run and that if one does not see the benefits, others might be able to see it and bring it to their attention. This exercise is also useful to practice improving emotional intelligence and empathizing with others.

Objective

Help your partner to see the positive aspects of a negative experience.

Setup

- Divide the delegates to pairs. If you have an odd number of people, use a group of 3.
- Ask each person to think of something bad that has happened to them recently. This should be something that is over and is *not* an on-going issue.
- Allow one minute for people to think of this.
- Ask groups to start the first round. One member in each group should describe the experience to the other member in their group.
- The other member should then tell the same story, though this time highlighting all the positive aspects of the experience.
- Both partners should then work together to explore and summarize all the good points related to the experience.
- Allocate 15 minutes for this round.
- Swap roles and ask the groups to repeat the exercise so the other member can share their experience and explore positive outcomes.
- After another 15 minutes for the second round, bring everyone back together.
- Follow with a discussion to ask about their experience. Note that during discussions no one should be forced to share their bad experience with the whole class. Many people feel much more comfortable to share their experience with just one person but may find it very uncomfortable or even embarrassing when they have to share it with the whole class. Your aim

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during discussions is to highlight the incredible power of positive thinking versus negative thinking.

Timing

Explaining the Exercise: 2 minutes

Activity: 15 min per round * 2 = 30 minutes

Group Feedback: 10 minutes

Discussion

What do you think of the experience you have gone through now that you have considered it from a positive angle? What does this say about negative experiences in life? Were you surprised about any positive element that your partner identified that you have not considered before? What do you plan to do in the future now that you have seen the power of positive thinking and self-analysis?

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