WORKSHEET 112 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

My best possible self

Imagining a future in which things have gone well

AIM

Write about a realistic future in which important goals have been achieved, to strengthen optimism, clarify goals and connect them with values.

WHO IT IS FOR

Lack of prospects, indecision, transition (career change, life abroad, end of therapy).

DURATION

15-20 min of writing, perhaps on several days in a row

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Invite the person to imagine their life in a few years' time, if things had gone well thanks to their efforts.
2. Write freely, area by area (relationships, work, health, leisure).
3. Connect what was written with their values and with a first step.
4. Go back over the obstacles and emotions (some people feel a painful gap).

POINTS TO WATCH

> For a very depressed person, the gap between the imagined future and the present can hurt: offer a short, realistic version focused on one area. Positive psychology complements support, it doesn't replace it. With marked depression, these exercises can increase the sense of failure if offered too early or as an obligation to "be fine": adapt the pace and first validate the difficult emotions.

REFERENCES

King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 27(7), 798-807.

Sheldon, K. M. & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. The Journal of Positive Psychology, 1(2), 73-82.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 112 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My best possible self

Imagine your life in a few years' time, if things have gone well thanks to what you have done. It isn't about dreaming the impossible, but about imagining a realistic, desirable future and seeing which first step brings you closer.

1. Imagine yourself in ___ years' time, when things have gone well.
2. Write, area by area, what your life is like.
3. Reread it: what values lie behind it?
4. A first step, this week: _____

Area	My best possible self	The value behind it

What I felt while writing, and what it teaches me:

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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