

My Favorite Things

Faciliator Instructions

As described here this exercise is best done over the course of a full day. However, with consideration of the group's needs it can be adapted to less time.

Step 1 Once the group gets settled in their seats and you've taken care of housekeeping items give each participant a blank My Favorite Things sheet. Tell them to take a few minutes to write down the five most important things in their life. You may get questions like "Do you mean people or things or values?" Answer that this is up to them – the task is to list five things that are very important to them. Only allow about 5-8 minutes for people to complete their lists.

Thing #1 As soon as they complete the list go around the room and ask them to give up one thing. Try to move around the group quickly or have a helper. You purposely don't want them to have too much time to think about the 'loss'. Once you've collected everyone's first thing ask them to write down what it felt like to give up something so important without any notice or time to consider the options.

Don't dwell on exercise – move on to your program. The power of the exercise is in interjecting it unexpectedly throughout the day. However, as the facilitator you should pre-determine the times for each step and build into your program.

Thing #2 At a time you've pre-determined, tell the group that its time to give up another of their favorite things. This time you are going to let them have a few minutes to contemplate the choices. Remind them of what it felt like not to have time to consider this earlier so they can begin to appreciate the luxury of time. As before, ask them to write down their feelings about this loss on their sheet.

Thing #3 Again, at a time you have pre-determined let the group know its time to give up another thing. This time however, they have to give it to the person on their right, who is now responsible for its care. They are not allowed to give the person any information about the favorite thing they are handing to them – they just have to give it up and the other person just has to take it. Ask them to write down what it feels like to lose another thing and what it feels like to be responsible for someone else's favorite thing. Move on with your program.

CAReTOGRAPHY Card Each participant is given a CAReTOGRAPHY Card. I usually try to have the card 'hidden' somewhere in their handout packets or inserted in their name tag. This is a powerful part of the exercise. As people read their cards there will be a lot of reactions and comments. Go around the room have a number of people read their cards. Try to have at least half the group's cards read aloud. Now ask the group to write down their feelings about what this new dimension means to them – especially given their other favorite things and the thing they've been given from their neighbor. They each should have two of their own favorite things left, one of someone else's and a CAReTOGRAPHY Card.

Thing #4 At some point in the afternoon take one more favorite thing. They are not allowed to give up their neighbor's favorite thing or their CAReTOGRAPHY Card.

End of Day Reflection As you wind down the day allow time for the group to reflect on the program and ask them to talk about the exercise. Each person will have little left of what was most important to them and they will have added responsibility for another's. Most importantly they are also now challenged by the information on their CAReTOGRAPHY Card.

My Favorite Things

List five things that are *really* important to you and that you would not want to lose or give up.

My Favorite Things

Describe your feelings

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Comments

My Favorite Things

CAReTOGRAPHY CARDS

Here's a few cards that I've used in the past:

- Time to give up the keys to your car
- Your least favorite relative has just moved in to help care for you
- You need to hire private help to help with your care
- Your child takes over your checkbook
- You need help applying for MASS Health
- No one in the doctor's office speaks your native language
- You need to purchase Depends for the first time
- The doctor tells your child that you can't be alone anymore – but she didn't talk to you about it
- You are moving from your home of 40 years to an assisted living apartment
- You can't work anymore because your treatments take up too much time
- Time to give up your cane for a walker
- You are short of breath most of the time
- Your pain is an 8 out of 10 with 10 being the worst pain ever
- Its 3am...its your first night in a nursing home
- You're getting a feeding tube placed today
- You can't bathe yourself anymore
- You can't care for your dog anymore and you have to give him away
- You need to get permit for handicap parking
- You work full time, have two kids and now need to be a caregiver for your mother
- Your medicines are too expensive so you decide to stop taking them