


 Savoring Exercise 5-10 min Client Yes

## Positive Reminiscence

Savoring is the ability to take time to enjoy the small pleasure in life like a cup of coffee, a beautiful sky, or a nice conversation. In this fast-paced world, the act of savoring is often something that people simply disregard as tedious or a waste of time. Research shows that people who take the time to savor the good experiences in their lives, to relive the good feelings associated with those events, enjoy more positivity in their lives (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). In this exercise, clients are invited to relive and enjoy a positive event from the past.

### Goal

There are two primary goals of this exercise:

1. To help the client develop the skill of savoring
2. To build positive emotions



### Advice

- Savoring is intended to be experiential, not analytical. When recalling a positive experience, the goal is to allow oneself to relive that moment. Research shows that by analyzing the experience when savoring its memory, positivity is reduced (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). It is, therefore, important that the client does not savor in a cognitive, analytical mode.
- Savoring may or may not come naturally to your client. This exercise may simply require that you ask your client to recall a positive experience from his/her past and try to relive it. Some clients, on the other hand, may have a really difficult time doing so. In these cases, you may ask your client to consider physical memorabilia (i.e., picture, video, etc.) to help trigger savoring a memory in detail.



### References

- Bryant, F., & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A New Model of Positive Experience*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sousa, L., & Dickerhoof, R. (2006). The coast and benefits of writing, talking, and thinking about life's triumphs and defeats. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 692-708.



# Positive Reminiscence

## Instructions

### Step 1: Spend some time thinking about a positive event from your past

This event could have brought you great joy, such as a wedding, graduation, or birthday celebration. Or, perhaps, the event could have created a real sense of accomplishment, such as finishing a race, completing an assignment, or receiving a job offer.

It may be helpful to look at a picture or something else that serves as a physical reminder of the event (i.e., award, degree, or correspondence of some sort).

### Step 2: Savor

Once you have pictured the event in your mind, take a few minutes to relive a moment from that event. If you slip out of this act of savoring, look at your physical prop and try to get yourself back to that moment. Bring your focus to the details of the event, to the positive feelings that you were experiencing at that time.

### Step 3: Relive the experience

It is important to avoid trying to analyze this process. Instead of dissecting the experience in your head, simply focus on reliving the experience. The act of savoring is intended to increase both the duration and intensity of positive emotions, not to figure out why or how they happen.