

BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES



Building Better Beginnings

Alexander Graham Bell is attributed with the anecdote: “When one door closes, another opens.”



Parenthood can feel like a series of door closures and openers – a journey of endings and new beginnings.

For example, baby’s arrival may close the door on a carefree lifestyle, but it also opens the door to all sorts of potential for joy and discovery.



Sending a child to school for the first time may close the door on a special era for parent and child. At the same time, it opens the door to new learning,

adventure, and friendship for the youngster. For the parent, it holds opportunity for developing other interests, finding a new job, or going back to school.

Staring too long at the closed doors we leave behind can distract us from seeing the open doors that lie ahead of us.

The rest of Graham Bell’s declaration is as follows:

“... but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.”

It can be especially difficult to see an open door when an ending is not expected, or if a door is closed when we are not prepared for it, such as the end of a relationship, a job, or a housing situation.

A positive outlook is a great tool for seeing open doors



ahead even when a door gets unexpectedly closed behind. Parents can cultivate a positive outlook by modeling one for their children using some of the following ideas:

Get Grateful:

If you are challenged to think of what is good in your life, ask someone else to help you create a list.



“See” Your Strengths:

Post your skills and good qualities in a place you look daily. Check out the list on the next page for help getting started.

Give Yourself a Break:

Everyone makes mistakes, and every day holds potential for new beginnings. If you need help overcoming patterns of negative thinking or taking the first step to address an addiction, contact:

Otsego County Mental Health Clinic: 607.433.2343
Addiction Recovery Services: 607.431.1030

Foster Forgiveness:

Apologize to others when you make a mistake, and offer forgiveness when they do. Make it safe for children to say “I’m sorry” without judgment.

IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS

Which of the following skills sets, strengths, and positive attributes do you possess that can be used to shape a positive outlook?



Skills:

Organized	Innovator
Negotiator	Dancer
Communicator	Problem-Solver
Decision-Maker	Athletic
Builder	Artistic
Remodeler	Knowledgeable
Mender	Advocate
Creator	Listener
Scheduler	Giver
Musical	Navigator



Character Strengths:

Persistent	Patient
Honest	Optimistic
Humble	Happy
Kind	Thrifty
Loving	Frugal
Hospitable	Wise
Assertive	Experienced
Respectful	Motivated
Cooperative	Thoughtful
Reliable	Considerate

Personality Traits:

Charming	Flexible
Friendly	Gracious
Confident	Achiever
Persuasive	Sensitive
Appealing	Open-Minded
Generous	Charismatic
Enlightening	Vivacious
Cheerful	
Adaptable	
Adventurous	
Commanding	
Admirable	
Free-Thinking	