

One door closes as  
another door opens



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

One Door Closes, as another Door Opens Growing up in San Diego, California in a full blooded Portuguese family, complete with the grandparents from the old country and the western more contemporary parents was a very colorful upbringing. My grandmother and mother had many old wives sayings and tales that were the foundation of the way they reacted to life. Although raised in the fear and guilt that is known as the Catholic religion, my mother always reminded me that even when something bad happens, something good will come of it. Now in my Christian life, our Pastor Aaron refers to it as "When one door closes, another will open in its place".

In this reflective paper I will describe how my life experiences, some which were tragic and traumatic and closed that chapter in my life, many times a new door opened, usually with a more positive outcome. Child molestation, becoming a widow at 26 years of age, and alcoholism are just a few of the obstacles I endured in my life. I will explain how some wonderful experiences evolved from these obstacles. I was raised in family of four daughters. I was the second youngest and considered the middle child. My two older sisters were seven and eight years older than me.

My mother use to say it was like raising two daughters, two at a time. By the time my older sisters married and moved out, my younger sister and I were just starting adolescence. My siblings and I cohabitated in one small bedroom with two sets of bunk beds in our small two bedroom home. My father was a hard working painting contractor and my mother was a stay at home housewife. My father drank everyday, and my mother spent her days meticulously cleaning our home. My childhood memories were full of large

family get together with aunts and uncles and all the cousins, grandparents and other Portuguese friends.

The women would cook cultural cuisine and the men would play cards, gather around and play musical instruments like the guitar, mandolin, and drums. My father played the spoons and bones that were carved from ivory. My father was the comedian, center of attention, and the guy who would put the lamp shade on his head after a few beers. I have shared that personality trait with him since I was very young. My sisters and I would sing and dance for the large gatherings. As a young girl, maybe eight years old, I remember reading a National Geographic Magazine article about Oregon.

I told my mother I was going to live there some day. The tall trees and the mountains of green versus the San Diego hills of houses piled on top of one another, was very pleasing to me. Even at that young age, Holland's personality theory of career satisfaction (Witt and Mossler, 2010) was apparent. My need for self expression came out through drawing pictures of those beautiful mountains and sharing them with my friends and family. I was already leaning towards the artistic and social aspects of his theory. When I was around 11 years old a neighbor who was in his forties sexually molested me.

His wife could not have children, so they would invite me and my younger sister for sleep overs. She had no clue the molestation was happening. She was always so sweet and caring to us. I was so terrified to go over there any more that I started making excuses. Having to give up my interaction with her is my first memory of a door closing. I started to become rebellious as

the anger and resentment ate me up inside. Alcohol became my escape at the early age of 12. I would sneak vodka from my dad's liquor cabinet, and take it to middle school to put in my lemonade at lunch. My world was closing in all around me.

It was in 8th grade that I had an art class that opened another door to me. I would engulf myself in that class everyday and work hard on projects at home. I had found a release for the anger, and a way to channel it into something positive. I was modifying my behavior without realizing it. Art became a prevalent part of my life. I would write poetry which was my form of a journal and I would draw for hours on end. It was in high school where I met my first love. I had run away from home after an argument with my parents and stayed at a friend of my younger sister's house.

His parents were understanding and let me stay there for a week. My parents knew where I was at, and they probably welcomed the break from me, as much as I did from them. I fell head over heels for him. The closeness and love was so wonderful. I had not been that happy since I was a little girl. We stayed together for two wonderful years. I began to trust again which opened another door that was once closed. I graduated high school with a 4.0 GPA and wanted to join the military. That dream would change when I met my first husband. Mac and I met at a co op softball game that some friends took me too.

He was muscular and athletic. We flirted a bit. I started to have those warm fuzzy feelings again. We moved in together after dating for 6 months. My parents were furious, but I was an adult. He had been to Oregon for a summer and I was fascinated with his stories. That same year we loaded up

the Volkswagen bug and headed to Oregon. Mac wanted to be a fisherman so we moved to Newport. We gave birth to our daughter April in 1976 and my son Smokey in 1977. Life was hard but we managed to get by. In 1980, Mac had decided he wanted to go to Alaska for a season because the money was much better up there.

He left in May of that year, came back to see me and the kids for my birthday in June and headed back up in August. That was the last I saw of him. He drowned on Labor Day weekend, 2 days before April was to start Kindergarten. Smokey was 4 years old. Needless to say, the children and I were devastated. How were we going to live and how on earth was a 26 year old mother of two going to survive? I moved inland to the Willamette Valley and started our new life. It was then that my career in the food and beverage industry came into play.

I had worked a few waitress and bartending jobs part time, but now I had to make all the income to support us. Mac hadn't paid much into Social Security so that check was more like a stipend than enough to live on. I worked and worked sometimes 2 and even 3 jobs to get by. I finally got a great fulltime, good paying job at the Red Lion Inn as a pantry chef. This door helped to strengthen my artistic and social characteristics even more. Creating beautiful food was an art form and the plate was my canvas. All the colors and placement of the final product was very satisfying.

Having a network of co workers really enhanced my social life. I was moving on and becoming the person I wanted to be..... happy. My children were now in high school and growing into their own wonderful beings. I also worked 2 nights a week as the Karaoke hostess at the Inn. That job was a great outlet

for my self expression and social life. I gained the courage to audition for a local band and became the lead singer and keyboard player. Another door opens. Both of my children graduated and moved on. My daughter went on to Oregon State University and my son went to work installing home and auto audio systems.

I moved back to the coast because my younger sister, who had since moved to Oregon, was going through a rough time. Her husband was losing his battle with cancer. He died later that year. It was while living in Waldport, Oregon, that I posted an ad in the matchmaker section of a local newspaper. I was lonely. It was there that I met my last husband. We dated for a while and life seemed pretty good. We ended moving in together where he owned a home in Lebanon. So back to the Valley I went. I obtained a job as a teacher's aide working in the title one program with elementary school students.

I also coached the high school cheerleading squad. Life was going well...or so I thought. My husband became very controlling and pressured me into getting a better paying job. He had a great job and money was never an issue, but he was extremely materialistic. He convinced me that I should become a Realtor, so I took the course, received my license and sold real estate for 8 years. The verbal and now physical abuse had escalated. I finally packed my bags, filed for divorce and moved out. That door slammed shut! By now I had become pretty numb to bad things happening in my life which I had little or no control over.

Once again alcohol reared its ugly head in my life. This went on for about a year when I finally decided I had had enough. I started writing my thoughts

again and decided I am going back to school. I was 52 years old. I enrolled at a local community college and focused on academics for the first term. Then I signed up for a couple of art classes and that became the door that opened up my life so dramatically and positively. My creative juices were flowing again. I had my self-confidence back, and I was expressing my artistic and social self again.

I entered several of my works in art shows and won a few awards. I felt like I was back on top. I believe that even though I had some terrible life experiences that I will never forget, they all opened up doors for me to grow and become the woman I knew God had created me to be. “ Divorce often leaves emotional scars that last a long time. Both men and women usually experience emotional challenges after divorce, including loneliness, lower self-esteem, worry about the future, difficulty forming new relationships, fear of failure in new relationships and depression (Amato, 2006).

I can honestly say I have experienced all the above mentioned, but I am learning to cope effectively and the impact has lessened for me. My goals for my future are emphasizing the importance of an education to my grandchildren, accomplishing and receiving my Bachelors in Fine Arts with the focus on Early Childhood Education and using what I have learned to teach art to children and to volunteer teaching art to senior citizens.

I feel with my artistic and social personality characteristics as explained by Holland’s theory, (Witt and Mossler, 2010) that I will have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children. Art and the expression of art have saved my life...numerous times. Another door that has opened for me is very exciting. I have reconnected with my first love from high school on face

book. He still lives in California and we talk and text everyday on the phone. He will be visiting me soon. We have rekindled our love and I truly believe that we are going to be together again.

With all I have learned from my past relationships I feel this will be the best ever! “ Relationship history is not your relationship future (David Niven Ph. D). Your Relationship future is not limited by your experiences of the past or by your disappointments of the past. You can learn from your experiences and avoid mistakes of the past. ” In conclusion, I have learned a great deal about myself through my life experiences. I know that I am a strong, resilient individual.

I have had numerous negative circumstances happen in my life, several of which were beyond my control. I did manage to survive them all, and grew from this multitude of trials and tribulations. Wisdom has prevailed and blessed my soul and heart. I embrace the adventures that lie ahead. “ When one door of happiness closes, another opens: (Helen Keller); but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us. ” I have learned to move forward through the open door and to welcome all that it has to offer.