

29 April 2022 - Independent Advocacy S.A.

Conversations that Create Hope: An Introduction to the Solution Focused Approach

David Hains

Left Turn Solutions

President, Australasian Solution Focused Association

Chairperson, Journal of Solution Focused Practices

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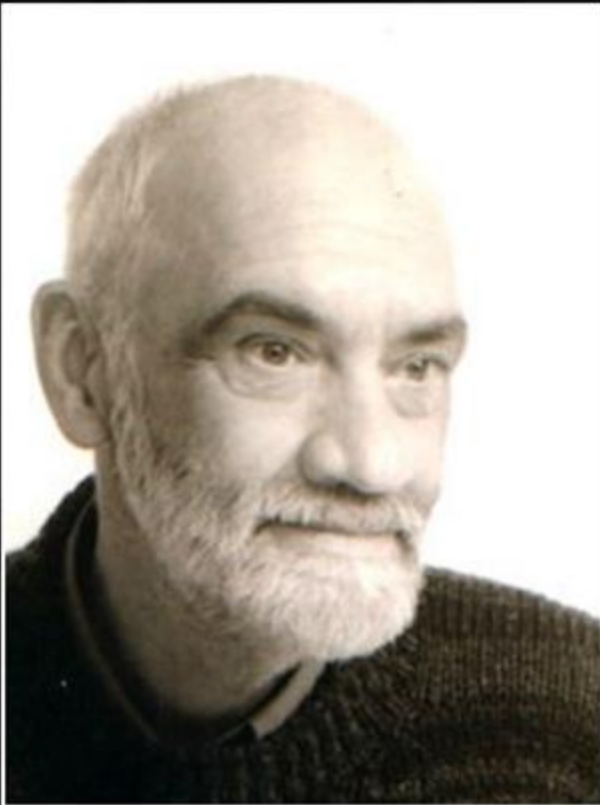
Conversations that Create Hope: (and why talking about your problems is bad for you)

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Where you stand determines what you see and what you do not see; it determines also the angle you see it from; a change in where you stand changes everything.

— *Steve de Shazer* —

“The answers you get depend
upon the questions you ask.”

Thomas Kuhn

Feedback from recent attendee #1

I started slowly asking the question "what are your hopes for this session?" And Wow - that was very powerful for a couple of people. And focusing on strengths and looking at what will make a difference in the future was very emotional for one client. I found through Solution focus the conversations flowed and information I had never received in past conversations came out - past conversations were never this productive.

Feedback from recent attendee #2

Hey David used the scaling for the first time today after watching videos.

I loved what came out of it -my client who I have seen twice now was able to list her strategies without any prompting from me! I ... found it nice and fairly easy to implement.

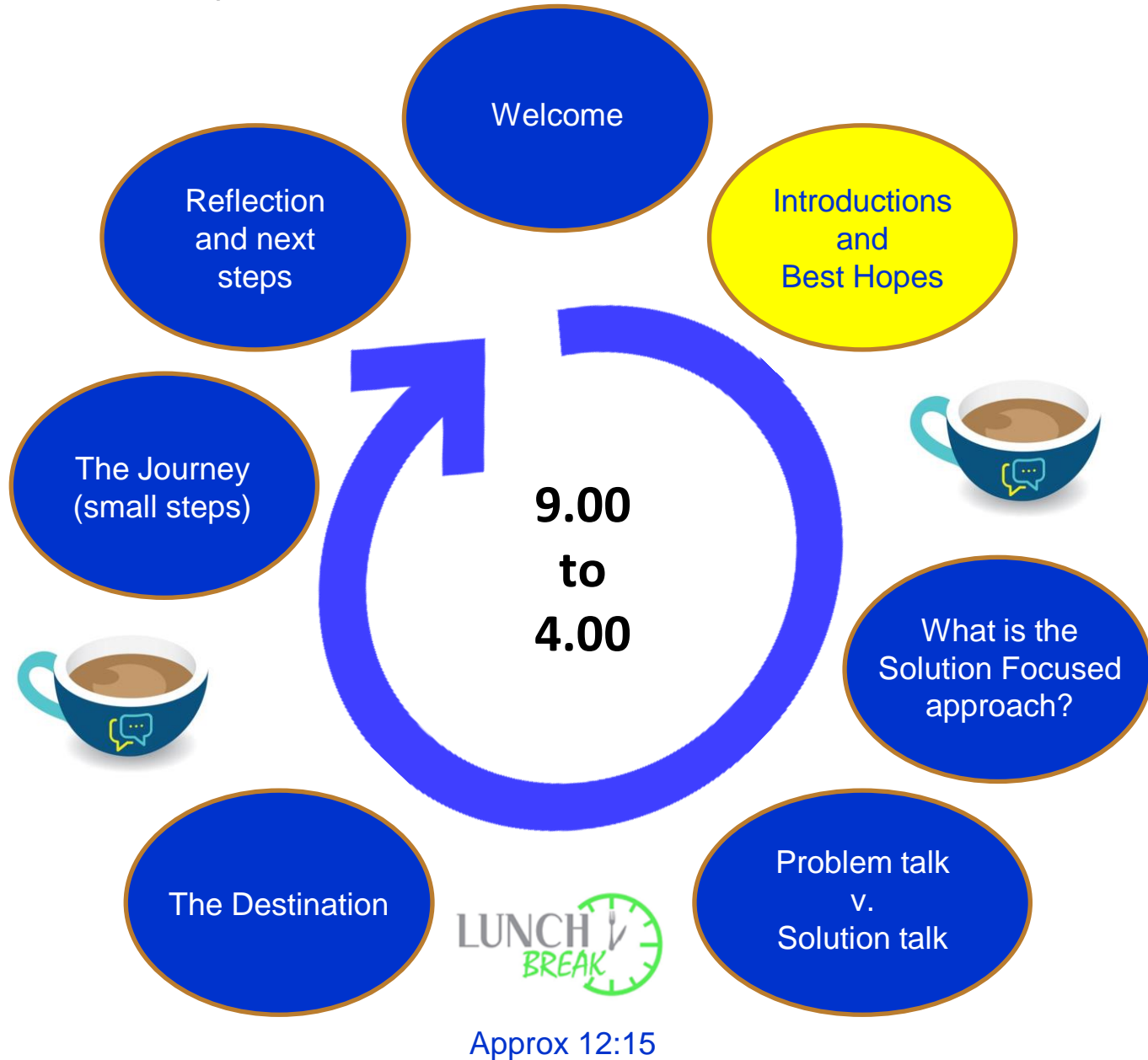
I also noticed the conversation shift to a more positive, current content instead of her talking about how bad she felt last week.

I think I am on to something! ha ha, thank you.

Today's Workshop

- Interactive
- No note taking required (I will supply notes)
- Introduction level using the SF approach in general communication
- I run 3 core workshops:
 - SF1 – Introduction to the Solution Focused Approach*
 - SF2 – Solution Focused Consolidation
 - SF3 – Advanced Solution Focus
- Any housekeeping?

The plan for today ...








PLAYLIST

Solution Focus Playlist

Jonas Wells • 317 likes • 1,022 songs, over 24 hr



#	TITLE	ALBUM	DATE ADDED	
1	 I'm on My Way The Proclaimers	The Best of the Proclaimers	Apr 22, 2015	3:45
2	 The Bare Necessities - From "The Jungle Book"/Sou... Phil Harris, Bruce Reitherman	Disney Summer Songs	Apr 22, 2015	4:49
3	 Don't Know Much (with Aaron Neville) Linda Ronstadt, Aaron Neville	Rhino Hi-Five: Valentine's Day Songs 2	Apr 20, 2015	3:31



Perfect Day
Lou Reed



0:03

3:45

- #825: "Watching the wheels" John Lennon
- #930: "Miracle Man" Elvis Costello and the Attractions
- #937: "You make my dreams come true" Hall and Oates
- #938: "More than a feeling" Boston
- #939: "Got my mind set on you" George Harrison
- #940: "Listen to the music" The Doobie Brothers

“People asking questions, lost in confusion
Well, I tell them there's no problem, only solutions
Well, they shake their heads, and they look at me,
as if I've lost my mind
I tell them there's no hurry, I'm just sitting here doing time”

John Lennon - Watching the Wheels

mental health nurse

flinders mental *health*

ed mental HEALTH team

inner south mental *HEALTH* service
mental *health* act
southern mental *health*

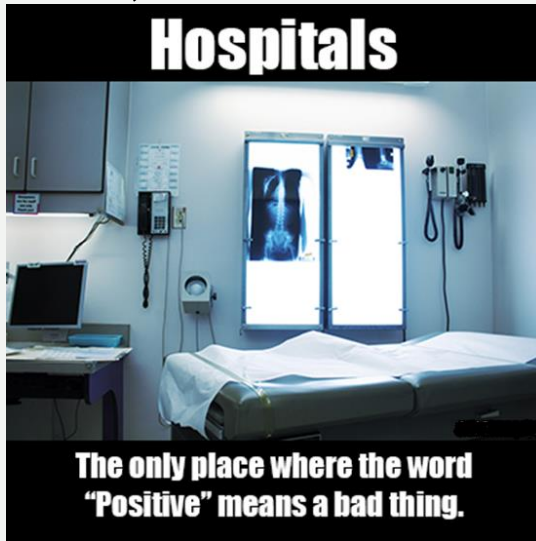
SA *HEALTH* service

member australian college mental **health** nurses

LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS

So, what did I spend my whole day talking about?

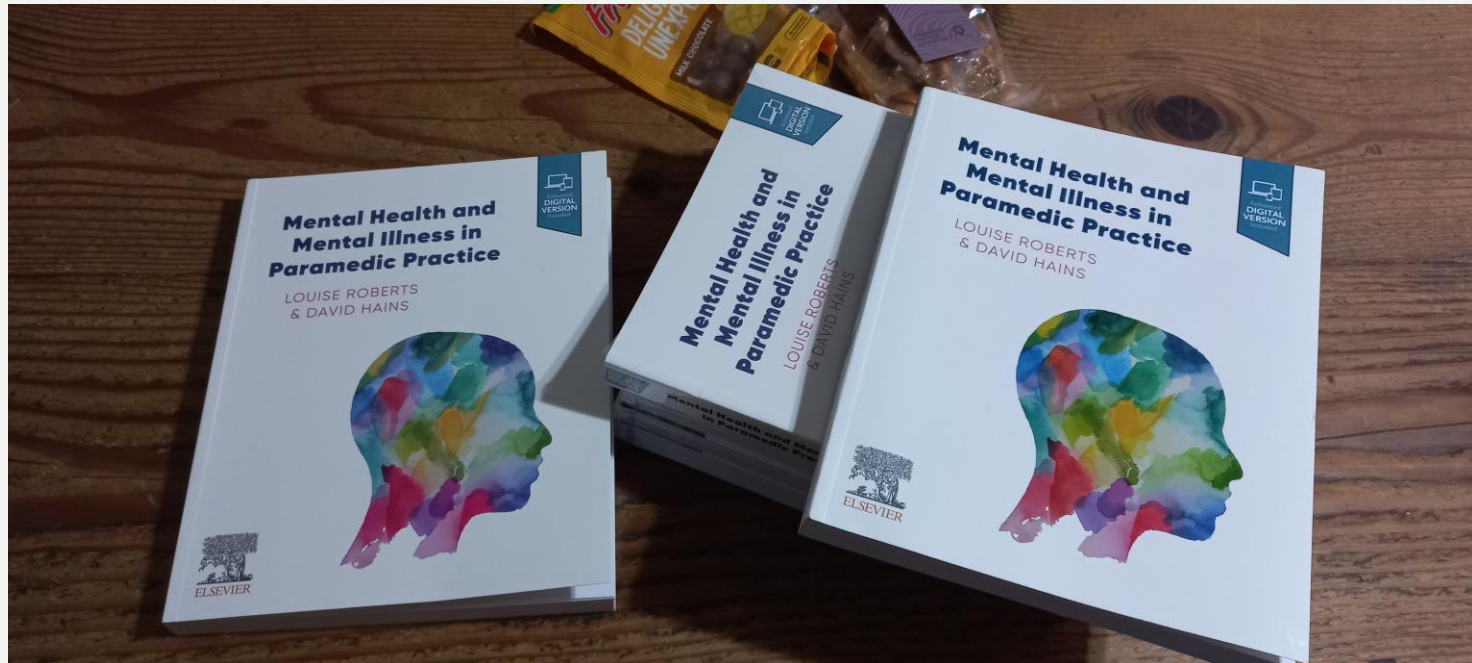
Mental illness



LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS



The Book

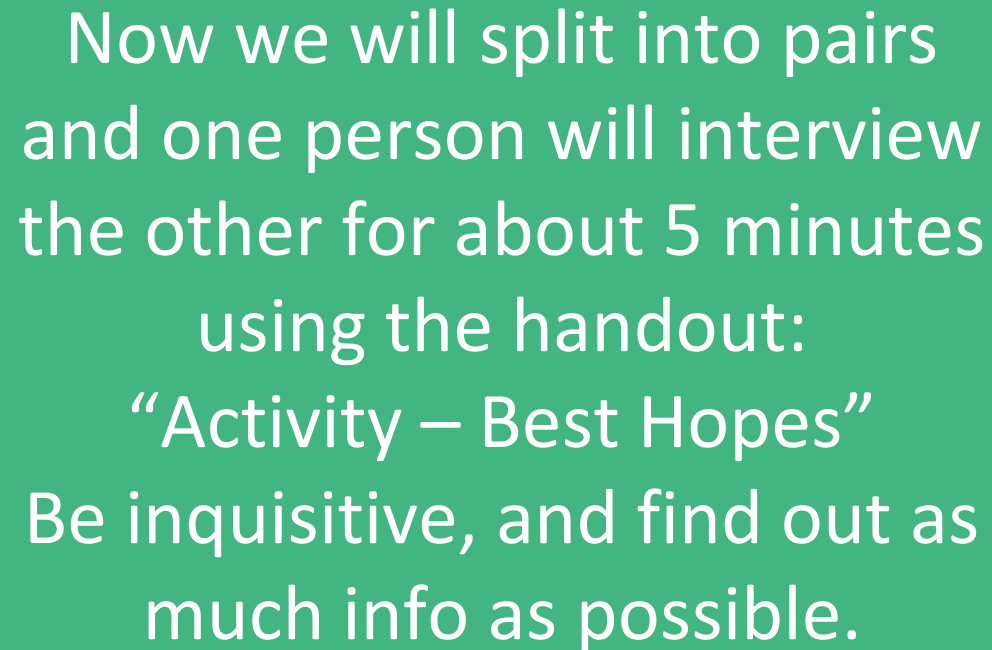


<https://www.elsevier.com/books/mental-health-and-mental-illness-in-paramedic-practice/roberts/978-0-7295-4318-7>



Problem talk creates problems,
solution talk creates solutions

Steve de Shazer



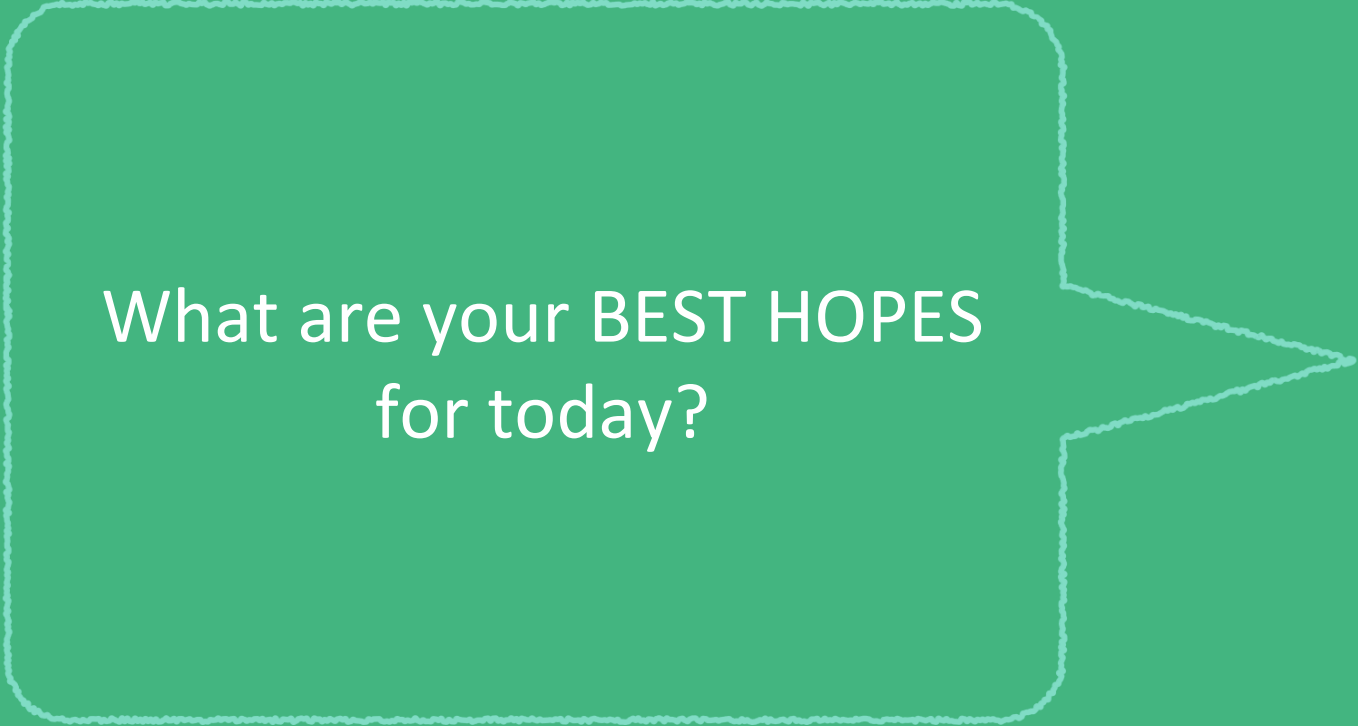
Now we will split into pairs
and one person will interview
the other for about 5 minutes
using the handout:
“Activity – Best Hopes”
Be inquisitive, and find out as
much info as possible.

Activity – Best Hopes

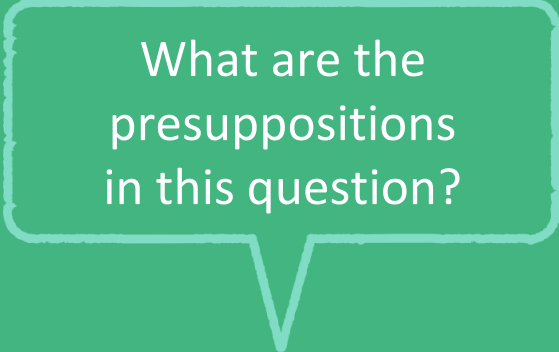
What are your best hopes for today? i.e. ask why your partner came today, and what they hope will happen her today. (For this 1st part we are only talking about what happens today)

Ask your partner to imagine that they get all of the things they wanted today and more – what difference would that make to them in the future? Eg “So if today turns out to be really good, and you get ..., how will that be a good thing for you?” Explore where this new skill/knowledge/thing will start to make a difference in the future.

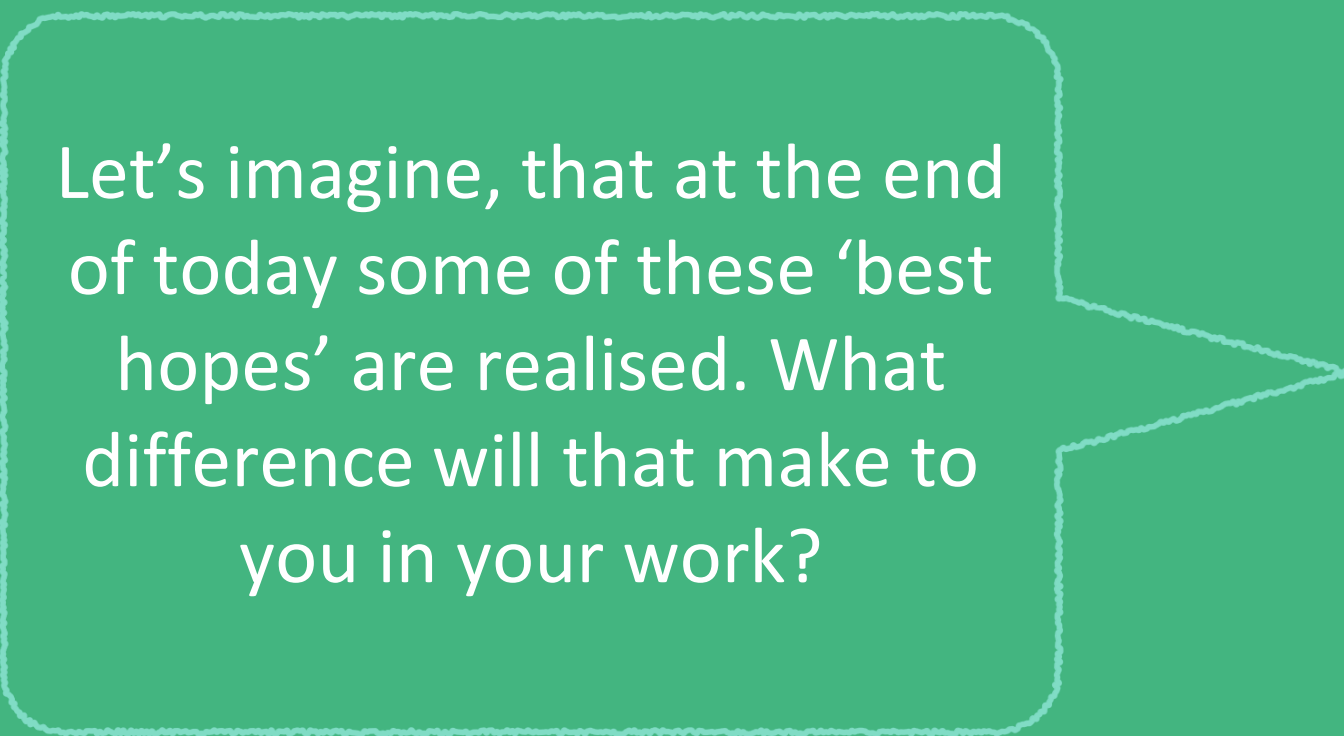
Who would be the first to notice this ‘thing’ happening/developing/changing? (they may talk about their partner, clients, colleagues etc?)
What will this person/people notice as things happen/change as a result of coming here? i.e. these ‘things’ starting to develop and show themselves in the future?



What are your BEST HOPES
for today?

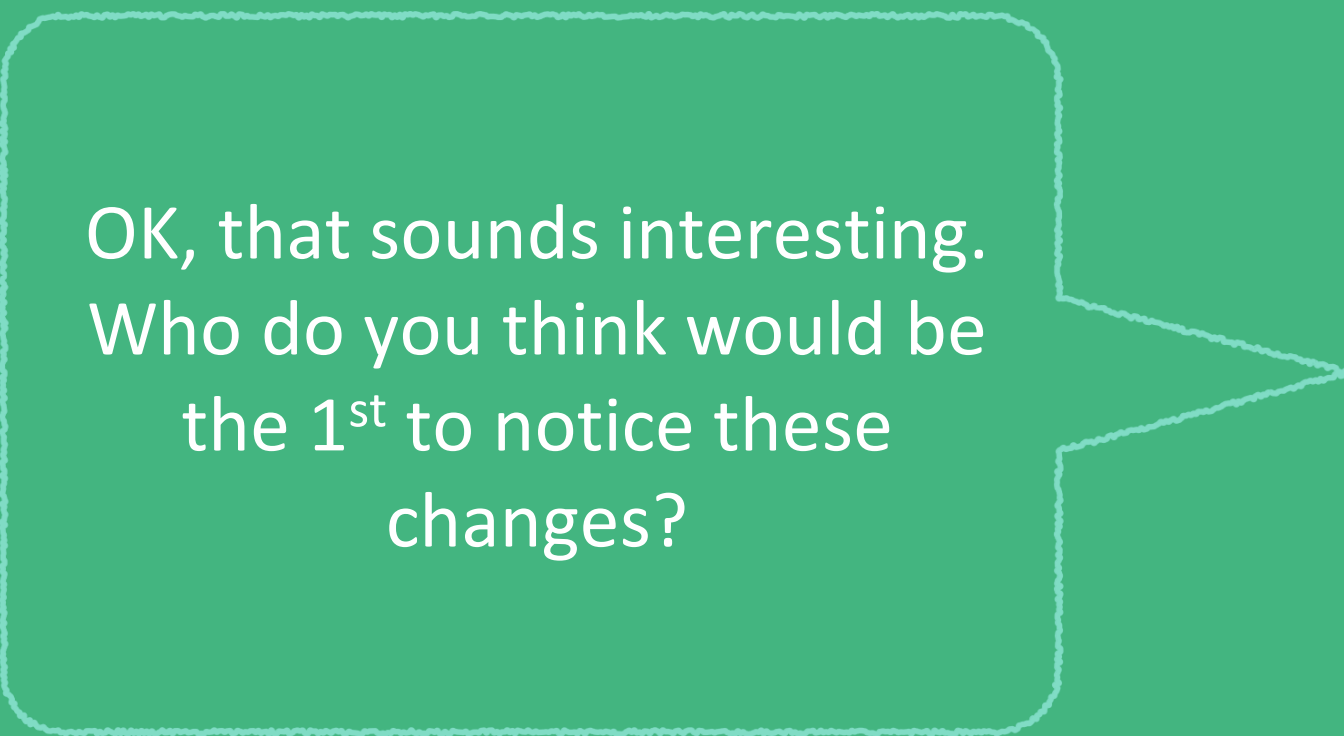


What are the
presuppositions
in this question?



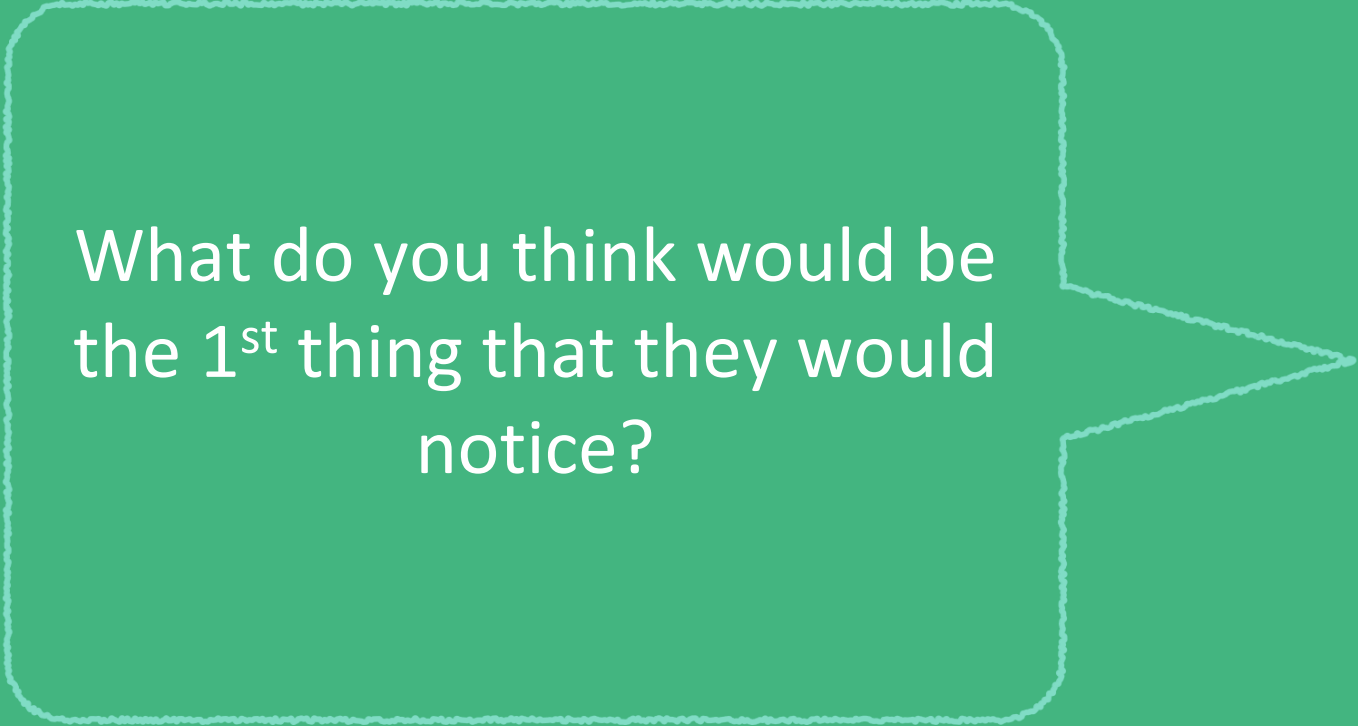
Let's imagine, that at the end of today some of these 'best hopes' are realised. What difference will that make to you in your work?





OK, that sounds interesting.
Who do you think would be
the 1st to notice these
changes?

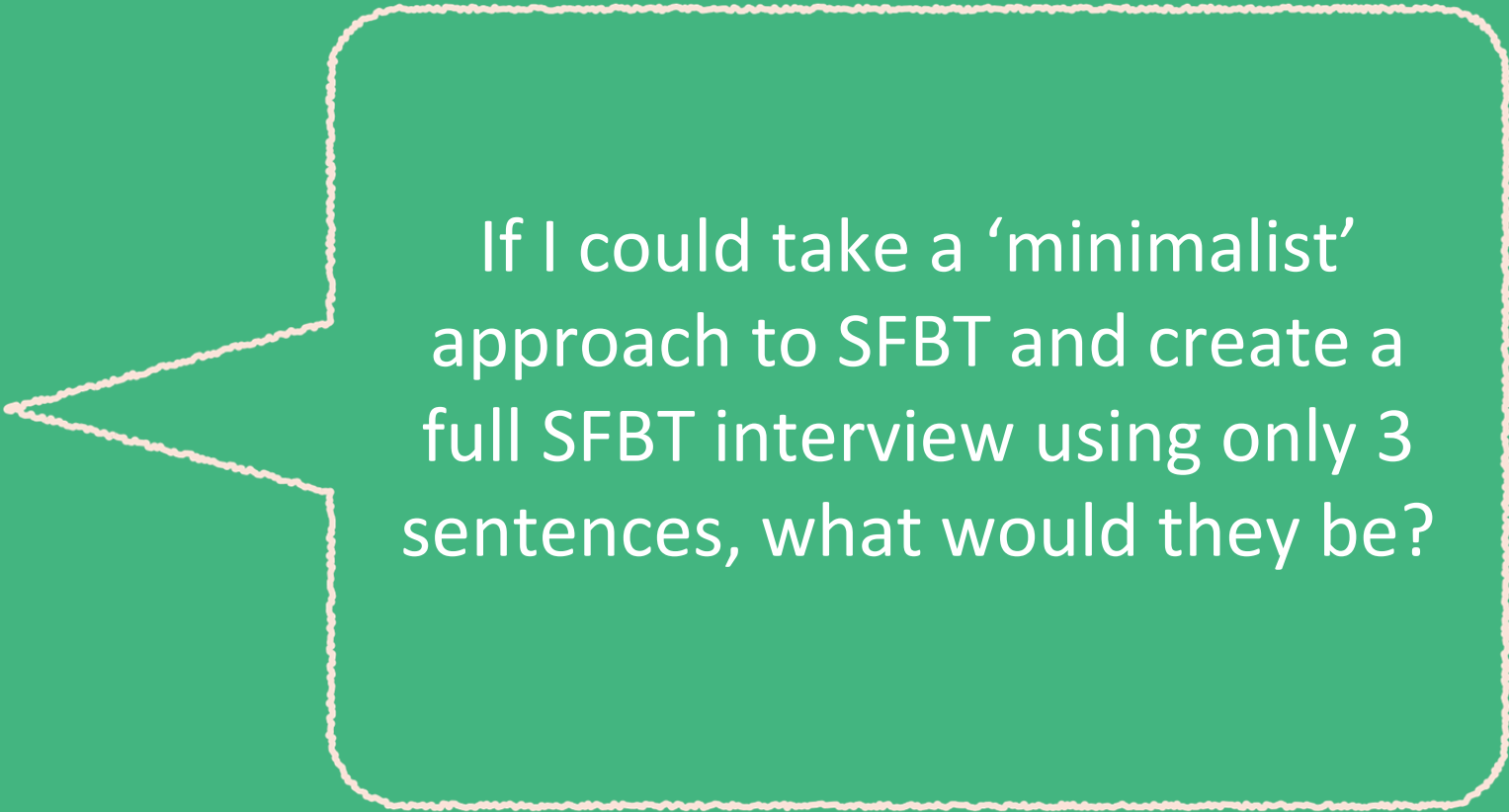




What do you think would be
the 1st thing that they would
notice?



Explore and be
inquisitive



If I could take a 'minimalist' approach to SFBT and create a full SFBT interview using only 3 sentences, what would they be?

What are your BEST
HOPES for coming here
today?

Establish what they want
Introduce 'hope' at the
earliest opportunity

What are your BEST
HOPES from coming
here today?

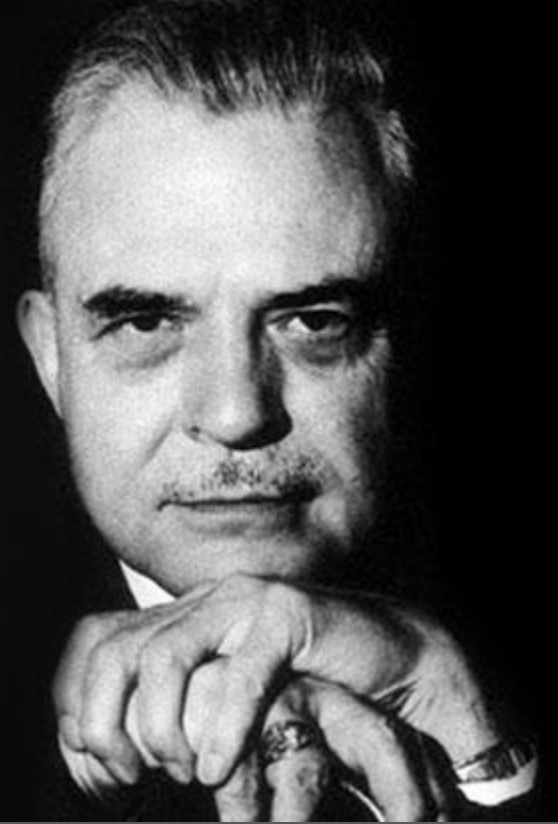
A description of this thing(s)
occurring in the future

What else?

Detail, detail, detail

People do not come
into therapy to
change their past but
their future.

Milton Erikson



People do not come
into workshops to
change their past but
their future.

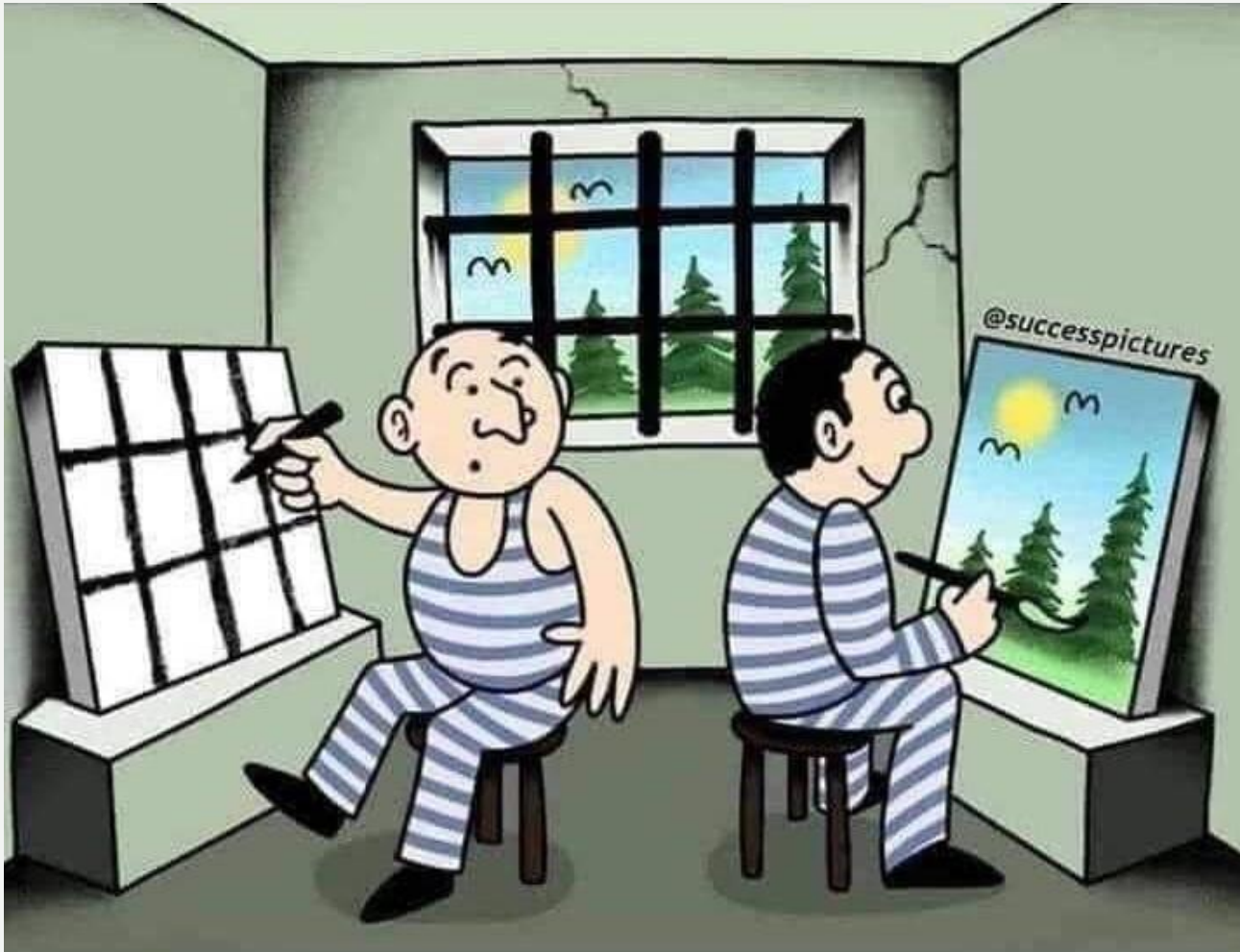
~~Milton Erikson~~ David Hains





Problem focus or Solution focus?

Sometimes it is all about perspective





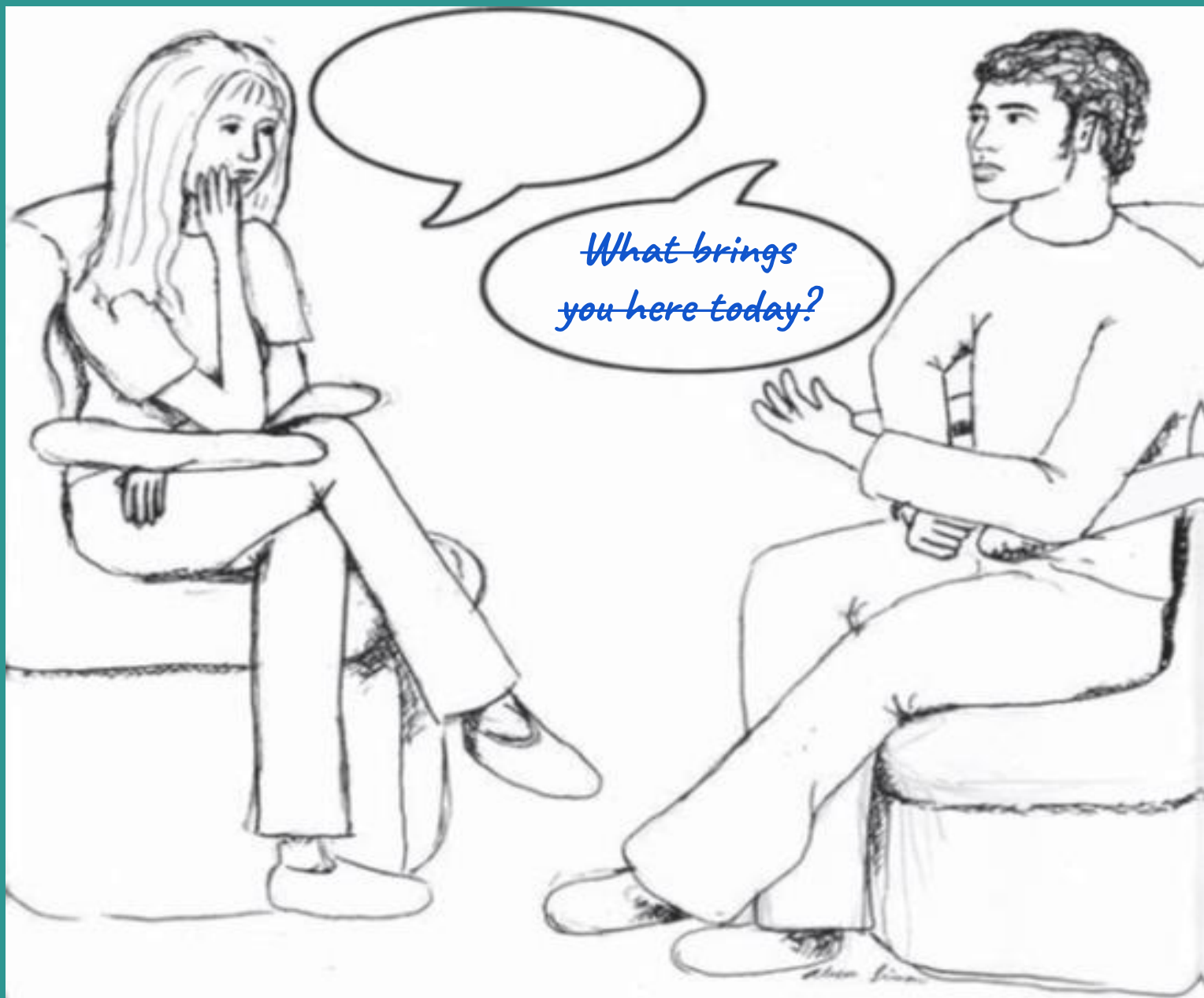
Simon, Joel, Oct 14, 2009, Solution Focused Practice in End-of-Life and Grief Counseling
Springer Publishing Company, New York, ISBN: 9780826105806

LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS



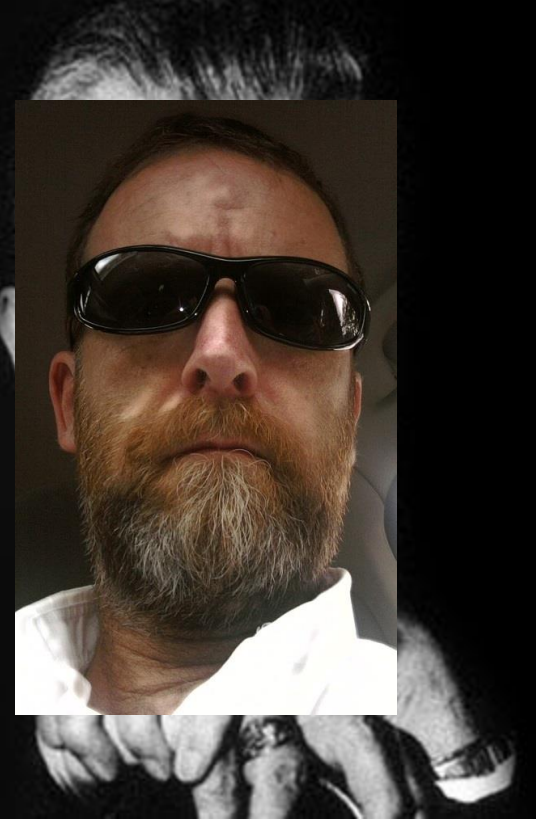


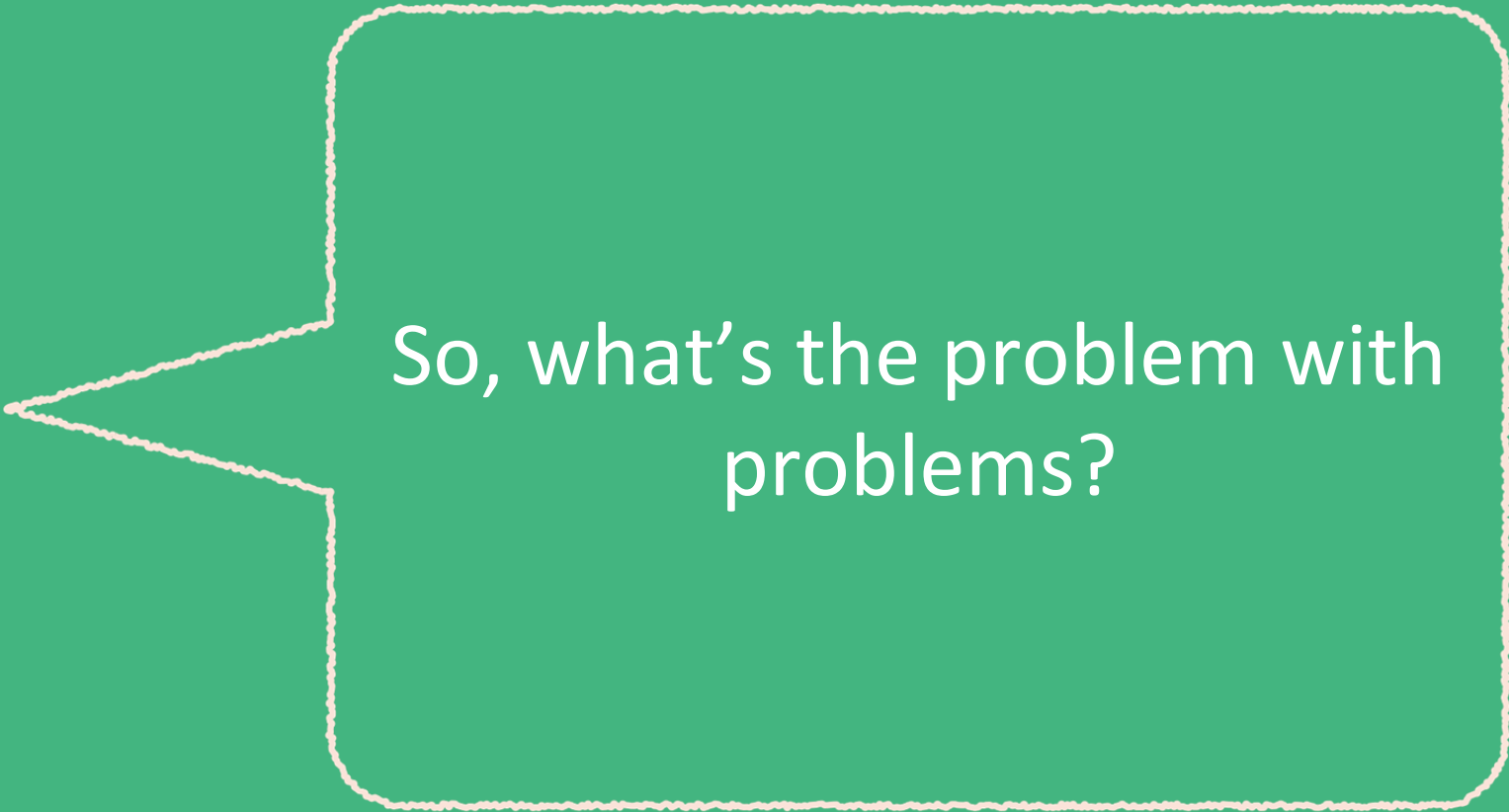




Who the hell said that
we have to talk about
our problems?

~~Milton Erikson~~ David Hains





So, what's the problem with
problems?

“When I focus on what’s good today, I have a good day, and when I focus on what is bad, I have a bad day. If I focus on a problem, the problem increases; if I focus on the answer, the answer increases”

Alcoholics Anonymous (1976) Alcoholics Anonymous: the story of how thousands of men and women have recovered from alcoholism (The big book). Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York.

The problem with problems:

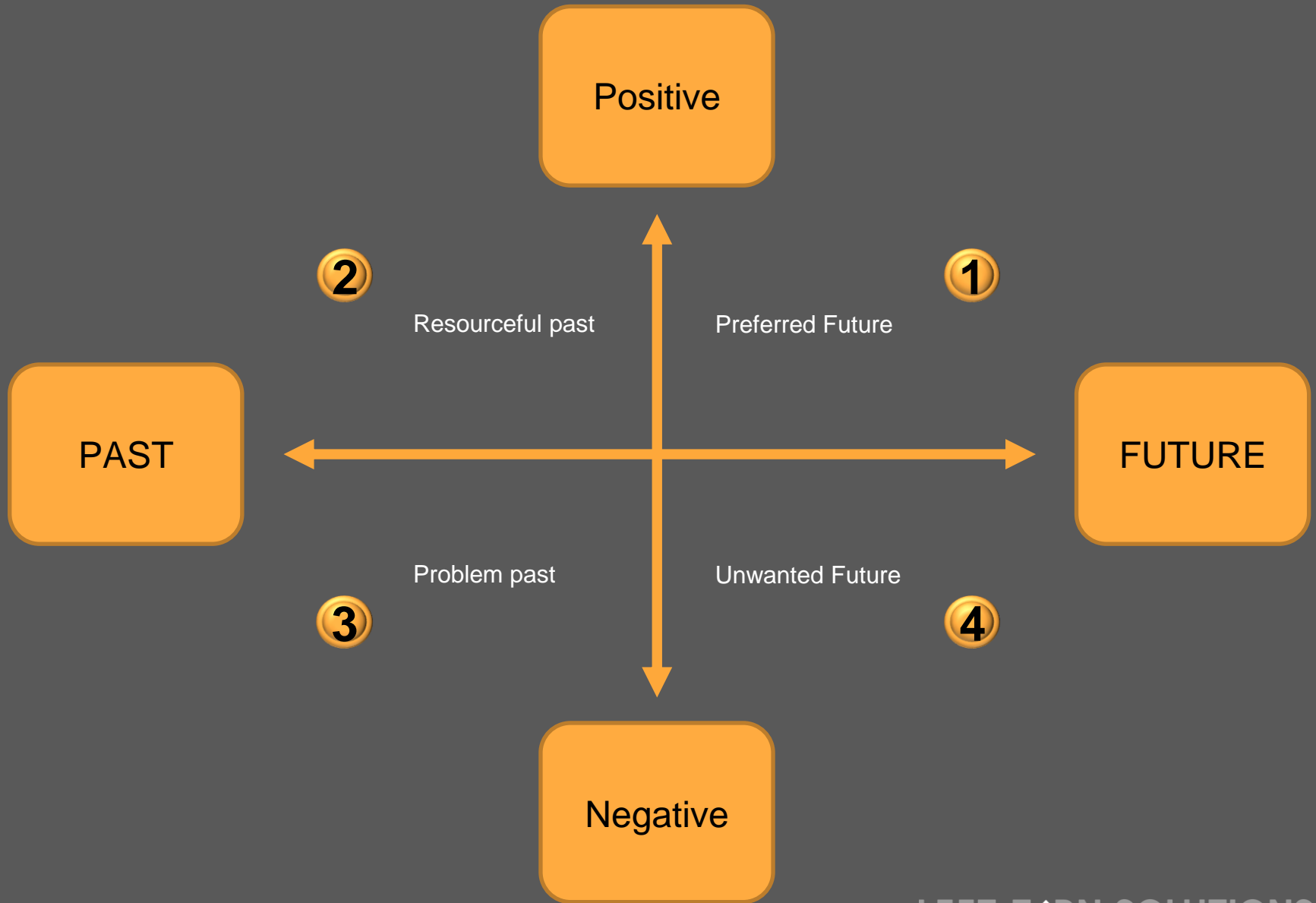
Contemporary assessments only serve to identify problems/diagnosis/illness

Identifying problems/deficits is not enough to mobilise change

Talking about problems only highlights the problems/deficits

It's a very disempowering approach: staff/clinician/doctor/psych/teacher (as the expert) and client (the hopeless victim who needs someone to fix it for them)

Dialogic Orientation Quadrant (Haesun Moon 2017)



LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS

Activity 2 – part 1

Problem Talk – Q3&4

Think about the place you live (street, suburb, LGA, town) and what it's like to live there:

- What are the main problems with this place?
- What things are you most unhappy about?
- What's missing?
- What's not working?
- What are the barriers to making improvements?
- Why has it be hard to change things in the past?
- Why will it be hard to change things in the future?

Activity – part 2

Solution Talk – Q1&2

Think about the place you live (street, suburb, LGA, town) and what it's like to live there:

- Why do you like living here?
- What things are you most happy about?
- What are the most valuable parts of the community?
- Who's contributing, and how?
- What has happened to already make things better?
- What could be even better?
- What would be the 1st sign that it's getting even better?



LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS

What is SFBT?

#1 - The Start

#2 - The Destination

#3 - The Journey

What is the Solution Focused approach?

1 .

2 .

3 .

4 .

5 .

6 .

7 .

#1

The Starting Place

- Goals & hopes
- Strengths
- Resources
- Exceptions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg&t=33s>



LEFT TURN SOLUTIONS

#1a

Thinking about the clip that you have just seen, discuss and speculate about: What is the Solution Focused approach?

What is the Solution Focused approach?

1 - The problem you see might be different from the problem they see AND

the actual solution might not match the problem

#1b



SINGAPORE CHANGI DEPARTURES

Flight number

Destination

Time

QF	32	SYDNEY	09:50
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Sorry I cant send you the audio, but there is a lot of info about this event available on the internet eg:
This 4Corners interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-4FBN8OTkk&t=1286s>

#1b

Thinking about the conversation that you have just heard, discuss and speculate about: What is the Solution Focused approach?

What is the Solution Focused approach?

1 - The problem you see might be different from the problem they see AND

the actual solution might not match the problem

2 - A focus on what is working rather than what is broken AND

highlight, strengthen, and mobilise these things

3 - Sometimes it is about perspective

Questions for rapport and about finding strengths

- Tell me some things about yourself
- What do you enjoy?
- What are you good at?
- Describe what an awesome day would be like
- What do you like learning about?

Questions about resources

- Who are the most important people in your life? (eg friends, family)
- What are the things that give you strength & make you feel good
- What are the things you connect with (eg culture, religion, career, sport, community etc)

Questions about exceptions

- When are the times that this problem is not such a problem
- How have you managed to deal with the problem so far
- What helps, even if it's just a little bit
- What give you the courage to deal with this problem
- How do you keep going on even when the problem is really bad

Questions about goals & hopes

- How will you know that coming here today was helpful
- What do you hope will happen today
- How will that make a difference
- What do you hope to see instead of what is bothering you (i.e. we want to talk about the presence of what they want, rather than the absence of what they don't want)

SOLUTION-FOCUSED CONVERSATION GUIDE

➤➤➤ 1. BUILDING RAPPORT / STRENGTHS ➤➤➤

- Could you tell me some things about yourself?
What do you enjoy doing?
- What are you good at?
- Describe what an awesome day would like for you.
- What would the important people in your life say
what is awesome about you?
- What do you enjoy learning about?

➤➤➤ 2. GOALS ➤➤➤

- How will you know that meeting here today was helpful?
- How would you know that coming here was worth your time?
- What do you hope to get out of visiting here today?
- What do you hope to see happen instead of what is bothering you?

➤➤➤ 3. MIRACLE QUESTION ➤➤➤

- If you could wave a magic wand and things changed, how would you know magic has happened? What would be different?
- What would you be doing differently that showed you your hopes came true?
- What else would be different? What other changes would you experience?
- Who would notice a change had happened? What would they see?

➤➤➤ 4. EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROBLEM & COMPETENCIES ➤➤➤

- When are the times that "the problem" is not such a problem? What is different?
- When does "the problem" not bother you so much?
- How have you managed so far to deal with "the problem"?
- What has helped so far? Even if it has been just a little help?
- How have you found the courage to deal with this problem?

➤➤➤ 5. SCALING ➤➤➤

- On a scale of 10 to 0, where 10 means your hope and goal has come true and 0 is the worst you can imagine, what number are you now?
- How will you know you have moved up one number?
- What will one number higher look like? How would you be able to move up one point?

➤➤➤ 6. CLOSURE / PLAN ➤➤➤

- What will you try differently or do more of when you leave today?
- What experiment can you try out?
- What is the best thing you noticed about yourself today?





#2

The Destination

- Focus on where you are going, not where you are now
- Miracle Question
- Detail, detail, detail

Patch Adams (please watch the whole film when you get a chance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKLQBuSPVwQ&t=1s>



#2

The Destination

Thinking about the clip that you have just seen, discuss and speculate about: What is Solution Focused Brief Therapy?

What is the Solution Focused approach?

1 - The problem you see might be different from the problem they see AND

the actual solution might not match the problem

2 - A focus on what is working rather than what is broken AND

highlight, strengthen, and mobilise these things

3 - Sometimes it is about perspective

4 - Identify the goal or what your client wants

5 - A focus on the solution/destination and not on the problem

6 - Highlighting and mobilizing skills/strengths/what's working

Questions about a preferred future

- Let's imagine there was a miracle ...
- Let's imagine I have a magic wand ...
- Let's imagine there was a time machine ...
- ... and the problem (or the things that are bothering you) disappear ...
- ... what would be different ...

Questions about a preferred future

- What would you notice that was different about you?
- What would other people notice?
- What else? (we need detail, even the most mundane type, so that the person can actually imagine being there in a very real situation)

Problem Focus or Solution Focus?

**IF YOU ONLY
FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM**



**YOU MIGHT
MISS THE EASY SOLUTION**

The Miracle Question

Constructing a vision for/of a preferred future

I'm going to ask you a strange question ... [flagging a change in focus]

Lets imagine ... [introduces the hypothetical nature of the question]

... that you go home from here, do whatever you normally do, have dinner ...
and eventually you go to bed, and you go to sleep ... [the context for the
miracle is in the clients' ordinary everyday life]

... and while you are asleep a miracle happens ...

... and the miracle is that the problems that brought you here are solved ...

... but because you are asleep you don't actually know the miracle has
happened ...

... when you wake up, what will be different? What will be the first thing you
notice that will tell you that this miracle has happened?

Closing your eyes, take a deep breath in, pretend you are holding a dandelion. Slowly breathing out, make a wish as you imagine the dandelion seeds fly into the sky. How would you know that your dandelion wish had come true? What would be different?

WRITE ABOUT OR INSERT PICTURES THAT SHOW
HOW YOUR WISH CHANGES THINGS.

MY DANDELION WISH.....



TIME MACHINE

IMAGINE YOU ARE INSIDE A TIME MACHINE THAT TRANSPORTS YOU INTO THE FUTURE. WHEN YOU EXIT THE TIME MACHINE, YOU FEEL BETTER!

What would you notice that was different?
How would know a change had occurred?

WRITE ABOUT OR INSERT PICTURES THAT SHOW WHAT IS DIFFERENT
WHEN YOU EXIT THE TIME MACHINE.

Future



MAGIC WAND

Imagine you have a magic wand.
When you wave it your wishes come true!
After you wave the wand,
how would you know magic had happened?
What would the changes look like?

WRITE ABOUT OR INSERT PICTURES THAT SHOW HOW THE MAGIC WAND CHANGES THINGS.



SOLUTION-FOCUSED CONVERSATION GUIDE

➤➤➤ 1. BUILDING RAPPORT / STRENGTHS ➤➤➤

- Could you tell me some things about yourself? What do you enjoy doing?
- What are you good at?
- Describe what an awesome day would like for you.
- What would the important people in your life say what is awesome about you?
- What do you enjoy learning about?

➤➤➤ 2. GOALS ➤➤➤

- How will you know that meeting here today was helpful?
- How would you know that coming here was worth your time?
- What do you hope to get out of visiting here today?
- What do you hope to see happen instead of what is bothering you?

➤➤➤ 3. MIRACLE QUESTION ➤➤➤

- If you could wave a magic wand and things changed, how would you know magic has happened? What would be different?
- What would you be doing differently that showed you your hopes came true?
- What else would be different? What other changes would you experience?
- Who would notice a change had happened? What would they see?

➤➤➤ 4. EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROBLEM & COMPETENCIES ➤➤➤

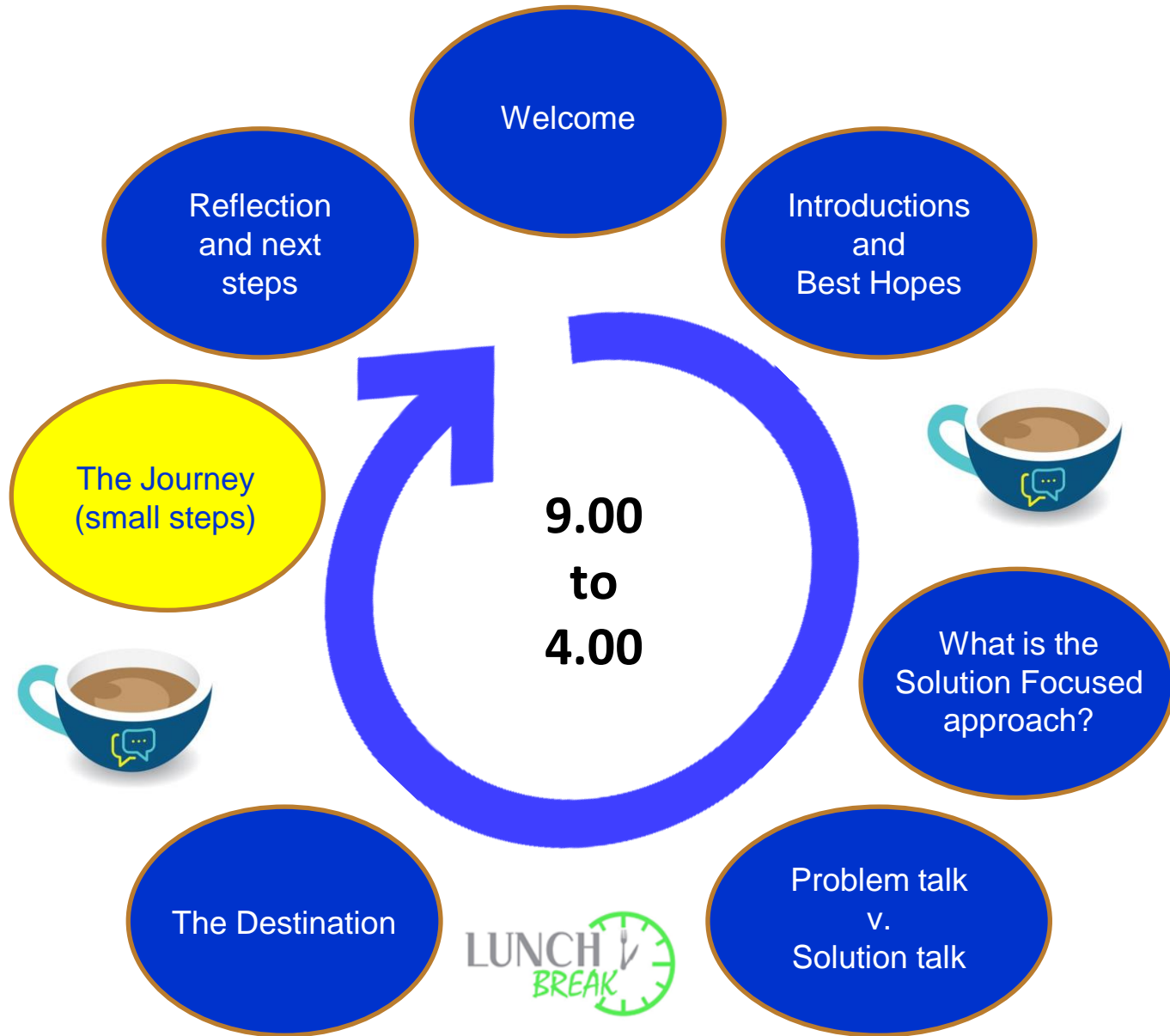
- When are the times that "the problem" is not such a problem? What is different?
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- What has helped so far? Even if it has been just a little help?
- How have you found the courage to deal with this problem?

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- What will one number higher look like? How would you be able to move up one point?

➤➤➤ 6. CLOSURE / PLAN ➤➤➤

- What will you try differently or do more of when you leave today?
- What experiment can you try out?
- What is the best thing you noticed about yourself today?



#3

The Journey

- Small steps
- What will you notice?
- What will they notice?
- What difference will that make?

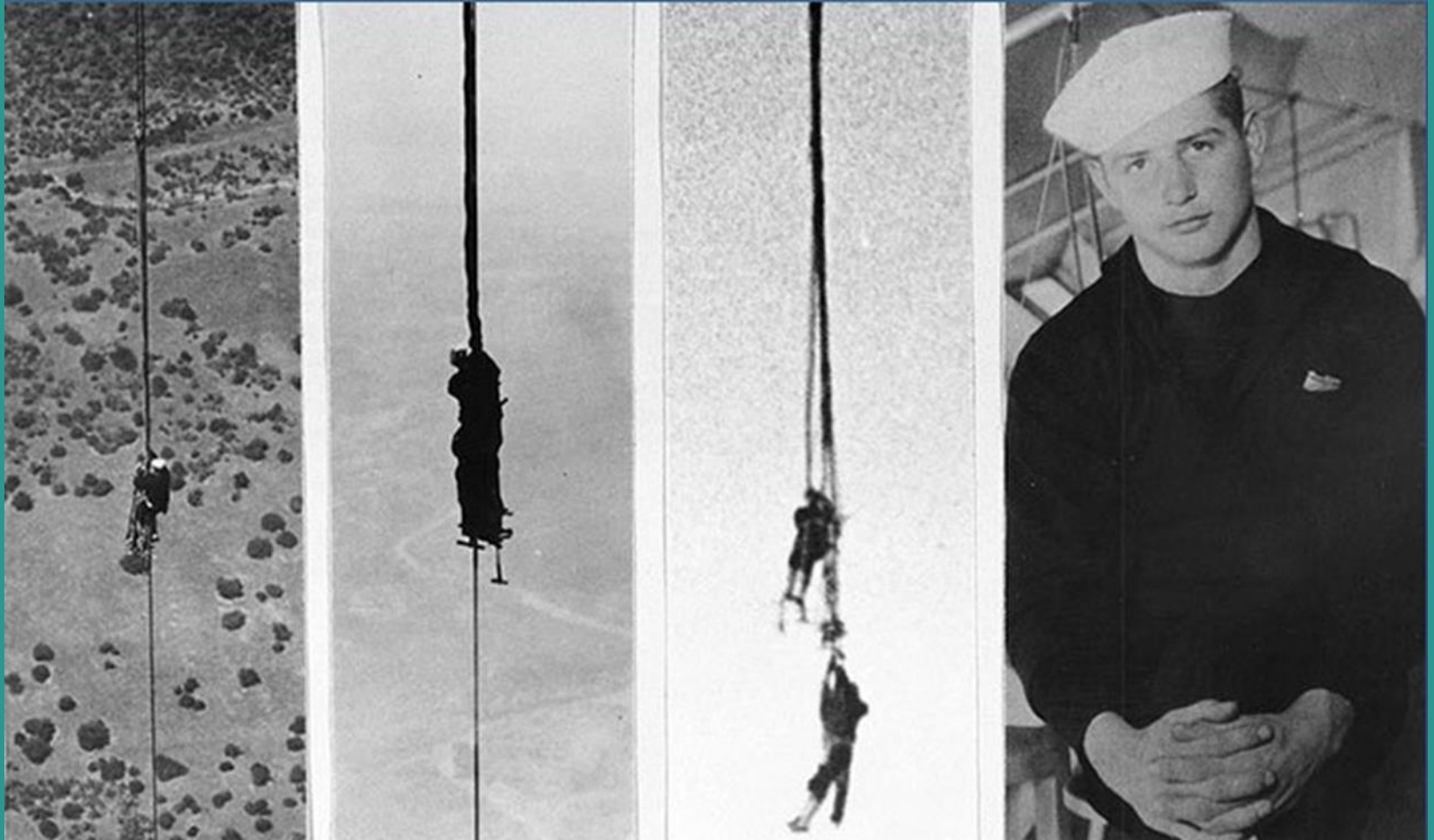
USS Akron



Content warning – this is a link to the full video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF5_OLJGPQY&t=3s

Apprentice Seaman C. M. "Bud" Cowart



#3

The Journey

Thinking about the story that you have just heard, discuss and speculate about: What is the Solution Focused approach?

What is the Solution Focused approach?

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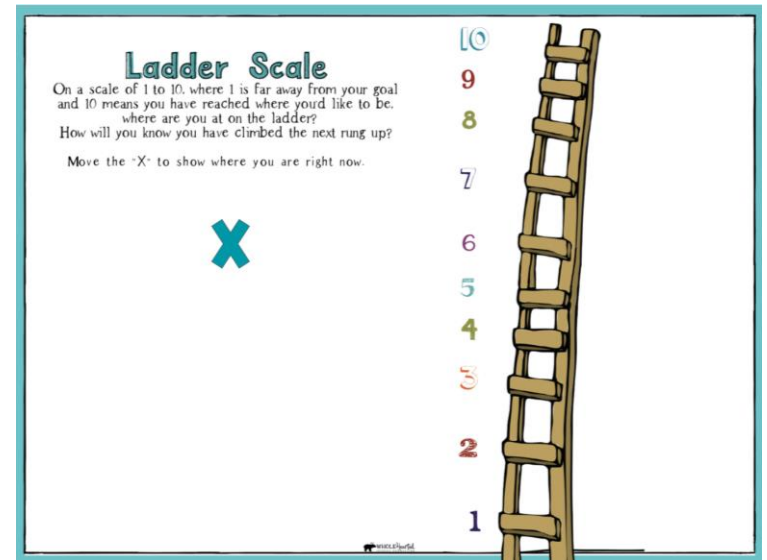
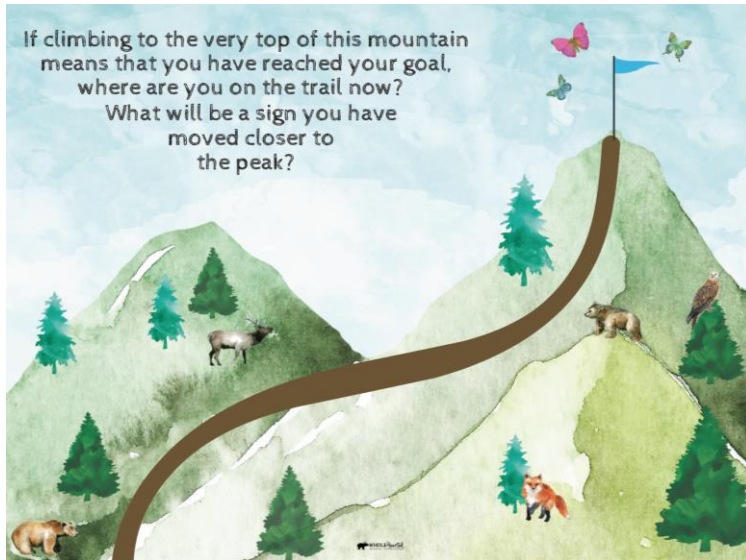
6 - Highlighting and mobilizing skills/strengths/what's working

7 - Keep looking to where you want to go

8 - One small step at a time

Questions about scaling & taking steps

- On a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 = the worst ever, and 10 = the best ever), where are you now?
- How did you get this high already (even if it was hard)?
- What will be different for you when you are just 1 step higher
- Who will be the first to notice that you are 1 step higher?
- What will this person notice that is different about you?



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So,

What is the Solution Focused approach?

*Time to summarise, reflect,
and share your thoughts.*

The Essence of a Solution Focus

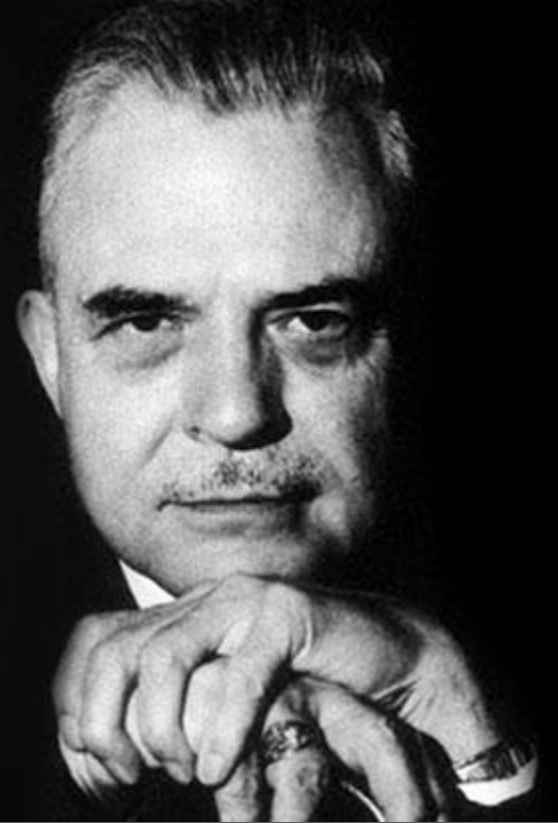
- Work with the person rather than the problem
- Treat people as the experts in all aspects of their lives
- Look for resources rather than deficits
- Explore what is already working
- If it works, don't fix it. If it doesn't, do something different
- Explore possible and preferred futures
- Instill hope at every opportunity

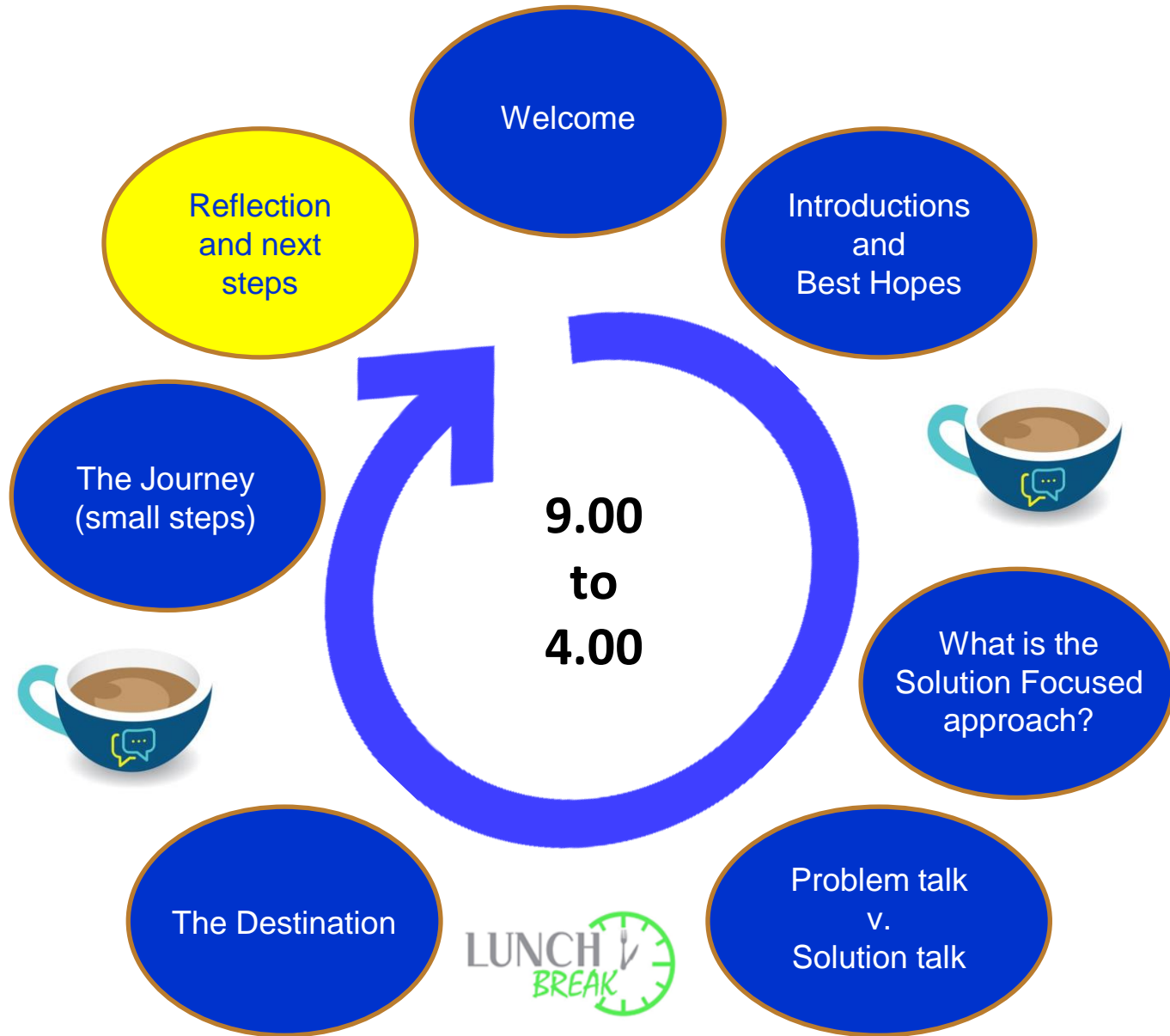
Assumptions in SFBT

- Change is happening all of the time
- A focus on the possible and changeable is more helpful than a focus on the overwhelming and intractable
- Motivation is more likely when clients are viewed as competent and experience themselves as having agency
- Change happens by people experiencing themselves as competent and successful

Don't ask why the
patient is the way he
is, ask for what he
would change.

Milton Erikson





Tying it all together

The post-workshop future

Interview your colleague about how they can see themselves using SFBT in the future.

Find out about:

- Their take home thoughts, what is going to stick with them, what would be the 1st thing that you would share with your boss or team?
- Where they can see themselves using these skills? What would be the 1st thing they would try?
- How it will help them in their work
- What people (clients/colleagues/boss) will notice

Further training
Community of Practice
General info
What else?

e.g. slides & handouts, certificates, other training

Next Level Workshops

Online and face to face:

SF1 - Introduction

SF2 - Consolidation

Face to face only:

SF3 - Advanced

Other workshops available, e.g:

A SF approach to suicide prevention.

SF conversations for the non-clinician.

Single Session Therapy.

Left Turn Solutions



www.leftturnsolutions.com.au

(check out the other training & info available)

Community of Practice



Next meeting 30 May, Glenside Hospital, looking at Single Session Therapy



network meeting

ASFA & JSFP



About ASFA ▾ Local groups ▾ Conference ▾ About SF Journal ▾ Find a therapist or supervisor Members Area
News & Events Training



www.solutionfocused.org.au

(sign up to their mailing list - there is lots available for both members and non-members)

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The Journal of Solution Focused Practices is the newly rebuilt and rebadged version of the Journal of Solution Focused Brief Therapy. The Journal is now produced by a new international collaboration, and financially supported by organisations and individuals from around the world. It is available as a free download via the University of Nevada Las Vegas

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The Possibilities Lab



<https://www.facebook.com/thepossibilitieslab>

(This is mostly Emma and I (with an occasional guest)
talking about why we love using this approach)

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The sheets I was using were not mine and are licenced here, so if you think they are helpful then please purchase an electronic copy – It's only \$5 (US)

Contact

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Podcasts and other Solution Focused info:

[Journal of Solution Focused Practices](#)

[FBS Chat \(interviews with practitioners\)](#)

[The Possibilities Lab videos](#)

[Simply Focus Podcast](#)

[SFBT Research \(almost all of it can be found here\)](#)

[Solution Focus in Organisations \(non-clinical\)](#)

[SFIO Journal](#)

[Tim Wand, Emma & David discuss the SF approach](#)

[in suicide prevention](#)

[ANMF Journal article](#)

Working with people who have learning difficulties:

[Video - Arnoud Huibers Circle Work \(in Dutch\)](#)

29 April 2022 - Independent Advocacy S.A.

For any other info please just send me
an email:

david@leftturnsolutions.com.au

... and don't forget - it's OK to NOT talk
about your problems