

July 2020

Book Review - Solution Focused Practice: Effective Communication to Facilitate Change

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Recommended Citation

Booth, Lisa Blond (2020) "Book Review - Solution Focused Practice: Effective Communication to Facilitate Change," *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 9.
Available at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol4/iss1/9>

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BOOK REVIEW**Solution Focused Practice: Effective Communication to Facilitate Change**

Guy Shennan

Red Globe Press, 2019, 248 pages, ISBN 978-1-352-00599-8 Can\$32.99/GBP £22.99 Paperback (e-book available)

Review by Lisa Blond Booth

Social Worker; Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

As is often said, and indeed is attributed to Steve de Shazer himself, Solution Focused Brief Therapy is simple to understand and extremely difficult to execute well. As a newcomer to the field, and being mindful of the need to learn and practice on a regular basis, this is a book that can provide the reader with a solid foundation in not only the theory but also the use of this model.

Guy Shennan invites the reader to think about the practice of solution focus in a manner that is congruent with his own training methods. And in order to do so, he presents the reader with ways to use and understand language, activities to practice, detailed transcripts with comments from the author, as well as suggested reflections to further the reader's own conceptualization of the material.

The book reads in a narrative format and uses questions in the SFBT manner that invite the reader to craft answers and notice their own responses. The transcripts allow the reader to focus on what has been previously delineated in the text as important to the process. As a beginner, having the guidance to determine what is important is most helpful, as all beginners find that everything new is important. So the reader is able to notice and be guided towards the concepts that are integral to the model in a gentle, forward moving direction as they read through the book.

The book is broken down into 10 chapters, each of which begins with a brief description of what will be addressed. At the end of each chapter there is a summary of important points, and it was quite validating to see that many of these 'important' points were the same ones that I took note of myself. Additionally, the end of chapter summary clarified what is important in a more global manner, not just in relation to the chapter, but to the model as a whole.

The chapters work towards an introduction of the model, then each chapter provides a more individualized break down of the concepts, ending with a reunion of all the elements in order for the reader to see the 'whole' version. Concepts that are explored include best hopes, establishing the direction of the sessions, and types of questions to gather descriptions. The final chapters speak to the broader use of the model, as well as the start of the reader's own practice. There are two appendices that provide the reader with multiple sample questions, as well as further resources.

In particular, the comprehensive listing of resources opens the door to further learning for the reader and is a most welcome source of information. There is also a concise and relevant review of the history of the model throughout the book that provides the reader with context and does not intrude upon the flow of the book as a learning tool.

There is a refreshing feel to the book as it moves from topic to topic, that appears to reflect the author's style and keeps the reader connected to the material. Questions that arose throughout the reading of the book were answered quickly, either in the next sentence or paragraph. For the reader this becomes a "conversation" with the book. As the reader progresses through the book and is asked to question and practice creating questions, it feels alive and within the scope of possibility that the reader, albeit being a beginner, does have the ability to understand the model and put it into practice.

This was a great addition to my learning, and provided me with hope that I can move forward in the model and made me desirous of attending the author's trainings. It seems to me that any book that ignites the desire for further learning has done a great service to the reader and to the Solution Focused community as a whole.

The reviewer

Lisa Blond Booth is a social worker providing services to Children, Youth and Families in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, is new to the SFBT world and very passionate about the model.

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