

10-2019

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David Hains  
david@leftturnsolutions.com.au

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### Recommended Citation

Hains, David (2019) "The Day I Triumphed Over Hofstadter's Law (but not Impostor Syndrome)," *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 3.

Available at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol3/iss1/3>

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## The Day I Triumphed Over Hofstadter's Law (but not Impostor Syndrome)

David Hains

President, Australasian Association for Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Impostor Syndrome, and Hofstadter's Law. I can link all three things, but only inside my head. I can't find any previous writing or research how these 3 things may be linked.

While SFBT is my friend, the other two are my greatest enemies. If the JSFBT gets published in 2019 then I have finally gotten one-up on Hofstadter's Law. (I can't find anything previously written about the link between Hofstadter's Law and SFBT, but I note that Frank Thomas referenced Douglas Hofstadter back in 1996). Hofstadter's Law states that important or worthwhile tasks will always take longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law. It doesn't really matter what I do, Hofstadter's Law slows me down...until now. From here on Hofstadter's Law will consume me no more.

I'm not sure what it is about SFBT that helped me conquer Hofstadter's Law. I never consciously thought about applying SF principles when trying to revive the JSFBT. Perhaps SF is just ingrained in me to the point that I can only focus on my preferred future? Maybe it is because talking about SFBT is so much more fun than the boring (non-SF) stuff I usually do? In retrospect, perhaps it was my other nemesis, Impostor Syndrome, that finally pushed me through? Whatever it was, I admit that the last 12 months have been pretty cool! Most mornings I wake up, check my inbox and find emails from all around the world – Sara, Mark, Harry, Chris, Evan, Alasdair, Frank, Peter, Gale, Kirsten, Rayya; I've seen your videos, I've read your books and your papers, but now you are emailing me? Ok, I admit that I am a solution focused nerd; your emails make me feel as excited as a kid in a candy shop.

Why are they contacting me? I am just a nurse from Adelaide with a long history of suffering from Impostor Syndrome. As it turns out, my international colleagues heard a rumour that the *Journal of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy* was coming back to life, and they wanted to make sure that it wasn't just a rumour. What have I learned over the past 12 months? There's an enormous amount of international support for a peer-reviewed solution-focused journal, and

a lot of people want to be a part of its success.

The story so far ...

The Australasian Association for Solution Focused Brief Therapy (AASFBT) was started in 2013. AASFBT's original aim was to publish an academic journal as a service to the worldwide Solution Focused community. Michael Durrant, the founding President of AASFBT and Editor of the *JSFBT*, was the driving force. Michael assembled an editorial board consisting of scholars and practitioners from 20 different countries. Over the course of four years, four issues were published. It is fair to say that Michael did most of this work on his own. The journal was his passion. He invested countless hours establishing the *JSFBT*. He solicited manuscripts, assembled papers, arranged peer reviews, completed copy edits, formatted content, printed and mailed hard copies of the journal, and all of this without payment. Amazingly he was able to produce a world-class publication for as little as AU\$3,000 per edition. The AASFBT, and the International Solution Focused community are indebted to Michael for the work he has done. Given the demands of maintaining an academic journal, the workload was too much for one person, or perhaps he too was defeated by Hofstadter's Law?

Back in July 2018 I took over as President of the AASFBT. One of my goals was to get the journal back into publication. It was clear to me that in order for *JSFBT* to succeed it would need more resources than what the AASFBT could provide, so we began to discuss ways to restructure the production of *JSFBT*. The first step was to find a new editor, someone who could build on the foundation set by Michael, someone who could expand and maintain the journal through the worldwide community.

I was VERY happy that Sara Smock Jordan applied for the role as editor of *JSFBT*. It only took a couple of emails before I knew we had the right person for the job. Sara first volunteered to serve as editor on May 1, and was unofficially appointed on May 23. Now, less than 5 months later, our new team has published volume 3, issue 1! In addition, we are establishing a permanent new platform for future issues of the journal in 2020. Our first issue with our new online platform is planned for July of 2020. Take that Douglas Hofstadter!

Sara really needs no introduction. She is one of the most well-respected people in the international solution-focused world. From her early days as a graduate student, Sara had the opportunity to learn the model from Steve, Insoo, and key members of the original Milwaukee team. Sara has studied, practiced, researched, and published extensively on SFBT. She brings an amazing amount of both clinical and academic expertise to her new role. Sara is a founding member of Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association, and past president of the association. Currently, she serves on SFBTA's board of directors and is a member of the research committee. We are excited to have Sara as our new Editor and have been working with her to rebuild the journal. This special edition is the culmination of 5 months' worth of work by Sara, her editorial assistant Kaitlin Andrewjeski, and the editorial board. I would like to personally thank everyone involved for their work, dedication, enthusiasm, and encouragement in getting the journal up and running again.

International collaboration: it takes a community to sustain a journal! From the very beginning, it was clear to me that the journal had to be supported by more than one association. While we are proud and grateful for what Michael and the AASFBT established, my desire was to have a fully international publication. Associations around the world are beginning to commit to the journal and we would like to invite other groups to join us as co-sponsors. In 2020 we will be establishing an open-access publication, providing free issues of the journal. While this platform will provide full international exposure of SFBT, costs of producing the journal still exist. Therefore, we call upon the solution-focused community - organisations, conferences, collectives, and individuals - to financially support the work.

So, welcome to this special edition of the *Journal of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy*. I hope you are as excited as I am to be reading this special edition (I haven't actually seen a copy yet!). Thank you for purchasing a copy. The money raised from this edition will be used to help fund the 2020 editions as we move to a full production schedule of two issues per year. From here, I will hand over the journal to Sara and wish her and her team every success in rebuilding the journal. As the President of AASFBT, I will stay involved in a managerial/oversight role along with our co-sponsors to build a truly international publication.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions, suggestion, or submissions regarding the journal, SFBT in Australasia, or even just to say g'day, or to feed my impostor syndrome.

David Hains

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Email: [david@leftturnsolutions.com.au](mailto:david@leftturnsolutions.com.au)

<https://www.solutionfocused.org.au/journal>

## Reference

Thomas, F. (1996). *Solution-focused supervision*. In Miller S., Hubble M., Duncan B. (eds) *Handbook of solution-focused brief therapy*. Wiley.