

**T**his book consists of articles written by professional business people who collectively work to a solution focused ethos. It adds to our own knowledge of SFBT in the therapy room, by looking at case studies and also approaches that work in the boardroom and deep in the business processes. For example, Louis Cauffman looks at an 'eight step dance' of solution focused coaching, which consists of socialising, clarifying the context, goal setting, exceptions, hunting for resources, giving compliments, offering differentiation and future orientation.

Positive approaches to change

Edited by Mark McKergow & Jenny Clarke  
ISBN 0-9549749-0-5  
★★★★★

review by Penny Ling

We're all familiar with yearly reviews which look at what we're not doing, and finding courses to help us remedy that lack. It's only on the odd occasion that we are praised for a quality or ability, so it's not surprising members of staff feel unappreciated. Giving compliments in a work situation is good for motivation and can boost overall morale – and Louis goes on to say that "Every compliment yields a dividend!". Offering differentiation is another expression for scaling, in this way, employees can learn to realise that the world is not made up of black and white but all the shades of grey in between. It can help them develop goal strategies, which are not overwhelming, asking, "What is the smallest next step that could move you up on the scale? What would it take?"

Having been in a position of both having been made redundant and being one of the few left, I can fully appreciate the lack of support and feelings of abandonment these issues can raise. One of the outcomes of such measures is the loss of a highly skilled workforce due to their finding new

employment as they believe there is no future at the downsized company. Employees, who have to face consultants who are being brought in to re-motivate a workforce, often resent the resources being spent on the consultancy, and would rather it was spent on employing more people to reduce the stress.

John Henden looks at team re-motivation, after redundancies which are due to a shrinking turnover. He asks the remaining teams about what they like to do to de-stress; what their hopes and expectations are; and what their gripes and complaints are. This is not a usual SF approach, but he maintains it is necessary, as it helps clear the air, getting all the negative stuff out the way first. It also allows sufficient expression of thought, as they realise someone is interested in what they want as much as what the senior management wants, and that promotes trust.

He then looks at the strengths and resources of all the employees and when those can be brought into play over the next year or so in order to help improve the worst case scenarios. His next steps are what he calls Time Quake, but is essentially the Miracle Question.

**Time Quake**

We are going to set up an imaginary meeting like this in 6 months time. Things have improved considerably in the mean time. Our purpose at that meeting is to find out:-

1. what is better?
2. How do we notice things are better?
3. What are you most proud of?
4. Where do you stand on the progress scale?
5. How did you manage to get there?

You can see from this that it's less esoteric than asking what would happen if a miracle were to happen - which can sometimes put people off – it's much more business- like in its approach.

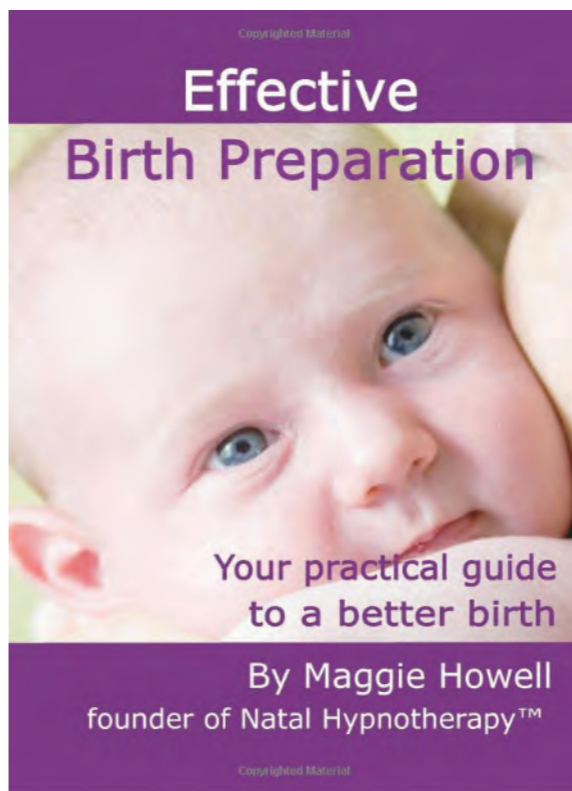
Having done this, he can use the small steps to get to that envisaged point. It shows that SF can be a useful process anywhere in the system, not necessarily right from the beginning to right to the end, but at the stumbling blocks along the way.

Peter Szabo – a SF trainer - then looks purely at scaling and its ability to stop the overwhelming quantity of goal setting by crunching it down into 'do-able' sections. It can be done for individuals, departments or the whole company. Dr Gunter Lueger uses a rating scale which is slightly different. When we ask "What's been good?" if our client has had a really bad week, they may feel their overall score is much lower than usual. Dr Lueger uses units of 10 across a 5 scale question between very poor to very good, so on the whole the client can put the bad times into some perspective.

Please distribute 100 points and use 'units of 10'

-- very poor	- poor	o average	+ good	++ very good
Customer orientation		10	70	20

This book is full of insights, case studies (such as Walkers Crisps), references to take you further into a particular field and book reviews to expand your knowledge. And-in typical SF thinking – "What one thing did I take away from reading the book?" The SF approach works if you keep applying it. Using it as a one off is fine, but to get the best of all worlds just keep using it ■



Effective Birth Preparation

by Maggie Howell  
ISBN-13: 978-1905220502  
★★★★★

review by Trevor Eddolls

Many therapists familiar with hypnotherapy techniques around pregnancy and childbirth will know of Hypnobirthing by Marie Mongan, Effective Birth Preparation not only reinforces much of what's said in the earlier book, it adds to your personal repertoire of techniques to use.

The whole point of the book is to enable a mum to enjoy the pregnancy and give birth in as pain free a way as possible by helping mum to relax through the process. It's about helping mum to trust the feelings she gets from her body and go through the experience of birth confidently and in a controlled way.

**A**ny new mum-to-be is constantly being told that giving birth is a painful and frightening experience that is reliant on the presence of qualified medical personal. And yet nothing could be further from the truth. This book runs through the concepts and techniques of Natal Hypnotherapy™, showing how childbirth can be a normal and natural part of life.

The book is easy to read and miles away from dry technical manuals. Quotes are liberally sprinkled throughout and short interesting facts or anecdotes are presented in text boxes – this is what makes just skimming through the book so enjoyable.

The book starts by looking at mammal births, then instinctive births – in which Howell gives us some facts about oxytocin, endorphins, relaxin, and prostaglandin. The review of birthing through the ages makes an interesting read to see how we've got to the current state of affairs. The chapter on fear and pain reinforces what many hypnotherapists are already telling their patients, and shows the importance of relaxing into the birthing process.

Section 2 of the book looks at how hypnotherapy works, what's going on inside your brain and some hypnotherapy techniques that can be used. Section 3 gives lots of detailed steps that should be taken to ensure a better birth – including relaxation and breathing techniques; it even looks at your birthing partner's role in everything. Chapter 11 importantly describes how a calmer mum can produce a calmer baby. There are also a number answers to frequently asked questions.

The book is very easy to read and would make an excellent self-help book for anyone who's pregnant or planning to get pregnant. It also adds to the toolbox of any therapist offering hypnobirthing as a technique to clients. You'll certainly enjoy the engaging 'Mum's experience' notes that can be found throughout the book. It also comes with an excellent DVD; well worth a look ■