

## SOLUTION-ORIENTED COUNSELLING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by Frank D. Young Ph.D., R. Psych.1[1]

### What is it about your service that makes it **DIFFERENT** from your competitors?

Solution-Oriented Counselling is a creative blend of Ericksonian utilization and metaphors, collaborating about patterns of possibility for a happier life.

### What would your colleagues and clients say are your greatest strengths?

- Flexibility and **creativity**, the ability to think around corners. Value to you: can collaborate in thinking outside the box to find solutions that fit.
- Knowledge of **research-based best practices**, solid grasp of applied theory. Value to you: solid and grounded, not flaky or flighty.
- **Depth** of clinical experience over 30 years. Value to you: not just knowledge, but wisdom and humility.
- Utilization of client strengths, use of **metaphors and stories**: Value to you: reframing and ways of breaking out of old patterns and paradigms of constraint.
- **Integrity**, reliable and dedicated, leads by example. Value to you: follows through with mutual accountability in the therapeutic alliance.
- **Pragmatic and realistic**. Value to you: setting goals that are attainable with sustainable strategies that fit with your personal ecology of skills and resources.
- Training and use of **CBT, hypnosis and EMDR** and other methods of affect regulation. Value to you: help with anxiety, phobias, and PTSD.

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- **Spiritual and mindful**, incorporating Martial Arts lessons in daily living. Value to you: Zen philosophy comes to life in a practical and simple way.
- Advanced athletic and **coaching experience**, NCCP Instructor. Value to you: mental training consultation for performance enhancement and excellence.
- **Systemic and gender-informed**. Value to you: couples counselling, sex therapy, interpersonal work situations looking at systemic feedback loops that can lead to unintended consequences and ways to avoid them.
- **Business and organizational development consulting experience**. Value to you: executive coaching for stress management and handling difficult and sensitive issues in corporations as well as family business where there are multiple layers of contexts.
- Grasp and **synthesis of many models** of therapy and intervention; experienced as a trainer of hypnosis and AAMFT Approved Supervisor. Value to you: can translate most phenomena in terms of many explanatory models, ideal for training, supervision, and mentoring.

### What is your mission and your passion?

I am one living manifestation of the spirit of Judo that flows through me and informs my life. My role is hopefully a **vessel of transformative grace** present in abundance to those who are open to its reception.

I will continue to pursue effectiveness, focus, and balance in developing transpersonal synergy.

A thorough Personal Mission Statement can include an Identity Statement, like the one you just read. It can also include Core Values, Signature Strengths, Operating Principles, Favorite Roles, Life Goals, and Proximate Objectives in the next 2-5 years to attain these goals. For more information about this mission, and my suggested format for life planning and purpose, see the Mission Statement section in the Topics section.

## What does SOC really mean?

**SOC** is an intervention framework featuring:

- **Solution**, including presenting problem defined in terms of the context in which it is embedded, its scope of influence, previous attempted solutions to deal with it and their success or failure, including circular questions about who is influenced and in what way.
- **Oriented**, means that our discussion and inquiry is not our exclusive focus. We are not rushing forward to a solution without building a therapeutic relationship based on listening, understanding, and dealing with the feelings and emotions that are bundled with the presenting problem matrix. We use selective empathic reflection to refine a focus around seeding patterns of possibility.
- **Counselling**, to include aspects of intervention from intense therapy to heal trauma, to counselling about strategies to navigate through life transitions, to coaching methods to enhance happiness and purpose.

## Value to You:

- Emphasis on being in the Now in progress toward an enhanced future.
- I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become.
- If there are factors from your past that impair your present functioning, they will be addressed adequately enough for you to transcend their limits
- Principles of acceptance and commitment will allow you to have compassion for yourself and others while rising to accountability in working toward your life goals and dreams.

## What do you mean by the misery to happiness continuum?

## The Misery to Happiness Continuum:

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### HOPELESS MISERY, CHALLENGES, CHOICES, TRANSITIONS, HAPPINESS

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Healing →	Counselling	→	Coaching
EMDR, CBT, SFT	SOC		SOC

- This graph puts interventions into perspective.
- Therapy for healing trauma and escaping life traps.
- Counselling for problems and transition points.
- Coaching for strategies for enhanced functioning, happiness, engagement, and meaning.

#### Value to you:

- Not labeling, blaming, or pathologizing.
- Suiting the level of intervention to your level of functioning.
- Going slow, if necessary, but as rapidly as optimal for growth and goal attainment.
- Incorporating the principles of Positive Psychology for the fulfillment of happiness, not merely relief from misery.

#### What is meant by an Ericksonian Approach?

Milton H. Erickson, M.D. was a legendary hypnotherapist who lived until 1980. He was regarded as the most effective hypnotherapist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is still renowned for the outstanding creativity of his approaches to problem conceptualization and innovative solutions to complex problems. Many books have been written about his approach, and a group of therapists have gone forward using his ideas in the method and style of their delivery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dr. Frank Young is one of these practitioners. This approach involves:

- Utilizations and assumptions of latent strengths. We all have strengths, but sometimes they are unavailable to us, as if we were locked out of our own house, and we need a locksmith to restore our access to our resources.
- A journeyman stance, not necessarily a master or expert, just a more experienced explorer of many paths, using collaboration and mutual discovery as a main theme.
- Using a language of possibility for the installation of hope.
- Presenting problem is analyzed in terms of scope of influence and context.
- Previous attempted solutions are examined, lessons learned and unlearned.
- Constraints interpersonal and intrapsychic, seen as impenetrable barriers that are actually illusions.
- Myth-management by pattern interruption, CBT assignments for myth-busting.
- The use of reframing, stories and metaphors to “see around corners.”
- Reconstruction and rearrangements of sequences and reward patterns between people in the problem-solution system.
- New patterns, management by exception, expanding good patterns.
- Small wheels turn big wheels, just noticeable differences leading to change-of-state transformations.
- Ratifying and amplifying change.

**Value to you:**

- A client-centred approach customized to your needs and your way of seeing the world, at least as a point of starting and joining in collaborative discovery.

- Metaphors and stories that make sense to you.
- Breaking away from old patterns and paradigms.
- A pathway to discovery and implementing patterns of possibility.

### **What is Positive Psychology, and how so you integrate it into your approach?**

Martin Seligman Ph.D. and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania and associates in several world academic settings have been active in researching the elements that constitute happiness. Over the past 15 years they have codified practices that promote happiness, and made them into correspondence courses called Authentic Happiness Coaching and Coaching Toward Happiness. Dr. Frank Young took an 8-month vanguard course in 2006, then integrated it within SOC, and subsequently taught a course about this integrated model at the Department of Social Work, University of Toronto. (See topic outlines in the SOC section).

#### **Value to you:**

- Positive Psychology principles fit particularly well in a solution-oriented approach, given its emphasis on present and future orientations, and an action-focused optimistic but realistic framework for problem resolution and enhanced functioning.
- Principles of the pleasant life (savoring), the engaged life (Flow in daily living), and the meaningful life (mission statement or personal life charter) are outlined and developed according to client purposes and goals.

### **How are the principles of Mindfulness covered in your approach?**

- In addition to the usual principles of affect regulation and dealing with negative thinking and assumptions through the application of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), the SOC approach incorporates strategies from acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).
- That is, in some cases the client is encouraged, through meditative practice and guided imagery, to separate personal self from thoughts and emotions, letting them float by, without judging them or identifying with them.
- Mindfulness is a meditative practice of being in the Now, rather than the present or the future, thereby turning down the loud insistence of negative mental chatter.
- Additionally, philosophical principles derived from the Martial Arts can be invoked to develop the elusive skills of acceptance, detachment from desire, compassion for self and others, and devotion and passion for life's purpose.

### **Value to you:**

- An empirically proven effective technique for stress reduction and affect or mood regulation.
- Learn a simple meditative practice for quieting the mind.
- Use mindfulness principles and practices to assist in life transitions.
- Learn the wisdom of acceptance, compassion, and commitment.

### **What does the SOC logo design represent?**

The centerpiece of this logo is the main object of intervention, the Solution to our client's dilemma in seeking our counsel. Hopefully, the solution will incorporate both yin and yang elements of a dialogue in a gender-informed systemic way. The Solution is holistically Oriented in the world to be sustainable. These elements are offered in the open vessel of Counselling, Consultation, and Coaching, denoted by the large C.

### **How can I use the materials in this website?**

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