

What we're reading... *The Solutions Focus*

90% of your customers love you to bits, but the rest don't. So, you focus on the remaining 10% to find out where the problem lies and eradicate it. Right?

Couldn't be more wrong, according to Paul Z Jackson and Mark McKergow, authors of *The Solutions Focus* (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, £16.99 – currently £11.89 on Amazon).

It's their pragmatic view that nothing succeeds like success. In thirteen information-packed chapters, they outline the practical skills and techniques that are essential to identifying what is working well – in order to do more of it.

The Solutions Focus is a veritable manual of techniques and ideas to help you transform the way you operate at work and in life generally. Through thought-provoking examples, ranging from seemingly trivial domestic disputes to issues affecting entire enterprises, the authors encourage us to ponder how we can apply their SIMPLE model to our own coaching practice, team or organisation.

There's something for everyone: as a 'words person', I particularly loved the concept of \$5,000 words that befuddle and bemuse and \$5 words that cut right to the core of the meaning.

The text is enlivened by anecdotes from 'expert witnesses', checklists and summaries to help the reader assimilate the content, while cheery graphics accompany references to the 'solution tools' of:

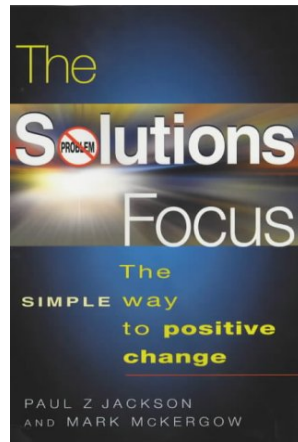
- Platform (where you are now)
- Future perfect (where you'd like to be)
- Counters (resources that help you to reach the solution)
- Scale (measuring progress)
- Affirm (recognising and valuing those who contribute)
- Small actions (little steps that mount up to a big difference)

I admit to initial misgivings when Jacqui handed me *The Solutions Focus*. Was this a simple idea stretched thinly across a whole book (in fact, a whole career, as the authors deliver Solutions training internationally)? And the model creates an acronym...

- **S**olutions not problems
- **I**nbetween – the action is in the interaction
- **M**ake use of what's there, not what isn't
- **P**ossibilities – past, present and future
- **L**anguage – simply said
- **E**very case is different

... which seemed way too neat!

However, I quickly warmed to their approach and 200 pages on I'm convinced. The book is inspirational in shifting the viewpoint from digging around the roots of problems and finding out who's at fault to searching for the solution. And in today's blame culture, isn't that a refreshing perspective?



This book review was written by Margaret Cain of M Squared Corporate Communications. For more information about Margaret's work please visit her website at: www.m2cc.co.uk .



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