

BOOK REVIEWS

Change Your Questions, Change Your Future by Elliott E Connie and Adam S Froerer

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The book's first half explain the SF stance and encourages the shift of attention from one's problems and obstacles, and accompanying sense of weakness, ineffectiveness or helplessness, towards purpose, autonomy, desired difference and outcome. Readers are invited to presuppose the best of themselves and their capabilities, strengths and resources. The second half introduces the "Solution Focused Diamond", the hallmark of how the authors present Solution Focused therapy. Here, the 'Purpose Diamond' is subtly adapted to fit into the self-development market, with a focus on 'success' rather than outcome — thus, 'desired outcome' becomes 'desired success', 'history of the outcome' becomes 'history of success', etc., and instead of 'closing', there is 'celebration'.

Readers of the earlier book are familiar with the 'Diving deep with Elliott' and 'A closer look with Adam' approach to unpacking concepts and techniques of SF and the 'Diamond'. This structure is carried over into the new book, with sections illustrated with vignettes from both authors' lives, and how they have dealt with challenges and overcome obstacles — many of

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them serious and testing. Some from before the authors' encounter with SF are viewed retrospectively, while others show how they have personally used the approach to advance towards their desired success. Most chapters end with a list of useful questions that synthesise the foregoing message, while the book's second half has excellent worksheets that will enable readers to get closer to the differences they seek.

The authors have worked hard to make Solution Focused Therapy more accessible, through their organisation The Solution Focused Universe and Elliott Connie's move into podcasting and use of social media — more recently, he has appeared on popular broadcasts, such as The Breakfast Club, The Black Effect podcast, has appeared as an expert in popular psychology events like the Anxiety Summit, and is increasingly viewed as a motivational speaker, particularly in the US black community. This work is bringing SF unprecedentedly into the mainstream and will likely help shift the public narrative on how to talk about problems — or approach life in general. It is an outcome many in the SF community have sought, and it is good to see this new visibility, on a scale that could make a real impact. This book provides interested general readers with a means to deepen their understanding of the approach.

Some aspects of *Change Your Questions* could have made the link to Solution Focus more explicitly. By choosing to keep the same broad format as the 'Diamond' book, while removing some of the more technical elements, examples and descriptions sometimes seem generic and indistinguishable from other self-improvement messaging. Phrases like 'greatness requires discomfort', 'train yourself to enjoy the journey' and 'live a life of love and love will come back to you' are typical of the tone, and Solution Focused context is not always obvious. There is a focus on the role of God and faith in the authors' own lives that might alienate some readers, and may obscure the link to SF. Only in the book's middle, where the 'Purpose Diamond' is introduced, do the structure and process of SF become more explicit. But does this matter? Perhaps not, as Solution Focused therapists are not the audience here, and as a motivational, self-improvement book, this fits ably into a familiar and accessible genre where the celebrity and charisma of the writers are an important vehicle to draw readers into the message.

A sincerity and desire to help others better their lives — often against the odds — is present throughout this book, alongside an energy in the presentation of ideas and questions that is infectious and should inspire many readers. The authors are genuinely sharing what they believe has helped them achieve success, without holding back any secrets, or pretending they have all the answers. Instead, they share the powerful questions that people can ask themselves to create their own pathway to success, based on personal knowledge to achieve the outcomes they desire. The book has a real generosity of spirit, both in the vulnerability shown in sharing personal stories, and in the sharing of the Solution Focused process.

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