

BOOK REVIEWS

The Essence of Solution Focused Practice by Andrew Gibson

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Yes, you got it right. Andrew Gibson manages on 55 pages to explain the practice of an approach, that claims to be simple and easy, and he does it in a simple and easy. Numbers and figures are used to set a structure: what comes first, second, third etc. and a quadrant and circle to illustrate the relationship between a problem and a solution, other times a line illustrating “a mountain” and the steps to get there. All explained in 44 pages, summarized in 11! Impressive.

The simplicity of the book is hard to miss, as most pages only have one or two sentences. In this way, Andrew Gibson masters presenting the essence of Solution Focused Practice in a precise and concise language. No superfluous words, only what is absolutely needed, and to ensure understanding how it would look like in practice, you find an example in the end, one page only (unp.).

The Essence of Solution Focused Practice presents a structure of the essence of Solution Focused Practice containing 1) Common Sense 2) Social Capital 3) Description before Action and 4) Time. Each of these parts are visually explained followed by a simple description. In Part 1 you find the first three pages contains a total of 20 words: “We have a problem” (red square (p.3), “It blocks our view of what we want” (red square in front green circle (p.5) and “If we talk about the problem, it grows” (larger red square in front of green circle (p.7). A clear visual expression together with few simply words of explanation, which continues in Part 2, where Social Capital are explained

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in two pages with a bit longer sentence: “Our network of family, friends and acquaintances is a resource that can help us progress towards what we want. This is our Social Capital” (p.15) and illustrated with a big green circle representing the solution/ preferred future and a small red square as the problem, things we don’t want or dislike.

It’s difficult not to wonder, how many redundant words are used in many books to describe something simple. As a trainer, it certainly made me reflect on whether I’m complicating something very simple with too many words.

The book is aimed at anyone who wants a simple explanation of what is essential in Solution Focused Practice. Not so much about underlying assumptions, but hands on statements and tools that enable one to act. “If we start by describing what we want, this will help us before we act” (p.23) – this has a logical pragmatic sound, that is difficult to argue against. Next page, please. And by having both a visual and written explanation, the book aimed at a broader target group: if you are challenged with reading, look at the pictures, and vice versa.

I appreciate how something sometimes hard to explain and practice are nice and concentrated presented in *The Essence of Solution Focused Practice* although it in some ways have been a miner nightmare to review. How do you review something simple and straightforward without overcomplicating it? How do I ensure my review captures the essence of a book on the essence of a practice, that is only 55 pages long without reproducing the entire book? I ended up with making a review with more words than in the book itself, and longer to write than the hour that Andrew Gibson almost describes in “Acknowledgements” (unp.) – what a paradox, but I have enjoyed every single one of the eight minutes it takes to read the book, so I have read it several times, which I can’t say about many books. Congrats, Andrew!

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