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Book Review - The power of the next small step: What's the best that could happen?

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The power of the next small step: What's the best that could happen?

Rayya Ghul

2015. Dallas, TX: The Connie Institute

Paperback, 134 pages. £6.99 (Also eBook — various formats)

Review by Frances Price

Canberra Grammar School

Having completed my psychology internship with a Solution-Focused psychologist, the question, "What is the best-case scenario?" is very familiar to me. It does, however, speak against most of what we see, hear, talk about and focus on in our daily lives. In her book, *The power of the next small step*, Rayya Ghul provides an easily accessible foray into Solution-Focused thinking and explains simple ways to take that "next small step."

This is fundamentally a book for clients — a Solution-Focused self-help book. However, unlike some other self-help books, it is not opaque about the specifics of the therapeutic approach. It openly explains the ideas behind Solu-

tion-Focused techniques to people who might want to make some changes in their life.

Writing in a conversational style, Rayya takes her readers through the Solution-Focused way of thinking and provides practical ways people can be agents of change in their own journey. The basic tenets of Solution Focus are explained step by step, allowing people to dip in and out of the material, revisiting as needed.

While reading this book I found myself thinking of several friends, family members and colleagues who may appreciate/benefit from/engage with this book. As Rayya describes in the introduction, this book was written to bridge the gap between the Solution-Focused practitioner and those who are interested in applying it in their own lives. With expert advice “only going so far,” Solution Focus provides a framework to help people be the experts in their own lives.

Beginning the book with a chapter on myth busting allows the reader to question their assumptions and ideals they may have been pushing themselves towards without necessarily being aware of this. Rayya provides practical examples that allow the reader to step back from a predetermined ideal and focus on ways of making a shift — right now. The ‘Miracle picture’ or ‘preferred future’ of Solution Focus is explained in a way that helps the reader see its practical benefit for the here-and-now. By stepping through the miracle activities, you give yourself permission to dream success rather than just survive. You can create a compass for what you’re aiming for rather than focussing on what you’re trying to avoid. Filling the picture of your preferred future with specific details allows you to ‘hook in’ to what is important and meaningful to you.

I also loved the terminology of making sure you remain Solution-Focused rather than “solution forced”, using it as, “a way of co-operating with life instead of grappling with it and trying to bend it to your will.” Rather than seeking out the perfect answer to a ‘problem’ we’re presented with, Solution Focus encourages you to treat small steps as experiments, “whatever happens is simply useful information.” Rayya’s practical activities and real life stories guide the reader through engaging with these ideas and reflecting on them in their own lives.

This book provides a straightforward introduction to the field of Solution Focus that is easy to engage with, a perfect starting point for those new to Solution Focused ideas. For those familiar with Solution Focus, this book could serve as a conversational reminder as well as being a resource you could recommend to clients or people in your life who express curiosity about all things Solution Focus.

The reviewer

Frances Price is a psychologist who works in both the school and private practice settings. Having completed her registration training with Lyn Worsley at the Resilience Centre in Sydney, she has a passion for helping children and families identify their personal strengths and resources to navigate and negotiate successfully with their surroundings. She has been lucky enough to attend Solution-Focused conferences both in Australia and overseas and loves the professional collaboration involved in those events. She is Secretary of the Australasian Association for Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. Frances currently works in Canberra and, while she keeps in contact with Solution-Focused colleagues in Sydney, is open for new professional networks in the ACT.

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