

## ***Pathways to Possibility: 8 Solution Focused Tips to Build Practitioner Confidence, Make a Difference in Your Client's Life and Unstick Yourself and from the Problem***

When working with a client describing the multiple struggles and traumas they have endured, an empathic practitioner can feel overwhelmed by the intensity of the problem alongside their client.

To make finding a way back into hope more POSSIBLE, here are 8 SF tips to hold onto belief in the client's capacity for change, and our confidence to make a difference in the client's life, to be the 'Resilientologist' our client needs us to be:

1. **P** - *The person that the client wished to be was already there, present albeit in the shadows of the client's life, unnoticed, and very often all that we were doing was asking questions which invited that version of the client into the lime-light, to take front-stage. – Evan George (2022)*
2. **O** - **Our** job as SF practitioners is to invite our client to transform into the version of self who can better cope with their trauma experience - this better version is 'the solution'.
3. **S** - **"Suppose** you woke up tomorrow and somehow it was just one of those days where you were at your very best, what might be the very first sign that could let you know this had happened?" If stuck in a problem focused discussion struggling to find Best Hopes language to build on, use a Preferred Future or Tomorrow Question to invite a more general 'self at best' description then make this more specific to the client's life with follow up questions.
4. **S** - Identify the client's **strength** amidst their trauma, not strength without their trauma. *"It is not about removing the struggle, it is about showing up at your best for the struggle."* – Elliott Connie
5. **I** - **Invite** the client to describe how they would like to interact with the trauma in a better way, as a better version of themselves, rather than trying to remove the trauma experience from their life. Eg. Describe how the peaceful version of the client manages trauma thoughts differently compared to the anxious version.
6. **B** - The **Best Hopes** version of client walks through their pathway of possibility as one of many ways to better cope with their current life circumstances. Invite our client to describe the differences they would notice as they interacted with everyone and everything in their life from their better version of self – everything is different as they are different. Get a clear vision/picture of the client's Best Hopes or what their better version of self would look like to make this version stand out more clearly from the client's challenging life. Eg. Calm/confident client showing up to reclaim their life from anxiety or depression.
7. **L** - **Language creates reality** – Steve de Shazer. Engage our client in a detailed description of their Best Hopes becoming reality, their best version of self showing up to better cope with the challenge. For the client, a detailed description can feel like this parallel reality of possibility has already happened, and can happen again.
8. **E** - **Evoke** the best version of our client and get out of their way. How we see a person impacts how we treat them and how we treat them influences who they become. The trauma story and the hero story are the same story – it just depends on how you listen. – Elliott Connie. See the best version in our client despite the problem and to talk to this best version of our client.

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