

There will always be more solutions than problems

*We hope you will join us in September at the SOL Summer University in Budapest
or next year at the next SOL conference in Cologne 2008.*

More information on www.solworld.org.





SOL 2007

Reach-out Conference

6th International SOL Conference
11-13 May 2007
in Bruges, Belgium

Programme at a glance

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	08:30-09:30 Registration + Mingling with Coffee and Refreshments	08:30-09:00 Mingling with Coffee and Refreshments	08:30-09:00 Mingling with Coffee and Refreshments
	09:30-10:10 Welcome & Conference Introduction by Louis Cauffman	09:00-09:50 Keynote by Prof. James Kennedy 09:50-10:10 Break + Picture	09:00-10:00 Reach out to the Future with Mark McKergow 10:00-10:20 Break
	10:10-11:00 Conversation on Neuroscience, Happiness and Resilience with Luc Isebaert, Alasdair Macdonald and Michael Hjerth	10:10-11:00 Conversation on Networking models with James Kennedy, Peter Stam and Louis Cauffman	10:20-11:50 Workshop slot 4
	11:00-11:30 Break	11:00-11:20 Break	11:50-12:10 Break
	11:30-13:00 Workshop slot 1	11:20-12:50 Workshop slot 3	12:10-13:00 Closing ceremony + hand over to SOL2008 Cologne
	13:00-14:10 Lunch	12:50-14:00 Lunch 13:15 Djembé workshop 13:15 Guided Tour in Venue	13:00-14:00 Lunch
	14:10-15:00 Triangular Interview	14:00-14:50 Triangular Interview	
	15:00-15:30 Break	14:50-15:10 Break	
	15:30-17:00 Workshop slot 2	15:10-17:00 Swarm Open Space	
		17:00 Sol Steering Group Meeting	
20:30-22:00 Pre-Conference Reception in Bruges' Gothic Town Hall	18:45 Meeting in front of Bruges' Town Hall (Burg) for the Optional Evening Event: Brewery Visit + Dinner + Boat trip	19:00 Carillon Concert Gala Dinner SF Jazz & SOL Cabaret In the Belfry	



Reach out!

Working and Being Solution Focused is by definition surfing on the waves of change and explore with a curious mind what is working **NOW** in this very moment and world. It is not an isolated approach. Therefore we want to move beyond the old stories and brilliantly working techniques. We want to **REACH OUT** and connect to some exciting and innovative scientific approaches that offer support for the SF model. Please join us on this trip to the studies of resilience, happiness, networking models and the brain...

We also want to **REACH OUT** to you too and invite you to have a wonderful time in our well-loved medieval Bruges. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy your stay and that this conference will leave an unforgettable memory.

We invite you to **REACH OUT** too and meet new people, let new ideas and connections emerge from three days of swarming together in this most inspiring setting.

And finally, we hope that you will leave **HAPPILY** and build some **RESILIENCE** for your life and working practice as a result of these days.

**There will always be
more solutions than problems**

John Eagan

Bruges



The history of Bruges begins around 2000 years ago. Archeologists found traces of Gallic-Roman swarming behavior on the city grounds. Neuroscientists found next to nothing. The inhabitants did not live in isolated happiness; they traded with England and the rest of Gaul. Around 750, trade networks were developed with Scandinavia. The name Bruges in fact comes from the Old Norse "Bryggja" which means "landing stage". In the eleventh century Bruges had expanded to become a commercial centre for Europe and in the fourteenth century it was a rich international port city. The fourteenth century, a period of crises for Bruges and Flanders with revolts, epidemics, political unrest and war, ended with small steps in conflict resolution and the dynastic merger of Flanders and Burgundy. Cloth production was partly replaced by luxury goods, banking services, crafts and conference bags. Prosperity increased up to a steady 9 on a scale from 1 to 10. Travelers were deeply impressed by the sumptuousness and luxury of the city scene. They were welcomed by receptions at the Bruges Town Hall, enjoyed guided tours on the city canals and spent unforgettable evenings at the local cabaret. Art, consultancy, coaching and culture flourished as if a miracle had happened. But all this came to a temporary end with the sudden death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482. The revolt against her widower Maximilian of Austria resulted in the decline of Bruges. It became one of the poorest cities in the country. This problem however became the city's biggest asset because there was no money to tear down the old houses and modernize the city. Hence the historic outlook of the city. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Bruges has been a city of art, a tourist centre and home to the Korzybski institute and its Bruges model.



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Conference layout

The conference is designed in a format of four integrated layers: conversations, workshops, triangular interviews and swarms.

Conversations

Instead of panels, we choose to organize conversations amongst specialists from the different reach out themes who will be interviewed by a host and then be invited to an open conversation amongst them. The audience is invited to act as a reflecting team to spice their conversations with remarks and questions.

Workshops

In twenty workshops the latest developments in Solution Focus will be linked to one of our reach out themes.

Triangular interviews

We will interview a client together with his/her consultant. The clients present their case, the consultants share their initial ideas about the strategy to handle the case. The audience will be invited to work in small groups on how they would tackle the challenge. Then an interviewer will do a live consultation with the client and the consultant. The goal is that everybody is involved and that we get an opportunity to see the reality of the casework in real live.

Swarms

SOL people are often people who like swarming... they like to interact, give and take away, hang out together and see what interesting ideas, initiatives, new bonds, emerge from that. We kept two small rooms as "swarms" for you: places where people can meet, share, present something if they find an interested audience, hang posters, post Q&A's or small requests, read one another's articles, ... The swarms (**Vienna2005, Prague2006 and Budapest2007**) are accessible all through the conference.

Swarms: open space

On Saturday afternoon, there will be time for all the emerging questions, ideas, interesting topics that have come alive as a result from our interaction and swarming behaviour.

Appreciation wall

Insoo Kim Berg is one of the founders and pioneers of the Solution Focused Approach. Last year she was still at the conference in Vienna and this year we have to miss her since she passed away unexpectedly. Many people at this conference have known Insoo and heard so many wise and interesting stories from her. We want to show our appreciation for this remarkable woman, and invite all of the participants to fill up our "appreciation wall" with memories of Insoo, poems, drawings, photo's, anything that reminds you of her. We thank the organizers of Vienna 06 for the DVD with life shots from Insoo. Thank you Insoo.

Post-its

In your conference bag, you will find post-its. With these post its, you can leave your traces at this conference! Make compliments to the people that contributed something valuable for you, leave questions, proposals, suggestions on someone's bag, jacket, or chair... leave a note, drop a line, share your happiness, appreciation and curiosity!

Thematic Background

The science of happiness

The leader of the tiny Himalayan state of Bhutan is more interested in the Gross National Happiness than in the Gross National Product. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is writing about happiness since many years (see book: The Art of Happiness, 1998). Buddhism has for many centuries now, offered a manual for living a happy (read: a satisfying) life. In the west, Epictetus wrote in the first century his Manual for the Art of Living. Yet one does not have to be a Buddhist or an ancient philosopher to be interested in happiness! In contrast to this vast body of literature, one can wonder how it comes that the 'new' science of psychology in the 20th century was primarily occupied (read: obsessed) with everything that could possibly go wrong with humans, single mindedly focused (read: blinded) by pathology, even to the extent that it took a brave psychologist like Martin Seligman, until the late nineties before he discovered that you can reverse these ideas into learned happiness. His important book, Authentic Happiness (2002) really paved the road for the vast stream of academic and professional articles and books on the subject. This opening of the academic field and expanding the importance of the theme of happiness, is a real accomplishment that the famous psychologist Daniel Kahneman was not able to do (even if he won the Nobel price in 2002 for his foundational work).

The study of resilience

Family therapists moved psychotherapy from a strict individual approach (that was only interested in trying to understand why a person did not function well) to an interactional model where the relations between the members of the system were studied in the hope to change rules in the interaction so that the problems would go away. Yet, most (classical) family therapists were using a deficit model that was (and still is) very problem focused. It is very interesting to discover that the strength based approach to the functioning of systems (from couples over families to large groups and organisations) did not originate from psychology nor psychiatry departments and schools. The interest in resources, strengths, competencies in human systems was first studied in departments of sociology and social work.

Our working definition of resilience is: 'the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive (life) events, to learn from these experiences and develop a pro-active response mechanism ('prodaptation') that helps one to 'bounce forwards'. The exceptional usefulness of the resilience concept for organisational work is evident. Instead of concentrating on what not works, you can choose to tap into what does work. You can help staff and teams to appreciate the cognitive, emotional and behavioural strengths both on a personal and an interpersonal level.

Neurosciences

Is the time coming that psychologists no longer have to rely solely on what their clients tell them or on what they themselves conceptualize in their sophisticated psychologist minds? Can it really be the case that the psychologist of tomorrow only needs to look at the screen where the results of the fMRI show up? Well, this is all a little (but not more than a little, mind you) premature. Yet, the neurosciences are developing on a daily basis. What was unheard of in the year 2000, is per today reality. Mind and body truly are one again. The nurture-nature dichotomy is replaced by careful (yet expanding) research that indicates the interwovenness of genes, behaviour and circumstances. Recent neuroscientific developments offer useful insights for all of us who earn their living with 'influencing people for the better'. Managers, leaders and coaches can benefit from the knowledge that the neurosciences offer us in order to become even better at what we (try to) do.

Networking models

Intelligence used to be 'something' inside the head of an individual, as early researchers in artificial intelligence thought. Indeed, this is the way we experience our own thinking, as if we hear private voices and see private visions. But this experience can lead us to overlook what should be our most noticeable quality as species: our tendency to associate with one another, to socialize. If we want to model human intelligence, we should do so by modelling individuals in a social context interacting with each other. These social interactions result in a change in the thinking process -not just the content- of the participants. Since the time we were hunter-gatherers, evolution helped us to cooperate. In the light of harsh circumstances, humans developed the ability to enter non-zero sum games. A zero sum game is like tennis: 1 wins, 1 loses. Non-zero sum games makes all involved into winners and changes the game in the process. Particularly relevant to the Solution Focused approach are the insights from the study of swarm intelligence: 1. Mind is social, 2. Human intelligence results from interaction and 3. culture and cognition are inseparable consequences of human sociality.