

Editorial

Celebrating the contribution of Björn Johansson

Björn Johansson passed away on June 29, 2014 after a time of intense sickness and surrounded by the good wishes, prayers, vibes, letters and thoughts of many of the solution focused community. His partner Eva and Björn himself inspired many members of the SF community to have ‘the best summer ever’ in celebration of life – also Björn’s life. Björn Johansson was a generous, caring person – in all senses of the word ‘a good man’. Many remember him asking: ‘are we doing enough to leave this world a better place?’ and that seemed to have been a recurring theme in his life and work. We therefore want to dedicate this edition to the memory of our friend. His work, his thoughts, his straightforward kindness will stay with us, even if he is no longer here in person.

In this edition, we feature an article by Klaus Hofmann, Günter Lueger and Peter Luisser which describes the work of Björn Johansson and Urban Norling. The SF leadership training both carried out created ‘significant improvements on the level of leadership behaviour as well as on the level of hard facts like productivity’. It is a small study – but it demonstrates effectively what SF can do in organisations, and it is the only one of its kind (to our knowledge). We hope you will use this reprint to show to your clients and prospects and in your marketing efforts.

Many of you will have come across the ‘Björn’ activity. In groups of three, people take turns to ask each other a series of questions starting with ‘Out of everything you are doing at work at the moment, what would you say you are most pleased with?’ The question is asked around the group, then the next question is revealed. This is not only a very robust and enjoyable format to get people asking questions and listening to the answers. The initial question is a marvellous example of an SF question. ‘Out of all the things you are doing at work at

the moment' – think and look widely. 'What would you say' – it's your judgement that counts, not anyone else's. 'You are most pleased with' – there has to be something you are *most* pleased with, even if you are not very pleased with anything. This is a great example from Björn of how careful wording can pay huge dividends.

We also feature Björn and Eva's chapter from *Solutions Focus Working* (2007) describing their work with a leadership team in a social services office in Lund, Sweden. This chapter contains excellent exercises, which we have use for again and again, as well as another example of Björn's skilful application of SF work in management settings.

Björn Johansson participated in the great majority of SOLworld conferences and other events generously sharing his work and ideas. Many of us remember his funny songs at the cabaret, making us all sing in Swedish accompanied by his own guitar playing. He was also a founding member of SFCT and gave a lot of input into the Clues document, the review process and other foundational processes. The research conference idea emerged through discussions with him. The Clues centre in Karlstad, Sweden, emerged over the years as a leading light in the training and supervision of social workers, coaches and managers in Sweden. Eva has announced her intention to carry on their work there, continuing the use and exploration of the SF model.

Other contents in this issue

Vicky Bliss's article on formulations in psychotherapy emerged through our research conference in 2013. She describes the traditional concept of 'formulation' (where does the problem come from and what is the best method of treatment) and develops ideas on how SF therapy can show the same kind of ethical commitment (which is what formulations are used for) by using other means. Of course, this article is about therapy – the overall question, however, of how we as SF coaches and trainers can show our quality and commitment to ethics in a world that sees these issues quite differently is worth thinking about.

Susanne Burgstaller's Metalogue on 'What is an organisation?' is a delightful diversion. Inspired by Gregory Bateson's metalogues with his daughter Mary Catherine in the seminal collection *Steps To An Ecology of Mind*, this piece presents an imagined dialogue between mother and daughter about what mother does all day (SF) and why. The piece is not only entertaining but also offers a valuable perspective into the roots of our practice. The classic article we feature in this edition is a real treat – a glimpse into the foundations of SFBT as described by David Kiser, who was a student at BFTC at the time, and Fred Piercy. The reprinting rights for this article were rather expensive and the article is not readily available for people outside of universities. We are very proud to have obtained David Kiser's express permission for reprint and also to have had the funds to pay for the rights (which went to the original publisher). Thank you all for your membership fees which made this possible!

Our case study by Yumiko Morita describes an interesting way of adapting a resource oriented stance that fits with Japanese culture. Instead of using the 'strength'-concept of positive psychology, Morita-san uses Japanese characters for her clients to identify their resources. She also uses SF questions to help people find out how they see these strengths in operation in their daily life.

Our research review was done by three master's students from the University of Sydney: Jessica Cashman, Kate Munro and Lisa Wyburd. Carey Glass met them at the second Australian and New Zealand Solution-Focused Conference in August, and they give us access to very interesting material about work being done in education including the establishment of an SF public alternative school.

The Review-review describes Rob Rave's impressive training programme for 300 managers of a FTSE 100 company. We also have many book reviews – thank you all for writing them and please write more! Book reviews are a great way to keep everybody informed of the latest development and also to connect to writers of these books by sending them a copy of *InterAction* and thus making them aware of our existence.