Thema

Lösungen

The Solution Focused Approach according to SySt®

The linking of two effective schools

Insa Sparrer (IS) in conversation with Elisabeth Ferrari (EF)

Abstract

The Solution Focused approach according to SySt® builds on and extends the approach of the Milwaukee School. The possible questions are thus ordered by syntactic categories. Focussing on whether the connected elements reflect the complete state of the conceptual SySt® schemata helps us to decide to which extend they should be taken into consideration in their present state. This creates the basis to ask appropriate questions. The transverbal language additionally enables therapists and counsellors alike to make use of a multitude of further solution-focused interventions.

EF   *Solution-focused thought, action and speech, solution focus as a way of life can be viewed from different perspectives. What do you think links all these perspectives? What constitutes the common basis of the solution-focused approaches?*

IS   I think what all solution-focused approaches have in common is that the problem and the solution are independent of one another, and that we can find solutions without necessarily analysing the problem. We do not need to know exactly what the components or aspects of the problem are. Unlike this approach, problem-oriented ones focus more on the components of any individual problem. With the solution-focused procedure, we can immediately move towards a solution. In the solution-focused approach a client or a team can of course also speak of the problem. As those who want to change something often cannot just yet express exactly what the issue is about. This must therefore be 'encircled', so to speak: "What should we talk about today? Is there something like a main topic from your point of view?" Or, if there are many topics: "Which one should we talk about first?"

With the solution-focused procedure, we can immediately move towards a solution.

A solution manifests itself in the client feeling better in some way or other. This sense of BETTER can be expressed in very different ways: in an improved state of mind, an uplifted spirit, showing that the client is able to act with renewed energy, having more ideas, etc. (S)He or she will then describe all this as a form of BETTER. Working with the solution-focused procedure means concentrating on it only – time and time again, using whatever tools.

A solution manifests itself in the client feeling better in some way or other.

EF   *A solution focus is a broad term, a basis. According to Matthias Varga von Kibéd, this solution-focused basis involves:*

- *Where possible by using the terms that have already come up in the conversation and that the other person has already used.*

- *Follow-up questions that allow the clients (interlocutor, my partner) to further differentiate and to thus discern the relevant differences for himself.*

- *The use of scaling questions.*

- *A multitude of further questions, such as the 'Instead-Question' or circular questions.*

- *Transition from a client's usually causal description of his problem to a non-causal contemplation of any possible changes by way of the miracle question.*

- *Appreciative observations ('compliments').*

What exactly does solution focus in terms of SySt® mean?

IS The solution-focused work according to SySt® is essentially based on the solution-focused approach of the Milwaukee School.

The Milwaukee School has investigated the concept of a solution focus in terms of language. The extension of the concept of a solution focus to perception, action and way of life is an extension that I have made in order to be able to compare the solution-focused approach with other approaches. To this end, I first implemented what the change of paradigm from a problem- oriented approach to a solution focus one involves.

Change of paradigm from problem orientation to solution focus.

I believe that the Milwaukee School has fulfilled such a change of paradigm. To be able to compare both paradigms, I developed the following solution-focused formats for the structural constellations:

- Solution Constellation,
- Goal Approximation Constellation,
- 9/12 Squares Constellation,
- Solution Geometric Interview

to discover analogies in the terms and definitions and question forms in both paradigms. Thus the "obstacle" from the problem-oriented approach becomes the "challenge" in the solution-focused on, which then transforms into the "resource". In the solution-focused approach, the question about the causes from the problem-oriented approach corresponds to the question: "And suppose you can – as if by a miracle – overcome difficulty X, how will you notice this?", or the question: "Suppose you have overcome the trauma, how will you find out that you have?"

Manifold questions can be asked

On the basis of the above mentioned approach we have further categorised and systematised the manifold questions. There are questions that explore solutions in the here and now and there are others supporting the search for solutions in the past as well as in the future. Using this concept we become - to a certain extent - well aware of whether we might have forgotten a certain period of time which helps finding the solution.

For us, keeping an eye out for what could be missing stems from the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP) as propounded by Wittgenstein: "The world is determined by the facts, and by their being all the facts." (Sentence 1.11) and "... the totality of facts determines what is the case ..." (Sentence 1.12)

I believe this eye on the totality and completeness is another way of thinking that sets our approach apart from other ways of asking solution-focused questions.[1]

We consider whether something that could perhaps be important to the solution has been or is being forgotten. However, we do not use the concept of totality and completeness here in the sense that we must know all of the causes or all of the content. Completeness in our sense means to which extent ***Completeness*** should the connection of the elements in the present be considered, and which issues - due to the switch – should be considered after the miracle aspect has disclosed the solution.

In this respect, we extend the questions that have been discovered, developed or condensed for the solution-focused approach in the verbal realm within the Milwaukee School.

Let us take a look at a few additions and extensions to such syntactic categories that have proven themselves in the SySt® model of a solution focus.

Questions on the past and future context by analogy with the Tetralemma Constellation:

Past context:

"Is there someone you will become less similar with when the miracle happens?" (Dissimilarity question)

If the response is "Yes", follow up with:

"Check when you imagine this person mentally and say to her: 'You could not fulfil for yourself, what presently is my aim and that was very difficult for you' ...' (or 'My aim seems to be very ....strange for you). 'If I now take some first steps in my direction and towards my aim, then please look at me friendly.' Check how the person then reacts."

If the response is "No":

"If the miracle has happened now, how will you deal with this than?"

---

1   Please also confer to SyStemischer 2/2013: Insa Sparrer: 'Interventionen als Fragen' and Matthias Varga von Kibéd 'Fragen über Fragen'.

"Does an irritating event happen after the miracle that would not happen without it?"

If the response is "Yes":

"But now the miracle has happened. So how do you deal with this now?"

Stronger syntactisation

I developed the 'Solution-Focused Interview with (virtually) No Audible Answers' to this end, whereby a solution-focused dialogue is conducted with the client, but she only provides the answers mentally - to herself so to say. An interview thus takes place in which solution-focused questions are asked but the content of the answers to these questions mainly remains hidden by the interviewee. This makes clear that in the solution-focused approach, questions have a different function than in everyday life. The interviewer does not ask the questions to learn information and react to this, but rather to trigger processes in the client, which are helpful to him. Such processes might be

In the solution-focused approach, questions have a different function than in everyday life.

- to obtain details of the solution,
- to find forgotten resources,
- to empower him to be able to react to difficult context conditions (situations, individuals' behaviour), and in general
- to enable the independent finding of relevant differences.

One further syntactisation consists in our handling of the scaling questions. We use the scaling question prototypically:

The scaling questions are normally used in the solution-focused approach to de-

termine details for the next steps. We use the questions at the 'now', 'next step' (mostly: now +1) and 'good enough' points to explore

- where the client stands,
- how she notices progress,
- when she can continue alone.

Whereby the client in this case also does not need to say the answers out loud.

In this way the scaling questions can be used even more syntactically. The process triggered in the client by the scaling questions is important: that (s)he becomes aware of what (s)he has achieved, how (s)he notices the progress, and when (s)he no longer needs us. The contents are important for the client, however we as the interview host do not need to know them.

The syntactisation in the SySt® model of solution focus helps to leave the change process even more with the client, as it is not possible to influence the content in any way. I think Steve de Shazer would have really liked this form in terms of Ockham's razor, as communication of the contents of the responses can also be dispensed with.

Extension of the verbal language with the transverbal language of the systemic structural constellations

The integration of SySt® miniatures into the solution-focused dialogue allows what the client cannot say to be expressed in the pictorial language of the structural constellations. Moreover, in a structural constellation, the aspects of experience, of changing one's perspective and of trial actions are far more present than in the verbal language. For most clients, these further aspects are extremely helpful to implement the solution in one's everyday life.

EF   *Matthias Varga von Kibéd also sees the ability of representative perception as an opportunity to find questions: "If we allow ourselves to enter into a similar state to the client, we become more precise in asking questions. I recognized or perceived this attitude, this indirect access to representative perception, in both Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg as well as in Marshall Rosenberg. Similarly, the selection of the possible experiments chosen by a therapist does not happen according to a schema alone, but rather has something to do with representative perception, too. One indirectly assumes the client's perspective and checks whether one has the impression that (s)he will accept the task or not. If this seems doubtful, we'll give him or her another one."*

He regards the mental schemata as a further central source of questions.[2] SySt® is based on mental schemata such as the Tetralemma or Belief Polarity Schema. Matthias Varga von Kibéd defines a mental concept as a general schema that can be used in broad classes of applications regulating specific approaches, orientations, classifications and arrangements of what ever aspect in thought.

What is the significance of such mental schemata in the solution focus according to SySt®? Could it be said that these mental schemata also help to systematise questions?

---

2   Matthias Varga von Kibéd, 'Fragen über Fragen', SyStemischer 2/2013

IS The SySt® formats forming the basis of structural constellations originate from logical schemata, from mental schemata. In logic, you try to determine all possibilities and principles, which are connected with a certain mental schema.

Mental schemata are independent of any content, experience, etc. They enable us to enquire the necessary aspects in a certain sense (namely that of the totality of facts) more completely – and this also in a syntactical manner, so without the content becoming the guide for the questions.

Mental schemata are independent of any content.

In this sense, the scale is also a mental schema when we concentrate it on the aforementioned five prototypical scale values of 'after the miracle' – 'before the very start' – 'now' – 'now + 1' – 'good enough'.

In the Tetralemma mental schema, the totality is contained, whereby each possibility arises from a context extension of the previous one. If we start from the problem world (as THE ONE position), the world of the aim (THE OTHER position) forms the first context extension. If the aim is experienced separately, a switch to a link can arise through a form of BOTH, one aspect of the miracle.

In the Tetralemma mental schema, the totality is contained.

NONE OF BOTH occurs if an entirely different issue becomes relevant to the solution – e.g. a context issue such as an experience from the past that is perhaps still having such an impact that no decision can be made between THE ONE and THE OTHER. Or a future issue that arises when the current one is solved and which is perhaps associated with even bigger problems. Then resolution merely of the current issue would be insufficient; the miracle question must be extended to these context issues

The FIFTH NON-POSITION 5?!? again brings a context extension with it, adding something else, something mobile, a dynamism. All this is also contained in the solution in terms of the miracle. The miracle includes BOTH, NONE OF BOTH and the FIFTH NON-POSITION.

From a mental schema that takes all the possibilities into account, we receive indications in the sense of: it would be good not to disregard this or that in the miracle question.

With the help of a logical mental schema, I do have opportunities to ask questions that help to make something more explicit that the client perhaps does not think of, and it thus becomes less likely that something essential, an essential aspect, an essential component that is required to achieve a solution is missing. Thanks to the logical mental schema, no content knowledge is required to find appropriate questions.

No content knowledge is required to find appropriate questions.

EF   *To summarise, this means that you have mental schemata, which have been developed from logic or by applying logic. In this sense, these mental schemata have a completeness or totality, so if questions are asked based on these mental schemata, it is very likely that the client will remember all essential facts more rapidly.*

IS Yes, we are linked to our past, and it might be that people from the past are relevant to present-day changes, e.g.. people whom we have forgotten, whom we do not think of but to whom we are currently also linked in our relationship structure. We know from structural constellations that clients often do not immediately remember all relevant aspects.

The dissimilar question ("Suppose you achieve your aim, is there then a person important to you that you become more dissimilar with?") forms part of the past context, for example. If someone wishes to achieve an aim and assumes that if he moves towards this aim, he will become more dissimilar with someone, this can be an indication of a loyalty issue. In this case, we ask: "How do you suppose the person will react when you achieve your aim? And how will you react to this reaction – now, after the miracle has happened?" Such questions serve as a setback prevention and help stabilising the miracle. We do not see loyalties as causality but rather as 'as if' constructions that can be reframed.

Loyalties as 'as if' constructions that can be reframed.

EF   *I assume that these mental schemata do not automatically lead to solution-focused thought and action. We can also work in a problem-oriented manner using these mental schemata, can't we?*

IS It is, of course, also possible to use the Tetralemma schema in a problem-oriented way. If someone mentions an ambivalence, for example, from a solution-focused attitude I would not ask questions like "Where does this ambivalence come from? What is its cause? Which aspects that are contained in the poles are particularly problematic?" That would be a problem-oriented application. In the solution-focused approach, we ask: "Suppose the miracle has happened, how would you notice that you are better able to deal with this ambivalence?"

EF   *There are now various mental schemata to choose from hosting a SySt® constellation. Is a link needed between the matter and the mental schema in such a way that tells you: this mental schema for this matter? Suppose someone comes to you and says they find themselves in an ambivalence with regard to a work-related issue. Do you then ask questions along the positions in the SySt® Tetralemma?*

IS Mental schemata emphasise different aspects. Depending on the aspect that the client emphasises, I begin with the a matching mental schema and change this if another aspect (or structure) is more helpful for the solution. I do not select a

specific mental schema in a discussion and stick with it, but rather add questions as required. Otherwise I would determine where the solution should be sought, or lead someone in a specific direction. With questions that leave all possibilities open, the person being interviewed also has less of an impression that the interviewer knows the solution already or is the expert for the solution.

Mental schemata emphasise different aspects.

So I begin with a question in which all possibilities are still open, and the client chooses which direction she wishes to go in; metaphorically speaking, she decides the place in which she will seek her solution and thus also selects the mental schema according to which I then ask the questions.

EF *So if a client says, for example, that she currently finds herself in an ambivalence that she would like to leave behind, what would typically be your next question?*

IS "How do you notice that the ambivalence has been resolved for you?" She would perhaps answer: "I can then decide." I usually then continue asking: "How do you notice that you can decide now?" A focus is thus placed on the solution. And if I now ask the miracle question, then I enquire of the details of the solution and investigate what is different in this world. I subsequently add the context questions with regard to the past, present and future context: who reacts how? After all, the client is not one human being alone but rather lives in a social environment.

Context questions with regard to the past, present and future context.

EF *In this sense, the solution focus according to SySt® is based on the development of the Milwaukee School, but works even more syntactically and considers the concept of completeness and totality addionally in the mental schemata.*

IS Yes, you may say so. These additions according to SySt® do not contradict the work of Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg. Rather, they are simply a further development.

Moreover, with the structural constellations as a pictorial language, we have also created the possibility to ask questions and get answers if something cannot be expressed in the verbal language or, to put it another way: in pictorial language, for example, hypnotherapy and structural constellations, something that cannot be spoken verbally can be revealed by these means.

In pictorial language, something that cannot be spoken verbally can be revealed by structural constellations and hypnotherapy.

EF *How does the transverbal language of the constellations as a pictorial language complement or extend the solution-focused work?*

IS Unlike the solution-focused approach of the Milwaukee School, we can ask transverbal questions in addition to verbal questions in structural constellations, i.e. use an analogue form of language besides digital language. In structural constellations,

we use spatial arrangements in which the issue being discussed is ordered in its structure, emphasising the relations, so that we create a picture in the space.

We make interventions in the image, such as changing a position, allowing something to be returned or representatives to make eye contact with one another. Such interventions are transverbal questions. The answers reveal themselves in the changes in the representatives' perception. We ask the representatives how they react to these interventions: is it better, worse, equal or different? We use the differences to learn whether we are heading in the direction of a solution on the change scale or not. With structural constellation, we therefore extend the field of what can be said (in terms of TLP 7) into that of what we can only show (see also TLP 4.1212).

We use the differences to learn whether we are heading in the direction of a solution on the change scale or not.

In other words: we go into the pictorial language, and something can come up that someone could not have expressed verbally. Thus an entirely new issue often comes up in the fourth position of the Tetralemma that the client had not thought of before. We implicitly ask for relevant context issues in the miracle question. It might be that the client thinks of too few relevant people but that there is a further relevant person anyway without whose consideration or repositioning in the miracle state someone cannot go into the solution. Such a person often also does not come up even while being longer interviewed, simply because the client does not remember him or her.

If we speak in pictorial language, the constellation can show in the reactions of the representatives that an element is missing or, viewed from a constructivist perspective, that the idea arises that acceptance of a missing element could represent a useful reframing for the client. We then add this. We do not need to discuss it verbally; we can add it and thus complete the image. Without knowing what that means on the content level, we now have one further piece of information on the syntactic level, namely that something had been missing that is required for the solution. We obtain this information 'to an extent' via the representatives' difference perception. 'To an extent' as it is not a piece of information in terms of a factual representation but rather a heuristic indication for additional intervention ideas. This corresponds with the curative understanding of principles in the structural constellation work. 'Closer to the solution' shows in the representatives' perception as a state of better.

A heuristic indication for additional intervention ideas.

In this sense, the scale also belongs to the pictorial language. Yvonne Dolan, for example, asks clients to point with a finger at where exactly on the scale they find themselves. Without the scaling work, the solution-focused approach may not work well, for it is not always possible to refrain from the field of showing. Thus the scaling work can be considered the equivalent to the constellation work in the solution-focused discussion. Comparing the structural constellation work with scaling in the solution-focused conducting of interviews is a brilliant

idea of Yvonne Dolan's, which arose during our cooperation in seminars at our institute working on specific cases. Viewed in this way, structural constellations are multi-dimensional scalings and, conversely, scaling questions are internal miniature constellations within the framework of the solution-focused approach.

EF   *In your opinion, what is the difference between remembering something in the miracle state and remembering something with a constellation?*

IS   In the miracle state, people are in a resource state; this is significant. In this state, answers and details of the solution emerge – indeed as incoherent as described in the concept of language-game in the philosophical investigations by Wittgenstein. Ideas can emerge that they have never thought of before. Only aspects can come up in a verbal conversation that are essentially known, for example: someone has never thought of taking a climbing course before, but knows what climbing is. Therefore he can then imagine himself climbing in the miracle state.

Incoherent as described in language-games.

In a structural constellation, something can come up, a representative can feel something that he does not need to be able to express. Words are needed for the answers to the miracle question; one must be able to say "climbing course" or "climbing". In a constellation, there are more chances that something that is required for the solution can come up, not only aspects that can be expressed verbally, but also something can come up that can only be shown and not spoken.

EF   *You have fundamentally extended the field of solution-focused work with the structural constellations. It is now possible to also ask representatives solution-focused questions – in the Solution Geometric Interview, for example. Or – in a short form – simply to ask the representatives how they notice that whatever is difficult for them now is dissolving. How can you connect to these answers now?*

IS   Well, the verbal and transverbal discussions complement one another in constellations in this way. If an answer to the solution-focused question comes up for a representative, he expresses this and the host receives ideas for the next interventions. If, for example, the answer is: "It would better if the other person would look at me" or: "I can then say that I am very angry", we can arrange the next intervention accordingly, so making eye contact, for example, or let him tell: "I feel your anger" and test in this way whether this leads to a better state .

This procedure makes it easier for clients to perceive that the solution manifests itself of its own accord through the relationship system presented by the representatives. As a host, we may increasingly take a backseat, and the clients notice that our content knowledge is irrelevant here. One further advantage in this procedure is that the things that are done are still comprehensible for the clients. It becomes more normal and the impression that a host's magic hand is at work there vanishes.

Our content knowledge is irrelevant here.

EF   *Central to the solution-focused approach is that it supports helping people help themselves. The more clients become active themselves, the more they credit themselves with improvements and the more independent they become, meaning that the advising therapists' or consultants' support etc. is required less. I think such self-efficacy is reinforced by your syntactical work.*

IS   The attempt to remain as invisible as possible as coach, advisor or therapist counts among the elements that we have adopted in the constellation work from the solution-focused procedure. The less we know, the sooner it becomes clear to the clients that they find the solutions themselves. I believe it is also important that the steps are transparent and comprehensible. And this is supported via the solution-focused questions to the representatives in the structural constellations, for example.

The attempt to remain as invisible as possible as advisor or therapist.

The emphasis of independence is also in keeping with the fact that we do not conduct structural constellations non-stop but rather only from time to time.

EF   *In the solution constellation, the parts of the answer to the miracle question are arranged in the space by means of representatives. What difference does it make if such a constellation is conducted in addition to an interview?*

IS   One obvious difference is the stronger physical experience of the solution. Moreover, in the structural constellation, we have the opportunity to conduct simulations. Clients and representatives can thus try out ideas and immediately experience the difference.

Clients often say that a constellation has helped them remember. The constellation can highlight missing elements that are required for the solution, for example. According to client feedback, with a constellation issues often become clearer or more tangible to them in some way, and enable them to remember something that could previously not have been expressed. The pictorial language seems to strengthen the memory. From a structural constellation perspective, a statement such as the one that something is missing can be viewed from a constructivist point of view merely as an indication that remembering it might be useful.

The pictorial language seems to strengthen the memory.

Moreover, in structural constellations it is possible to try adding new elements that could be relevant for the solution the clients did not mention previously. Representatives physically sense that something is missing. The missing aspect can be complemented without having to know what it is. This is the advantage of a structural constellation.

EF   *Are there situations in which you particularly recommend constellations after a verbal work, coaching or therapy session? What are indications for the transition from the verbal to transverbal talk?*

IS   Removing unwanted or hindering context overlaps is, in my opinion, usually easier to deal with in constellations, as the client often does not recognise them and thus also cannot communicate context overlaps verbally. A context overlap manifests itself in the blending of two contexts, such as the 'boss in the professional context' and 'father in the private context'. Clients are often even aware of this overlap, yet still struggle to separate these contexts. With a structural constellation it is much easier to remove the context overlap.

Clients can hardly separate overlapping contexts without structural constellation

In structural constellations, we can host the separation with the help of the picture and the spatial relations by using the cataleptic hand. We conduct a test with the cataleptic hand, whereby we hold the hand as a symbol in front of the representative saying: "Suppose something has come between you and is now visible here in my hand, can now be seen here in my hand. When I allow it to slowly move to the side so that you can now see X – does that make a difference?" This is a hypothetical question linked with a transverbal intervention, which is easier to conduct in pictorial language than in a discussion.

Moreover, changes of perspective in constellations can also be realised directly. We use this intervention in supervision constellations for therapists, for example. By taking up the stance of one's clients, one often obtains intervention ideas more rapidly, or can better work in the state of empathy thereafter.

Changes of perspective in a constellation

During the discussion, one can of course also ask the other person to mentally assume the position of one's counterpart. Mentally assuming the other person's position or literally taking the partner's place in a spatially effective structure makes a relevant difference. We have developed various different SySt® miniatures, which facilitate the transition from a verbal talk, a dialogue, an interview to a structural constellation.

EF   *What has been your experience of giving clients little constellation sequences to take home. Does it work?*

IS   I have had good experiences with this – when a client has returned something that stresses her in a constellation and now she notices that the stress pops up again, for example. I explain to clients how they can make the Return Ritual for themselves, for I have often experienced that it is useful to make the Return Ritual several times.

Thus we can give the clients little rituals – so-called SySt® miniatures – to take home with them. The clients can then help themselves and do not need us as

often any more. They can do something and feel better because they have done something for themselves, and not because someone has arranged a constellation. This is possible because the transverbal language of structural constellations is a very natural language. This way clients can quickly learn how to apply certain little SySt® rituals – despite how complex it is to learn the entire process.

Thus we can give the clients little rituals to take home with them.

EF   *Some of the SySt® formats stem from logical constellations, others from the solution-focused approach. Which have their origins in the solution-focused approach in terms of their development?*

IS   Firstly, the Solution Constellation. Here, the parts stem from the answers to the miracle question. Besides the focus, the Solution Constellation comprises:

- the goal (the instead, thedesired state),
- the miracle,
- the exceptions (resources), and
- the context of the miracle.

The context can be people, groups of people (particularly those who can raise objections), an object, a new situation, an event or a new issue that has arisen after the miracle and could not have arisen without it.

In the Goal Approximation Constellation, there is additionally a timeline that is set as a location (i.e. a grammatical aspect in SySt-work). The timeline matches the scaling work. It essentially represents the 'scaling work' in these SySt® formats.

The timeline matches the scaling work.

In the 9/12 Square Constellation, we add the external and internal context in addition to the timeline. The internal context includes thoughts, experiences, bodily sensations, etc.; the external context includes people, groups of people, workplaces, events, objects from the outside work. With issues in which many internal processes and also people in the outside world are relevant, it often proves beneficial to first sort the representatives. And this can easily be done with this format.[3]

In all formats – particularly the PersonSystem Structural Constellation or Body Structural Constellation – we can conduct a Solution Geometric Interview, a solution-focused interview with the constellated representatives: we achieve simultaneity of verbal and transverbal talk in this way. Given that the representatives mostly do not know the originals and also mostly have no content concerning the issue or the situation of the client, they must rely on their

A solution-focused talk with the constellated representatives.

---

3   For arrangement as a metaformat of SySt® interventions, please also confer to Insa Sparren 'Einführung in die Lösungsfokussierung und Systemische Strukturaufstellung'.

representative perception. Their answers relate less to content and more to their relationship structure. Amazingly, this is the only difference.

EF *That's indeed amazing. It is certainly a little crazy to come upon such an idea – to ask people solution-focused questions and the miracle question who have absolutely no idea of the content of the client's issue.*

IS I came upon the idea of the Solution Geometric Interview in a seminar on solution-focused interview techniques in which I wanted to demonstrate a solution-focused group talk. However, there was no team present in the seminar, hence I suggested replacing the team members, who belonged to a seminar participant's team, with representatives. I sat with the representatives and asked them the miracle question, which they responded to from the representative perception. I then learned from the client that the representatives' answers matched exactly, and the client was somehow "shocked" that strangers could give such consistent answers. I initially named this format the 'Constellation of the Absent Team' but subsequently renamed it the 'Solution Geometric Interview', as I also interviewed representatives for families, body systems and abstract systems in addition to representatives for teams. The solution focus is reflected in the term 'solution', and the fact that spatial arrangement, the geometric arrangement of the representatives plays a role in the response is symbolised by the term 'geometric'.

With the possibility of uncovering concealed aspects a link to Erickson's work is given

The dialogue between Yvonne Dolan and myself on linking the solution-focused approach and the structural constellation work showed us that both approaches match extremely well - with the possibility of uncovering concealed aspects – which according to Yvonne Dolan is also a reference to the Ericksonian work.[4]

EF *Thank you, Insa, for this detailed portrayal of the solution-focused approach according to SySt®. I have just one final question: what would you say is the motto linking these two approaches?*

IS A "Both" that gradually develops into an independent world. ■

---

4 Insa Sparrer's DVDs entitled 'Solution Focused Approach' and 'Lösungsfokussierte Systemische Strukturaufstellungen (LfSySt)' available at www.systmedia.de provides further information.