

A survey of SF Questions

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The patient
knows the
solution to his
problem, he only
doesn't know
that he knows



Milton H. Erickson

To help the patient discover the solution to his problem, the solution-focused therapist uses empowering questions such as...



Client's own question

- In order for our conversation to be useful to you, what should I ask you?
- And if I would ask you that question, what would you answer?
- In order for my next question to be useful to you, what should I ask you?
- And suppose I would ask you that question, what would you answer?

Relabeling question

- That's what the doctors call that type of problems, but what do you want to call your **situation**?
- What word or phrase do you want me to use to talk about your **situation**?
- Maybe it's not a depression. Maybe you are suffering from JHGH? (Joy Has Gone Hiding)
- If the client wants to have a name for their problem, or if it helps talking about it, they can just as well try to find a good name for it.

Resembling situations question

- What resembling situations have you dealt with previously in your life?
- How did you handle those situations?
- How can you use what you learned from dealing with those situations to handle your current situation?

Improvement question

- Is there some recent improvement?
- Has there been some temporary improvement?
- What improvement have you seen?
- How do you explain the improvement?
- What have you done or thought that explains the improvement?
- Who else has contributed to this improvement?
What have they done that explains the improvement?

Outcome question

- What are your best hopes for the future?
- What needs to happen for you to be content with the situation?
- What is the direction in which you would want things to change?
- What would be a small but significant sign for you that things are moving in that direction?
- Suppose we meet again and you tell me that things have been moving in the right direction, what will you tell me that has happened?

Skilling question

- Do you already have an idea of what you need to learn, or become better at, in order to deal better with those situations?
- Suppose you had supernatural abilities. What supernatural ability would you need to have in order to handle those situations better?

Resource question

- What are you good at?
- What talents do you have?
- What special abilities or interests do you have?
- What problem do you want to solve with these resources? (David Epston)
- How can you use these resources to achieve your goal?

Support question

- Who has helped you?
- In what way have they helped you?
- Who can you ask to help you?
- If they ask you how they can they help you, what will you tell them?

Coping questions

- What have you done that has helped you deal with this situation?
- What thoughts have you had that have helped you deal with this situation?
- How did you find those ways to deal with this situation?
- How have other people helped you deal with this situation?

Recovery question

- How far have you already come in your recovery process?
- What have you done – or thought - to get that far in your recovery process?
- What will be the next sign for you that you are making progress in your recovery process?
- How will other people notice from you that you have made progress in your recovery process?
- What would need to happen for you to feel that you have recovered fully?

Scaling question From X-Z

- What is the problem? (X).
- What is the opposite of X? (Z)
- On a scale from one to ten, where 10 represents Z, and 1 represents X, where are you now?
- What did you get where you are now?
- How will you know you have moved up one step on your path towards Z?
- How will you know you have reached 10?

Suicide question

- Suppose you kill yourself and at the *Pearly Gates of Heaven* they send you back but they promise to change three things in you life for you to make your life more bearable for you.
- What three things would you ask them to change for you?

Love potion question

- Suppose both of you drink up this love potion and soon thereafter you notice that the potion is having an effect.
- What would happen that would give you the feeling that the potion is having an effect?
- Suppose you would think what happened was accidental, what more would need to happen for you to become convinced that the potion really works?

Miracle question

- Suppose that **as if by a miracle** the problem that you described is gone – just like that – how would you know that the problem is gone?
- Suppose you are still not convinced that the problem is gone, what more would need to happen for you to become convinced that the problem is indeed gone.
- How could you test that the problem is gone? What should the result of the test be for you to become convinced that the problem is gone?

Hypnosis question

- Suppose I was able to hypnotize you and give you a posthypnotic suggestion.
- How would you know that the suggestion works?
- Suppose you would not be convinced, what more would need to happen for you to start to think that the suggestion really works?

Injection question

- Suppose I gave you an injection of a drug that cures your problem.
- How would you know that the injection works?
- Suppose you would not be fully convinced, what more would need to happen for you to start to think that the injection works?

Telling others question

- Suppose you achieve your goal, who would be the first person to whom you would go and tell about your success?
- How would that person respond to what you tell them?
- What would they say and what would they ask you?
- How would you answer their questions?

Forgiveness question

- Suppose some day in the future the person who did you wrong would come to you and say he/she wants to apologize to you.
- What would that person need to say or do to make you feel that he/she is sincere?
- In what way would he/she need to apologize to you for you to be able to consider forgiving him/her?
- Suppose he/she would want to do something for you to repair the suffering, what would you ask him/her to do?

Haunting memories question

- In what way have your haunting memories (flashbacks) already evolved from what they were first?
- Suppose they continue to evolve, what do you imagine they will be like after some time?
- How would you want them to evolve as time goes by so that they no longer haunt you?

Expert question

- How have you helped other people who struggle with similar situations?
- If you were to help other people struggling with similar situations, how would you do it?
- Would you be willing to volunteer to help other people who are struggling with similar situations?
- In what way would you want to do it?

The Celebration Question 1

- What would need to happen in your life that would make you so happy that you would want to celebrate in some way?
- What specifically would need to happen for you to feel that it's time to celebrate?
- In what way would you want to celebrate? In what surroundings? What would the program be? What time of the day? What would be served? Would there be music? Dress code?

The Celebration Question 2

- Who would you invite?
- How would you invite them? What would you write on the invitation message?
- What would you say in your welcome speech?
- How would you thank your guests for helping or supporting you? What would you say to them?
- How would they respond? What would they ask you? How would you respond to their response?

The Celebration Question 3

- Suppose you could invite also people who are no longer alive, who would you invite? How would you thank them?
- Is there anyone you would not want to invite?
- Suppose that person came to your celebration uninvited, and you decided to thank him/her too for something. What would you thank him/her for?