

Miracle Question and Follow-up Questions

THE MIRACLE QUESTION

The “Miracle Question” gives clients permission to think about an unlimited range of possibilities for change. It begins to move the focus away from their current and past problems and toward a more satisfying life.

Recommended presentation of the “Miracle Question”

“Now, I want to ask you a strange question. *Suppose* that while sleep tonight and the entire house is quiet, a *miracle* happens. The miracle is that *someone solved the problem that brought you here (or to the attention of CYS)*. However, because you slept, you didn’t know that the *miracle happened*. So, when you wake tomorrow morning, *what would be different* that tells you that a miracle happened, and the problem that brought you here became solved? (Adapted from de Shazer, 1988)

- Speak slowly and gently, in a soft voice to give your client time to shift from a problem to a solution focus.
- Clearly and dramatically, mark the beginning of the solution-building process by introducing the miracle question as unusual or strange.
- Since the question asks for a description of the future, use future-directed words: What *would* be different? What *will* be signs of the miracle?

The miracle question is the opening piece of the process of developing well-formed goals. Client response may not take the form of a well-formed goal. The practitioner’s task is to pose a series of related questions that help clients express their vision of a more satisfying future in a more satisfying and developed manner.

Take time and persist in questioning. Avoid pushing for immediate closure on goals or offering suggestions from your point-of-view. Given a chance, clients will reveal many of their strengths and past successes.

Miracle Question and Follow-up Questions (cont'd)

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO THE MIRACLE QUESTION THAT HELP THE CLIENT DEVELOP WELL-FORMED GOALS

- How will you know the miracle happened?
- What will be the first thing you notice that would tell you that a miracle happened; that things are different?
- What else would tell you that things are different/better?
- What might others (mother, father, spouse, partner, siblings, friends, work associates, teachers, and etcetera) notice about you that would tell them that the miracle has happened, that things are different or better?
- How would they react?
- Then what would you do?
- What would they do next?
- If I had a “before miracle” and an “after miracle” movie of you shown side-by-side, what differences would I see in your looks, your behavior?
- Have there been times when you have seen pieces of this miracle happen?