The Miracle Question

Goals: Picturing Life After the Problem

The miracle question asks you to imagine that a problem you are facing has been solved, then notice what would be different. Therapists Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg developed it in the 1980s as part of solution-focused brief therapy. Instead of digging into what caused the problem, you describe what life looks like without it. Those details become clues for small steps you can take now.

1 Imagine the miracle

The problem I am thinking about:

Read this slowly, and take a minute to picture it.

Tonight you go to sleep as usual. While you sleep, a miracle happens, and the problem is gone. You do not know about the miracle, because you were asleep. When you wake up tomorrow, what is the first small thing you notice that tells you something has changed?

The first thing I would notice when I wake up:

Example: I would get up when the alarm goes off without dreading the day

Why does this work? *When you are stuck in a problem, it can be hard to say what you want instead. Picturing an ordinary day with the problem gone helps you describe your goal in details you could see and hear. Those details point to steps you can start on.*

2 Fill in the day

Who would notice the change first? What would they see you doing?

Example: My partner would see me make breakfast and chat instead of scrolling

I would do more of	I would do less of

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3 Where are you now?

Picture a scale from 0 to 10. Ten is the day after the miracle, and 0 is the worst things have been. Where are you today?

My number today:

What puts me at this number and not lower?

What would one point higher look like?

4 Build on what works

Small parts of the miracle may already happen sometimes. Solution-focused therapists call these times exceptions, and they show what already works for you.

A recent time when part of the miracle happened, even for a moment:

What was different that day? What did I do?

One small thing I can do this week that fits my miracle day:

Keep the step small enough that you are fairly sure you can do it. A therapist who uses solution-focused therapy can help you build on what is already working.

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