

Yasuteru Aoki (Aoki-san)

J-SOL Story



Welcome greeting by Aoki at J-SOL1.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the inauguration of CEE SOL CONFERENCE from the bottom of my heart. One of the respectable organizers, one of the editors of this book, Kati Hankovszky, made me very happy by saying J-SOL had inspired her and her colleagues in a certain way, fuelling their passion to create this new and great endeavour. When I was asked to contribute something for this publication, I thought what I could do best was to reflect and write up on the process of creating the J-SOL conference in Japan, which has just celebrated its success for the sixth time since 2008. I cannot theorize anything but I would like to look back on what happened and write a personal story which, I hope, might be inspirational to anybody who wishes to host an SF conference. What you are about to read is not an objective case report but more like a subjective monologue of a man who has been taking the lead in hosting a national SF conference for six consecutive years, thus creating a community of SF practitioners in Japan. Although I am quite aware of the fact that J-SOL is a product of collaboration among many solutionists, I will (and can only) write things seen only through my own eyes and sometimes it may just sound like self-glorification. Please just laugh at it when you find it. None-

theless, I hope some resonance will be felt by the people who have the same kind of aspiration, and hope it will increase the chance of starting more of this kind of nice solution-focused sharing community. I hope you will enjoy reading this and have lots of interesting and “useful misunderstandings”, which upon meeting in one of the future SF conferences we (you and me) could talk over with a glass of beer or wine in our hands (wink).

There was a man who wished to create a learning community in which anybody can share successful uses of SF at any level

I have always been a trainer in human communication since I graduated from university with a sociology degree in 1983. I was involved in the Human Potential Movement that had started in the West Coast, USA, since my student days. I was interested in counter cultures, therapy models, spirituality... I should say I was just intrigued by human beings and human interactions, especially the methods for human growth. When I got to know SF, I was almost convinced this must be something I should dedicate the rest of my life to because it made so much sense and I felt validated for how I had been thinking about human interactions.

My first appearance at a SOL conference was in Interlaken, Switzerland in 2005. The conference was organized by Peter Szabo and other colleagues. I arrived at the venue the day before the conference and happened to meet Peter in the lobby. He was so pleasant and asked my name. I

said, “*Call me Aoki-san*”, only once, and he repeated my name with a perfect Japanese accent and I was very happy. In my previous experiences in English speaking situations it had rarely happened. Because of the pleasant feeling Peter shared with me, my expectation for the conference grew higher, and it turned out to be so much better than I had expected.



Peter's special workshop at J-SOL2.

Throughout the conference I felt I was welcomed by the people participating there. I thought SF-minded people really listened and treated you with respect. People used SF words but in easy-to-understand ways. I really thought SF was beautifully demonstrated right there in the conference by the participants.

I kept coming to SOL conferences: in 2006 in Vienna, with my Japanese colleague Ogura-san; in 2007 in Bruges, with 3 other Japanese people, two of whom were managers from Canon Fine-Tech Inc. They joined with me in presenting their successful case of SF organisational culture change in a conference workshop. Our workshop was very well received and I gained even more confidence in what I do. So I started thinking about having a SOL conference in Japan. I had an open space in SOL 2007 Summer University in Budapest asking for ideas for how to host a SOL conference in Japan. Many people thought it was difficult because most of the SOL participants were Europeans, and therefore it would be hard for them to go all the way to the other side of the globe. I was a bit discouraged, but at the same time relieved of the imagined stress of hosting an international conference, which I never had experienced.

The next thing I wanted to do was to host a national SF conference in Japan which somehow resembles and is connected to SOL. So I started thinking about the possibility. Up to that point, in Japan, there were many therapists



Solution Café at J-SOL3

who used SF Approach (SFA) and they had their conferences. And I was often asked to be a translator. Although I liked the method I was translating very much, the culture they shared was of psychology professionals and they did not seem to know the exciting applications of SF in the business world. And the conversations about therapy clients were mostly

done in the third person and did not seem to translate into the daily use of it in workplaces. So I wanted to start something very new with the least influence from the professional psychology culture. Japanese people have a tendency to obey the already established authority. So I wanted to avoid re-creating the therapist-client culture. What I wanted to do was to create a new culture that can make people engage with each other in an SF way in a candid fashion rather than an established professional way, which, in my view, the SOL conferences had been achieving so nicely. So I decided to utilize the SOL World Charter which said “*the distinction between audience and presenters is minimal*”. I wanted to emphasize ANYBODY can share a successful SF case with or without an academic background. I could have relied more on the psychology professionals in the inaugurating phase to help us. But I did not, because what I wanted was not another psychology meeting, but a sharing community of people working in organizations who utilize SF in creative ways.

I think having this clear image of what I wanted helped a lot along the way. As you can see in the pie chart above, 60% of the participants are company people who want to make their workplace “SF inside”. So that means people in organizations who don’t have a special psychology background can see J-SOL’s door is open to them.

In the autumn of 2007 I decided to have a conference in Tokyo in the following spring time. But I did not have any experience of organizing a conference. So all I could do was just think about it in a very simple, naive way. Find a right-sized venue... find enough successful SF cases... get some help from people for the things I can’t do on my own... be ready to be responsible for any financial deficit... AND... there will be a way. And I started telling people around me about the idea.

Soon, someone found me a nice venue in Akihabara in Tokyo. So now the most important thing was having enough candidates for presentations of successful applications of SF in organizational situations. I had just started an SF Practitioner Course that year with 15 people and many of the students were making progress in what they were trying to achieve through applying SF. Six of the students, in particular, were almost sure to have good success cases. I also asked some of the graduates from my Basic SF Seminar if they had successful cases that they wanted to present in a conference and five of them said yes. Basic SF Seminar is only a two-

day course. However, I realized that some of the people who had been attracted to my seminar were already “natural” SF practitioners when I heard them talk about what they had been doing in their work. So I naturally expected them to have some successful experiences with SF even after only taking one seminar.

Now I had eleven successful cases. But I was afraid that business people might think those were rather small success. I wanted a smash hit so that the participants would be impressed enough and say, “*Wow, SF can work ef-*



Mr.Fuyama reporting his success of resuscitating a company at J-SOL1

fectively for an organization at that level!” Then I contacted Mr Fu Yama to whom I taught SF in the previous year. He was an executive of a manufacturing company, and I found out that he had just saved a small subsidiary company from bankruptcy utilizing SF and re-vitalizing its workers. It was a complete story of saving a company. He agreed to do a plenary presentation of his success. Now I was convinced we had enough successful cases to make a good conference. I also wanted to add an international flavour to attract more business people. So I contacted Dr. Mark McKergow and his partner Jenny Clarke to ask if they wanted to contribute to the first SF conference in Japan. And I was very happy to hear their immediate reply “*Yes, we will come to Japan.*” So I found a great, appropriate key note speaker who had started SOL World.

At this point I was sure there were enough ingredients to fill a one-day conference. But I knew so little about organizing a conference. I needed and wanted a team to make this new endeavour possible. Modelling SOL conferences, I started to organize the J-SOL steering group. I asked 19 people to join, five managers, five consultants, five trainers, two coach-

es, one school teacher, one counsellor. It was not a hard task because, I think, the timing was just right. Since so many Japanese companies had been adopting problem solving method for kaizen (continuous improvement by tackling EVERY single problem), SF thinking was very refreshing for minds that were so used to thinking “*What is the root cause?*” and were stressed out. For another thing, business coaching had been a trend in Japanese organizations since the turn of the century. And there were some people who found SF to be a booster for effective coaching. So those 19 people were filled with excitement at being part of the very first SF conference in Japan “in my eyes”. When we had the first overnight meeting on December 17-18, 2007, I felt “*This is going to be a great event!*”

Before all these concrete steps took place, I asked myself if this was really possible or not. My biggest realistic concern was the financial responsibility. When I thought about it, the highest item of cost was the venue. It was a little more than 10,000 Euros and I thought to myself, “*Even if I get no participants, this will not ruin my life.*” So I gave myself a GO. I chose to lose some money if I had to, rather than to get involved in money troubles with my colleagues.

But my anxiety about total failure lasted for several months until a week before the conference, when all the registration process was done and I went to see the venue to do the last minute check. I remember saying to my colleague, “*Only now I feel this is finally possible!*”

Making it international to highlight the popularity and universal quality of SF



Mark's key note at J-SOLI

Japanese people have a tendency to value things that come from overseas more highly. “*If something is popular in Europe or the USA, it must be good.*” So in order to attract more business people who are new to this kind of thing, I wanted to invite solutionists from overseas who had interesting top-

ics, even though J-SOL was a domestic event. Luckily, we had Dr. Mark McKergow and Jenny Clarke in J-SOL1. Dr. McKergow's key note title "Solutions Focus - The New Wave of Evolutionary Transformation" was very appropriate for the inauguration of J-SOL at that time in 2008.

In later J-SOLs we were so honoured to have distinguished SOL members, such as Kirsten Dierolf, Peter Szabo, Stephanie Von Bidder, Monika Houck, George Agafitei, Roxana Agafitei, Michael K. Hjerth, Fredrike Bannink, Simon Lee, Dominik Godat, Liselotte Baeijaert, Peter Sundman, Ben Furman, Marco Ronzani and Franziska Ronzani. I am really grateful to all these people for coming all the way from far away countries and making their expertise available to J-SOL participants. In fact, I hear remarks from the participants that having these foreign guest solutionists is one of the major attractions for J-SOL. I want the Japanese people to experience as many different types of solutionists as possible and these colleagues have offered the best possible variety.



Kirsten's key note at J-SOL2



Michael and Aoki talking just before Michael's key note at J-SOL3.



Panel discussion "How Europeans saw Japan".

At first it was kind of difficult for me to see if and how overseas guests could find it worthwhile to come to Japan when the conference was in Japanese and they had to listen to the imperfect whispering translation through headsets. We could not give any financial reward to these people except the small amount when they did a pre or post-con-



Japanese culture experience – playing the koto and the shamisen.

ference seminar. But we tried to give them a chance to really experience Japanese culture. So for a few days before each conference, my wife Ruiko organizes a guided experiential tour. In the past we have experienced tea ceremonies, Zen meditation, a Japanese drum “Taiko” session, sightseeing tours of fish markets, temples and museums, and of course enjoyed the Japanese cuisine of sushi, tempura, and so on. And so far these colleagues seem to have enjoyed the conference and the Japanese cultural experience as a whole... I hope.

Inviting foreigners to J-SOL is one important thing, and encouraging Japanese to visit the SOL conference is another quite important thing. Looking back at J-SOL 1, I was the only Japanese in the organizing team who had been to a SOL conference. And so I was amazed how our first conference also had good SOL-like features: lively, friendly, and useful. Maybe it’s the magic of SF. When you organize a gathering in SF spirit and skills, it tends to make a lively “Ba (place)” for meaningful exchange.

Even so, I wanted as many Japanese solutionists as possible to visit SOL conferences in Europe so that J-SOL will evolve in an even better direction. For that purpose I started a semi-organized group tour for SOL conferences. In 2008, eight of us went to Cologne. In 2009 ten of us to Tex-



Team Japan at Balatonfured with Marco.

el, in 2010 twenty of us to Bucharest (which was the biggest number from one country!), in 2011 sixteen of us to Balatonfured, in 2012 sixteen of us to Oxford. Most of us don’t speak good English and we use headsets to listen to whispered translation, which may only communicate half of what’s been said. Nonetheless, it was possible to learn SF and make friends with lots of people with varying backgrounds. Some of our repeat visitor members started studying English seriously after participating in SOL conferences. And many of these SOL tour members became

J-SOL steering group members and contributed to the success of each J-SOL conference. I am sure J-SOL got powered up each time because of these returnees from European SOL conferences.

Steering Group - everybody must have a reason for being “that” way.

Because of the financial responsibility, and for public credibility, my company Solution Focus Inc. has always been the hosting entity. But we always had a J-SOL steering group consisting of volunteer members who were mostly graduates from my SF seminars. Each year about 9 months before the next J-SOL conference I publicly announced on a mailing list that we needed volunteer members for the steering group. And the people who responded joined. Altogether, we had 38 people in five years. Some of them only once, and some of them were repeat members. But this year for J-SOL6, I stopped having a steering group and we managed to do all the administration work with six staff members in our company. There were reasons for having a steering group and there are reasons to stop it.

In the initial stages of creating J-SOL I think I was very lucky to find many supporters who joined the steering group along the way and I really appreciated what was offered by their contribution, whether big or small. I was just happy to have anybody who was sup-

porting the J-SOL cause. Some of them really dedicated their time and offered a splendid job in the preparation. On the other hand, some others seemed to have hard times finding the time or what to offer. I con-



Trailer show for the Open Space.

sciously decided to take a certain stance with steering group people, that is, “whatever is offered is appreciated and whatever is not offered should not be sought after”. It sounds like common sense in a volunteer based event. And at first I naturally took that stance because I felt any voluntary offer was so precious. But as time went by, certain things started to irritate me. For example, email was the main channel for communication among the steering group members and there was such a big difference in the speed and quality of the responses. Some responded right away with the necessary information, and some just did not respond at all. So sometimes I needed to send the same email several times to get a response. I thought I should not impose a standard here, like “*Everybody should do such and such.*” If I did, my attitude toward the poor responder should have been a negative one in whatever form it took. I was often reminded of Insoo’s remark to a client who exhibits an inappropriate behaviour. She says, “*You must have a good reason for that.*” So I thought being the leader of this event was a great opportunity for me to be trained as an SF practitioner. I needed to believe that the people who volunteered in the first place must always be wanting to contribute but some of them just cannot for a reason. And more often than expected I found that this kind of attitude paid off somehow. Sometimes a member who did not show up at any meeting, nor responded to any email, suddenly offered something that was needed at the time. And I felt so glad that I had not given a negative feedback before that happened. Be as nice as possible and leave the door open.

So why are we not organizing the steering group anymore? There is one very happy reason. Because we have observed that many repeaters behave as ideal participants and show their willingness to help out, we have realized there is less and less need for steering group members to take essential roles for the conference. Even the first timers show their willingness to help because of the repeaters’ influence. I think this is due to the power of SF conversation that we exchange during the conference. People feel at home right away and so they want to engage in what’s going on and contribute when they can.

Another reason for not having a steering group is that the two-day format is almost “purified” after five conference experiences, and we do not need to have too much discussion about the framework. So we have the

format ready, and the staff to take care of the very basic needs. All we want from people is good SF utilization cases. I did not wish to rely on repeated members of the steering group. Or rather I wanted to release them from the obligatory feeling of “*I should help again.*”

Crisis

There was a crisis about continuing J-SOL. After J-SOL 3 was over, I felt so exhausted and did not want to take on the burden again next year. So I asked some other people to be the next leaders for J-SOL. But that did not work out, and so we did not have the definite plan for J-SOL4. And then the Tsunami tragedy happened on March 11, 2011. They said Tokyo might not get enough electricity during summer time for air conditioning because we lost the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. So what to do?

Three weeks later I happened to attend a coaching workshop and did a constellation work. I wanted to make a decision about J-SOL4, so I worked on that. Then I realized that there are people who are waiting anxiously for the next J-SOL. So I decided to do it in August in Sapporo, the northern city where there



All participants of J-SOL4

is little need for air conditioning even in mid-summer time. There was a risk of having very few people because it was very far from Tokyo. And we could not invite foreigners this time because of the difficult situation.

So we decided to put up the theme of the conference for the first time, which was “*We are the Solutionists!*” in the spirit of waking up our potential power within, in this time of historical crisis for our country. We had 57 people and I think we did a good job under the circumstances. I regained my passion to continue J-SOL when I saw all these people com-

ing to a faraway northern island and happily engaging in SF activities in the conference.

Small things that worked

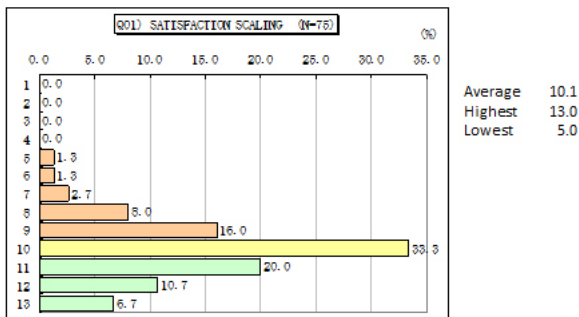
1, Questionnaire to go over 10

Scaling is done usually between 1 and 10. But we created a scale to go beyond 10 for evaluating J-SOL. We just wanted to cheer up and encourage ourselves for the next J-SOL when we were planning for the first J-SOL. And when we were discussing the content of the questionnaire and the very first question, which was the satisfaction scale, I came up with an idea to make 10 meaning “satisfied as expected” and extend the scale to go over 10 to show that you are more satisfied than you expected. Japanese people are not very optimistic. So if the scale is from 1 to 10, people usually leave a little space for improvement and do not easily mark 10. And when the organizing team members see it, most likely we’d start thinking “*What was not good enough?*”

I did not want that to happen in the steering group reflecting meeting after our first J-SOL conference. Luckily, as you see in the chart below, we got 10.1 average. That means the participants were more satisfied than they expected as a whole! And this number really encouraged us to continue J-SOL. So we decided to make the second conference a two-day thing instead of one day.

Questionnaire Research Data: “SATISFACTION SCALING”

Q01) How much are you satisfied with the whole day of J-SOL ONE?
 1 means “not at all”, 10 means “as much as expected”, 11 or over means “more than I expected”



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2, Wall facebook

The two-day conference is packed with plenary programs, workshops and open space programs leaving little room for free time. So in order to promote friendship among the participants, we created a get-to-know-each-other tool called “Wall facebook”.



Wall facebook with OK messages posted.

Everybody is asked to send in a photo and simple one line personal introduction before the conference and they are printed out on A4 paper and put up on the conference room wall. The participants are given small post-its for “OK messages” (compliments) to stick on the paper “facebook”.

Many people give and receive a surprising number of post-its. And for some people this is such a precious souvenir to take home. The OK messages are so encouraging and they want to keep them as an anchor for the rich experience of the conference. I myself put them up on my office wall every year.

3, “Corporate Discount” to promote “SF inside”

I believe in the power of collective SF knowledge. That means when a certain percentage of the group of people consciously share SF knowledge and use SF skills, a chain of natural positive response (CNPR) is likely to happen. That percentage cannot be determined since the influential power varies from one member to another and so many organizational factors may facilitate or hinder the process. But I think it should be as low as we don’t need to lose our hope. So I wanted to encourage people in organizations to participate as a group. If a manager comes to J-SOL

alone and really likes SF, he is likely to have a hard time sharing it with other people back in his workplace. If he brings just one more person, it makes a big difference because they can have SF conversations between them right away at the office. So we have a corporate discount system to encourage group participation. Three people's attendance makes the fourth person free of charge, and five people's attendance makes the sixth and seventh person free of charge, if they all come from the same workplace. In J-SOL6 we had five group participations. They know the merit of group participation well and usually assign members to different workshops and have sharing time later so that they don't miss anything that is offered in the conference. A wise way to spend money.

One of the workshops in J-SOL6 had a very interesting title. It was, *"Hey, I just happened to get this one person on my side who resonates with SF, and just see so much is happening!"* This workshop was presented by a human resources manager, Mr Tachika and his subordinate, Ms Asanuma from Texas Instruments Japan. The title is a candid remark from the manager about having Ms Asanuma. Mr Tachika had previously tried to spread SF in his company but not to his satisfaction. Then Ms Asanuma was transferred to his division and she absorbed SF so well. And when these two people became a team for doing SF in the company, the coaching trainings they delivered for the managers got so much better. And the managers who used to say *"Coaching is difficult"* now is saying, *"SF coaching works!"*

I really liked the title of this workshop because that's what I wanted to promote. When you make an SF team at the workplace you can achieve much more than when you try to do it alone. SF communication at workplaces seems to increase psychological security and it leads to unleashing more of the potential resources that people have.

4, SOL Candle Ceremony

There is a beautiful blue glass SOL candle holder produced in Bristol, UK which is used to light a candle and is ceremonially passed from one conference host to the next as a symbol of linkage. When I received this SOL candle holder to be lit at J-SOL, I felt very honoured and included. It made me feel like J-SOL already had an international recognition and

status. I usually do not care too much about these kind of ceremonies, but it had such significance for me after all the efforts made for creating something that nobody had done before in Japan. So at the end of the J-SOL conference we do a small ceremony, passing the candle and receiving some comments from overseas guest solutionists. It adds a nice tone of wide ranging friendship to the conference.



SOL candle ceremony

When it was first carried to Japan, it was in a broken paper box which looked terrible. So I wanted something firm to keep the glass holder safely. I asked my colleague, Teruko, to find something for the poor holder. And to my surprise, she found a craftsman to do a custom-made job with a duralumin case. So the candle holder now travels in an orange strong-box. Maybe it is too big and not easy to carry, but I hope the light of the SOL World will be kept safe and last long.

5, Professional photography

I wanted to have as many good photos as possible taken during the conference so that we could use them for publicity for the next year and also for remembering the fruitful good times people shared during the conference. Photos give such rich impressions that letters and sentences cannot. So I asked an old friend of mine, Mr Hirano, a professional photographer who used to live in New York, to be an official photographer of the conference. He is like a “ninja” when he approaches the target. He sneaks in with no sound and does not draw anyone’s attention. So he captures the great moments of smiles and liveliness of the people. So when we see the photos afterwards we can almost re-live the good

memories of the conference. My wife Ruiko makes photo movies from these pictures and puts them up on the website.¹

Of course, we are careful about not taking photos of those people who do not wish to be exposed on any media. So we ask for permission from the participants in the registration process. Usually there are only a few who say no.

Personal Reflection

I am very grateful that I was given this opportunity to look back and write a small reflection note on one of the most important things I have done in my life. I truly appreciate Natalie Polgar for her very timely encouragement through emails from time to time.

There are many moments from J-SOL conferences that I treasure. The highlight in J-SOL1 was Mr Fuyama's comment in his plenary presentation about his success in saving a company from bankruptcy. As an overall reflective comment he said, *"In my opinion I think SF is about human love."* He said it in a bit of a tender tone but very normally, not like a punctuated punch line. Nonetheless, that voice sounded very touching. When I heard this rather straightforward message my heart was filled with so much contentment. I thought what I had done or what this SOL movement was doing had such significance. If an executive of a company that employs so many people can think that way about the OD method they have adopted, that method should be in line with the innate human nature that nurtures intimacy and caring, even under the pressure of industrial competition.

Another highlight came two conferences later. A ZACROS (packaging manufacturer) team (7 men) had come to J-SOL2 for the first time, to present their success of utilizing SF in their workplaces. They were proud of their own creative invention of SF tools like Hi-5 greetings, SF notebooks, SF email and so on. The youngest one, Mr Ushida, was only 20 years old and was very energetic in explaining how he invented the tool

¹ You can see them on the Ning site of SOL World: <http://solworld.ning.com/video>

and his seniors were generous enough to take up his suggestion. They reported how their workplace had really transformed for the better and it showed in higher productivity and in better retention rate. The workshop was very well received.

The highlight for me came in their presentation next year at J-SOL3. ZACROS came as a team again. Half of them were different members from the previous team. They reported that they no longer use the SF tools they invented. In question & answer time, somebody asked why they stopped using the tools that seemed to be working so well previously. Then a young worker stood up and said;



ZACROS team in workplace uniform ready to do a workshop.

“You know, we may have needed the tools before when we felt too shy to give each other OK messages or say good things about other men. But once we had enough experiences of feeling good and had better relationships among us, we realized that it’s not the tool that is important but

our behaviour. And you know, it takes time and is tiresome to write something in the notebook. It’s so much easier if we just give OK messages directly in our communication. We threw out the tools, but we do more of the positive communication that we want.”

My heart was filled with so much joy and I could not stop tears flowing from my eyes. SF worked to elicit the best of human nature at workplaces. AND the people credited themselves doing that!

Solution Focused Approach (SFA) was originally created for therapy. So it was used by a helper mostly for one to one therapeutic conversations. As I have continued J-SOL and the application of SF in organizational settings, I have come to realize the essence of SF can be interwoven into daily workplace interactions not necessarily in the form of one to one

coaching type of conversations, and it will work to bring better relationships and higher morale, resulting in higher productivity. And at the same time SF communication has a preventative effect for mental disorders. What I am saying here is not yet statistically proven, but I have seen the changes happening in workplaces that can be regarded as forerunners of those effects. And when CNPR (Chain of Natural Positive Response) happens, there is no distinction between counsellor and counselee. It's not like somebody does SF to somebody, but it's more like there are only co-workers responding to each other in SF ways.

So what I would like to pursue in the future with the evolution of J-SOL is creating a frame of reference for spotting the essence of SF in daily interactions in workplaces. GSFAS (General Solution-Focused Attitude Scale) was created for that purpose and its refining process is in progress. My future perfect image of when GSFAS is finalized, is that people are happy trying to find SF essence in the interactions and behaviours in their daily work life because it is easily done and gives awareness of what is important for collaboration towards purposeful and meaningful co-actions. GSFAS will be like glasses - and if you wear them, the SF essence is highlighted and appreciated. And you know what to do more of. J-SOL will continue to be a place for developing and sharing that kind of device and its useful applications.

I think one of the most important qualities of human beings for having happy communities is cultivated through this SOL World, whatever name you give it. So I really would like to bow deeply with respect to the people who started and have continued SOL World conferences. Also I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the people who supported, participated and contributed to J-SOL. And most importantly, I would like to say hello, and greet with a deep bow the people who are a part of this new endeavour called CEE SOL.

Let's see each other in smiles, soon.

You can take a look at the photos of J-SOL conferences at briefandsimple.co.

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What is J-SOL?

Official conference name: Japan Solution Focus Utilization Case Sharing Conference

Nickname: “J-SOL +n”

- ◆ The conference is modelled on the SOL conference in Europe.
- ◆ So “J-SOL” means the Japanese version of SOL. And the number is added after the nickname to show how many times it’s been held. J-SOL6 means it’s the 6th conference, for example. J-SOL1 was held in 2008.

Official language: Japanese

Where, when and how many people:

- J-SOL1 Tokyo April 27, 2008 118 participants
- J-SOL2 Tokyo June 27-28, 2009 127 participants
- J-SOL3 Tokyo June 26-27, 2010 146 participants
- J-SOL4 Sapporo August 20-21, 2011(Tsunami year) 57 participants
- J-SOL5 Kyoto June 23-24, 2012 129 participants
- J-SOL6 Tokyo June 22-23, 2013 108 participants

Website (Japanese): <http://www.j-sol.org>

English report by Dr. Mark McKergow:

- J-SOL1: <http://www.j-sol.org/one/J-SOL%20One%20review.pdf>
- J-SOL6: <http://sfworkblog.wordpress.com/2013/06/26/j-sol-6-report-aoki-lead-the-way-with-sf-in-japan/>

Workshops & Key Note titles from J-SOL6:

- To develop and evolve a workplace community to enhance cooperation

Yumiko Morita (Consultant) / Yoshifumi Furukawa (SMBC Real Estate)

- SF Approaches for the NEXT 100 Significance of continuing our “SF inside” activities

ZACROS Dream Team (Fujimori Kogyo Company Inc.)

- Power of “Compu-Ru” to vitalize people and organizations
Saeko Katsukawa (Saizeriya Co. Ltd.)

- “Kata” (format) for experiencing an effective SF communication

Teruko Watanabe (ICF accredited Professional Coach)

- *“Hey, I just happened to get this one person on my side who resonates with SF, and just see so much is happening!”*

Tetsutaro Tachika / Rie Asanuma , Texas Instruments Japan Ltd.

- Organizational innovation driven by “Good & More”
Seiichi Imano, Human resource consultant, Manglobe Co., Ltd.

- “Re-Teaming : Application in Japan and the Positive Results”
Yumiko Kawanishi / Kaoru Yamakoshi EAP Souken, Randstad Japan, Inc.

- ◆ Solution Focus in a Japan Quality Award Winning Organization

Taku Ogawa (General Affairs Manager, Kawagoe Gastroenterical Hospital)

- Ben LIVE! - Let’s ask ANYTHING and EVERYTHING FROM Dr. Furman -

Dr. Ben Furman

- SF Revolution~How SF is So Revolutionary~
Jenny Clark (SF Works)

- “Focus on solution.” How conflicts become a resource.
Marco Ronzani

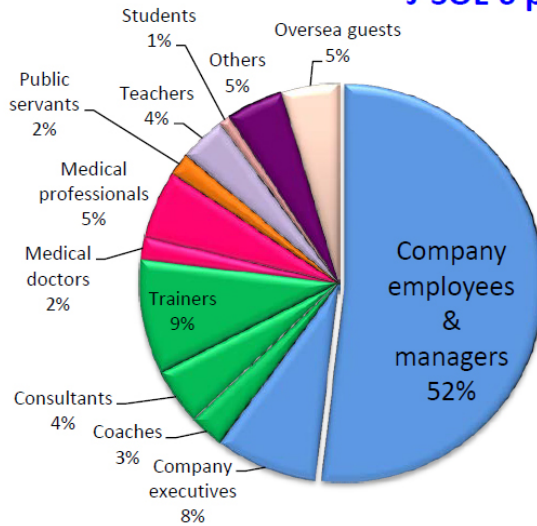
- Let’s talk with Mark!

Mark McKergow

- Key Note: “Diverse Uses of Fantasy and Imagination in Solution-Focused Work”

Dr. Ben Furman

J-SOL 6 participants



This is a case study originally published in:

Brief and Simple: Solution Focus in Organizations

Eds. Natalie Polgar & Katalin Hankovszky

SolutionSurfers, 2014, ISBN:978-963-12-0115-4