

"Deck of trumps" - introduction
by Tomasz Switek

I have the privilege to present to you a procedure for working with clients, and at the same time I'm deeply convinced that it can be an efficient tool in your work. This procedure is based on the experiences of many therapists, whose work was my inspiration, and refers to the principles of Solution Focused Brief Therapy developed at the Brief Therapy Family Center in Milwaukee (USA). Because our work (as Solution Focused Therapists) is useful for our clients in a very visible way, I decided to share with you with this structured procedure in the hope that it can encourage you to practice helping people in a way focused on their abilities, needs and resources.

I'm strongly convinced that my procedure can be used with people with very different kinds of problems. It is aimed at what the client wants to achieve from therapy and what he or she wants to improve. It keeps the focus on creating and introducing possible solutions instead of focusing on the nature of the problem – a basic idea for Solution Focused Therapists.

The choices of the leading titles for the thematic parts of the Deck of Trumps (parts 1-12) are based on my experience working with people. I observed what and in what degree was important to them, what was needed, and what had received a high subjective value. Of course, the list is not a complete one; part 13, which is open, can accommodate your client's specific needs.

A dozen or so formulas can be used by the therapist and client in two stages.

The first stage:

The first step is to choose with the client one of the formulas from parts 1-13 based on his needs and preferences. After that, the client answers the questions included in the chosen formula. The client may do this alone or together with some helpful person. The questions help the client to self analyze particular aspects of life and his functioning in each area. They lead the client to use his imagination about: (1) good and desired functioning in the specified area of life, (2) when and how he was able to behave in such a manner, (3) what are his internal and external resources, and (4) what other factors are helpful to him in functioning this way.

After answering the questions, your client can make a decision whether to continue to work toward introducing some solutions in the specified area of life. If the answer is yes, together you go on to the second stage. If not, you may stay on the first stage and choose another formula, if the client expresses a need for continuing to work together.

The aim of the first stage is to help client to notice that, besides having deficits and faults, he is also the owner of some resources. Bringing these resources to the light of day is made possible by analyzing personal experiences from the client's life in a constructive way. This makes it easier for the client to see and internalize resources, and to make more effective use of them in the preferred future. Eliciting, amplifying and reinforcing the person's resources is one very effective strategy in providing psychological help.

<u>Deck of Trumps:</u>	
- part 1 - Me as a parent	- part 8 - Me achieving successes
- part 2 - Me as a spouse or life partner	- part 9 - Me as a woman/man
- part 3 - Me as a worker	- part 10 - Me showing a strong will, resisting temptations
- part 4 - Me believing in God	- part 11 - Me taking care of my health and body
- part 5 - Me using my own free time constructively	- part 12 - Me controlling my own behaviors and impulses
- part 6 - Me behaving in accordance with my own values	- part 13 - Universal, for use according to the needs of client
- part 7 - Me coping with life's difficulties	

The second stage:

Parts "Deck of Trumps - Formula for Change - 1" and "Deck of Trumps - Formula for Change- 2" are adjusted for use with the chosen formula from thematic parts 1 to 13.

At this stage, the client is preparing to introduce some changes in her life, and to check out how those changes are suitable for her. What works? What is good to continue? Which strategies need to be changed? The aims of these two formulas are (1) to help the client to plan the direction and the way of introducing changes on the basis of her personal experiences and abilities, and (2) to notice how these new strategies influence the client's present life.

When reading the questions, you will notice that they refer to the client's experiences from the past and present that are positive and constructive. These experiences are used as a basis to build on and to introduce further steps in the process of creating solutions.

When using these formulas with your client, it is recommended that you try to elicit as many details as possible from her internal and external life at the times when she functioned in a better way. You also need to avoid the danger of getting in and analyzing the nature and the causes of the client's problems. (That would be another game, maybe the "Deck of Low Cards"!) Instead, keep your focus and concentrate on what worked out in the past, what is working out now, and what can work out in the future.

The presented procedure needs to be treated in a very elastic way so as to adjust to each individual client's needs and goals. It's good to remember that every time you offer this procedure to the client, it is only a proposition. Letting your client make the decision about the eventual use of this procedure will let you keep the responsibility for change on the right side. You can use it in individual or group work as well.

It is intended for free use and copying for all professionals in the area of helping people. Please share with me with your reflections about your use of the procedure!

I wish you good work!
Tomasz Switek

My thanks for help with the English version of trumps to my friend Alison Johnson, Psy.D.

Warning! If you're an English language purist it will be better for you to run away from here immediately, it was not corrected by anyone who knows English!

This is a very free translation of my article published in Poland
for journal for CB therapists

**"Deck of trumps" - one of the ways for being helpful to the clients
in becoming as they want to be!**

In this article I'll present to you a procedure for working with clients, which is called "Deck of trumps". I'll describe it's structure, basic techniques, which are utilized, possibilities of applications, and it's effects which were noticed by the therapists and clients who used it during therapy process. This procedure is based on the experiences of many therapists, whose work was my inspiration, and refers to the principles of Solution Focused Brief Therapy developed at the Brief Therapy Family Center in Milwaukee (USA). Because so many therapist in so many settings found this "solution focused" tool as a very useful for them and for their clients, I decided to share with you with this structured procedure in the hope that it can encourage you to practice helping people in a way focused on their abilities, needs and resources. "Deck of trumps" is available in Polish, English, Dutch, Spanish, French language versions, soon should be other language versions. It's used by many therapists in the countries like Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Holland, Spain, Germany, USA and others.

Procedure's structure.

"Deck of trumps" is divided into two stages - the first which is focused mainly on redescribing client's reality, and the second which is focused on planing, continuing and introducing some strategies and noticing how these acting's influence the client's present life.

A dozen or so formulas can be used by the therapist and client in this two stages.

The first stage:

The first step is to choose with the client one of the formulas from parts 1-13 based on his needs and preferences.

- part 1 - Me as a parent
- part 2 - Me as a spouse or life partner
- part 3 - Me as a worker
- part 4 - Me believing in God
- part 5 - Me using my own free time constructively
- part 6 - Me behaving in accordance with my own values
- part 7 - Me coping with life's difficulties
- part 8 - Me achieving successes
- part 9 - Me as a woman/man
- part 10 - Me showing a strong will, resisting temptations
- part 11 - Me taking care of my health and body
- part 12 - Me controlling my own behaviors and impulses
- part 13 - Universal, for use according to the needs of client

The choices of the leading titles for the thematic parts of the Deck of Trumps (parts 1-12) were based on my experience working with people. I observed what and in what degree was important to them, what was needed, and what had received a high subjective value. Of course, the list is not a complete one; part 13, which is open, can accommodate your client's specific needs. As you can easily noticed, particular parts of "Deck of trumps" are focused on the client's person in the perspective of some social roles or in the perspective of having some abilities.

The aim of the first stage is to help client to notice that, besides having deficits and faults, he is also the owner of some resources and possibilities, and to redefine in more useful way description of the client's self reality (eusémie)¹.

After choosing one of the formulas, the client answers the questions included in the chosen formula. The client may do this alone or together with some helpful person, maybe with you as a therapist. The questions help the client to self analyze particular aspects of life and his functioning in each area, what cause in redescription of the client's reality. Particular questions in formulas lead the client to use his imagination and think about:

- (1) good and desired functioning in the specified area of life by creating the picture of the "preferred future" in the chosen area of life,
- (2) when and how he/she was able to behave in such a manner - "exceptions",
- (3) what are his internal and external resources, and what other factors are helpful to him in functioning in desired way. Bringing these resources and possibilities to the light of day is made possible by analyzing personal experiences from the client's life in a constructive way. This makes it easier for the client to see and internalize resources, and to make more effective use of them in the preferred future. Eliciting, amplifying and reinforcing the person's resources is one very effective strategy in providing psychological help.
- (4) defining his/her present situation in chosen area of life by using homogenous numeric scales from 1 to 10.

After answering the questions, your client can make a decision whether to continue to work toward introducing some solutions in the specified area of life. If the answer is yes, together you go on to the second stage. If not, you may stay on the first stage and choose another formula, if the client expresses a need for continuing to work together or put formulas aside. In many cases helping clients in changing their way of perceiving one's reality, to realize what one do wants, what one can and is able to do, what is strong in oneself, what was and can be helpful is found as sufficient therapist input for some clients and they continue introducing next desired changes in unaided way, out of therapy.

¹ Eusémie - greek: *eu* - well, good; *seme* - sign, meaning.

The second stage:

Parts "Deck of Trumps - Formula for Change - 1" and "Deck of Trumps - Formula for Change- 2" are adjusted for use with the chosen formula from thematic parts 1 to 13.

At this stage, the client is preparing to introduce some changes in her life, and to check out how those changes are suitable for her. What works? What is good to continue? Which strategies need to be changed? The aims of these two formulas are:

- (1) to help the client to plan the direction and the way of continuing and introducing changes on the basis of her personal experiences and abilities,
- (2) to maintain and introduce these changes,
- (3) to notice how these new strategies influence the client's present life,
- (4) to create context in which client is choosing what is and what is not good for him, what will and will not be continuing, what will be introduced.

We're talking here about changes which appear on the level of acting, doing things (euhéresis)².

At this stage clients by using "scaling" and "self-observation":

- define what in chosen area of life is working out in sufficient way, with what they can be satisfied with,
- remind the times, when it was better than now, and look for these elements, which helped them to make that moments to be better,
- on the basis of own experiences, achieved knowledge, using experiences of the other members of the group, "support team", important persons, or therapist they plan "small steps" to introduce in the near future in own life,
- observe to what degree introducing strategies of behaving influenced their lives, self, environment,
- took decisions what is working out in sufficient way and what is worth to continue, and what is not working out in sufficient way and what must be changed, introduced to work out in more sufficient way.

When working with "Deck of trumps" client and therapist are using following techniques:

- creating the picture of the "preferred future" - near and a long time ahead,
- looking for and identifying "exceptions" - when there was not a problem, or a problem was less intensive, or better say when there was a full solution working out or at least solution was created and utilized to some degree,
- complimenting,
- scaling,
- self-observation,
- doing choices.

By using above techniques changes occurs on the level of the redescription of the client's reality (eusémie) and on the level of client's acting (euhérésis).

When reading the questions and giving the answers, you will notice that they refer to the client's experiences from the past and present that are positive and constructive. These experiences are used as a basis to build on and to introduce further steps in the process of creating solutions. When using these formulas (in the first and second stage) with your client, it is recommended that you try to elicit as many details as possible from her internal and external life at the times when she functioned in a better way. You also need to avoid the danger of getting in and analyzing the nature and the causes of the client's problems. (That would be another game, maybe the "Deck of Low Cards"!) Instead, keep your focus and concentrate on what worked out in the past, what is working out now, and what can work out in the future.

The presented procedure needs to be treated in a very elastic way so as to adjust to each individual client's needs and goals. It's good to remember that every time you offer this procedure to the client, it is only a proposition. Letting your client make the decision about the eventual use of this procedure will let you keep the responsibility for change on the right side.

² Euhérésis - greek: *eu* - well, good; *haeresis* - choice.

Furthermore it's very recommended to remember that introducing changes must be done with respect to the clients ability and readiness to do new things which leads to change of his/her reality. Process of keeping change in the frame of individual clients acceptance will allow him/her to keep proper level of safety and to get orientation. With such a flexibility and working "slower than clients" therapist will be able to create situation in which subjective feeling of continuity between past, present and future is supported in the process of introducing changes (transcontinuïte)³.

Possibilities of application.

To make my knowledge about possibilities of application Deck of trumps more objective I asked other therapist who used that procedure, about their experiences and ideas, particularly about ways of application and effects. Below I quoted conclusions, I received as an answer on my request.

1. Deck of trumps were used in a very wide area of providing psychological help to people who need it. Mainly were mentioned following settings: mental health problems, chemical addictions, family violence, family and couple disfunctions, social disability problems, parenting problems, children and adolescent disabilities.
2. Procedure was also used as a tool in the process of teaching and supervising other professionals in the area of helping people.
3. It was used with adults, adolescents, and after providing some changes in the outlook and content with children.
4. At the group settings it was applied either as one of the propositions, or as main scenario.
5. Within individual therapy clients were working with particular formulas independently, coming to the sessions with filling once, or therapist helped client to answer questions during the session, or formula was used as a framework for conducting "solution focused" session with clients.
6. Depending on using "ground-basic" approach by therapist "Deck of trumps" was offered to the clients as a way to broaden provided so far therapeutic program, or was used as a way of reinforcing process of solution focused therapy.
7. CB therapist used elements of procedure in preparing "experts" programs of therapy for clients.
8. Depending on clients needs and therapist readiness Deck of trumps was used in different moments of the process of therapy. From the very beginning moments, up to work with people who are at the end of the process or within "aftercare" programs.
9. It was applied at residential and ambulatory health care programs, in public and private institutions, at social care systems, at juvenile systems, school settings.

I think that this procedure were used with so many issues, because it's aimed at what the client wants to achieve from therapy and what he or she wants to improve. It keeps the focus on creating and introducing possible solutions instead of focusing on the nature of the problem – a basic idea for Solution Focused Therapists.

Advantages/Effects.

Laying on the experiences of those professionals who used Deck of trumps two kinds of advantages has emerged. First connected with the advantages and effects referred to the clients, second with those perceived by therapist themselves.

Client's advantages/effects generally:

- growing feeling of self-esteem,
- changes in self perspective, from seeing oneself as "not able, not capable" into person who "is able, can do". Of course, person who is not able and can do everything, but so often apparently able to do a lot of desired things,
- greater readiness to talk about problems, and to change problematic behaviors,

³ Transcontinuïte - the concept of *transcontinuïte* is described by Luc Isebaert and Marie Cristine Cabie in theirs book "Pour une therapie breve"

- increasing amount and quality of constructive behaviors,
- reinforcement of the feeling of having impact on one's life,
- strengthening hope connected with therapy,
- developing abilities in creating and introducing desired strategies,
- improving quality of the relationship with other people,
- better preventing of relapses,
- shortening periods of the relapse's duration and its intensity,
- higher motivation to participate in therapy programs.

Client's advantages/effects in SFT process:

- after preparing formula easier finding answers on SF questions,
- faster specifying goals, exceptions, resources,
- maintaining SF perspective between sessions.

Therapist's advantages/effects:

- decreasing level of the client's resistance in the therapy process,
- increasing possibilities of the cooperation with clients,
- higher subjective feeling of self efficacy,
- strengthening of the therapist engagement in the workplace,
- broadening of the therapist perspective of the new possibilities and solutions,
- changing of the self attitude toward clients, much more friendly and optimistic, particularly toward so called "difficult clients",
- making easier to conduct SF sessions and to keep focus on solutions instead of problems.

Above advantages and effects were quoted by many therapist, many of them were not solution focused ones. Most of this quotations are very common for people who were trying to use even to some degree SFBT. So I can say it's not advantage of using Deck of trumps, but that using Deck of trumps is useful for many to work on the basis of SFBT's principles. And in such a perspective it's a helpful tool to straighten or introduce SFBT's techniques into ones therapeutic practice, and for clients to help them find effective way to achieve their goals and meet their needs in a save and respectful way.

Tomasz Świtek

Bibliography:

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3. I.K. Berg, S.D. Miller, Working With the Problem Drinker, Norton, 1992.
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	<u>THE</u> by	<u>DECK OF</u> Tomasz	<u>TRUMPS</u> Switek	
Me taking care of my health and body	Me as a woman/man		Me achieving successes	
Me behaving in accordance with my own values			Me showing a strong will, resisting temptations	
Me as a parent			Me as a spouse or life partner	
Me controlling my own behaviors and impulses			Me using my own free time constructively	
Me coping with life's difficulties			Me as ... whatever else I imagine	
Ma as a worker			ME AS A HUMAN !!!	Me believing in God
Translated with the help of			Alison Johnson, PhD	

3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in acting as a Good Spouse or Life Partner? If necessary ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm acting like a Good Spouse or Life Partner" and 10 means "currently very often I'm acting like a Good Spouse or Life Partner", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the examples described above, and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in acting as a Good Worker? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm acting like a Good Worker" and 10 means "currently very often I'm acting like a Good Worker", estimate your present level in that area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in using your own free time in a constructive way? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm using my own free time in a constructive way" and 10 means "currently very often I'm using my own free time in a constructive way", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality characteristics do you have that are helpful in behaving in accordance with your own values? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm behaving in accordance with my own values" and 10 means "currently very often I'm behaving in accordance with my own values", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in coping well with life's difficulties? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situations?	What feature of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm coping well with life's difficulties" and 10 means "currently very often I'm coping well with life's difficulties", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in bringing you closer to achieving some successes. If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm doing things which brings me nearer to achieving some successes" and 10 means "currently very often I'm doing things which brings me nearer to achieving some successes" estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in acting like a valuable Woman / Man? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm acting like a valuable Woman / Man" and 10 means "currently very often I'm acting like a valuable Woman / Man", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in showing strong will and resisting temptation? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently, I almost never show strong will or resist temptation" and 10 means "currently, I almost always show strong will or resist temptation", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in taking care of your health and body? If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently I'm taking a little care of my health and body" and 10 means "currently I'm taking enough care of my health and body", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in controlling the particular behavior/impulse. If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out the table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situation?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means "currently very rarely I'm able to control analyzed now behavior/impulse " and 10 means "currently very often I'm able to control analyzed now behavior/impulse ", estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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6. How much are you able to keep control of and continue the behavior, in a way that is safe for you and other people? Please estimate on the scale from 0% to 100%.

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in behaving as you would like, and described in Items 1 and 2. If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out this table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situations?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where
 1 means "....."
 and 10 means ".....",
 estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what you can do? What abilities do you have? What kind of personality features do you have that are helpful in doing effective SFT as you would like, and described in Items 1 and 2. If necessary, ask someone to help you to fill out this table!

What was I able to do?	What abilities did I show in that situations?	What features of my personality did I show?

4. What was helpful and useful to you to act in such a way?

Inside yourself	Outside of you

5. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means " I'm doing a little bit of effective SFT now" and 10 means "I'm doing almost only effective SFT " estimate your present level in this area of your professional activity.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. Imagine a moment in the near future when you'll be able to estimate your situation a little bit higher than you've estimated in Question 1. Think and write in what way that situation will be different from the present. What will you be doing, thinking, feeling, what will others be doing, what else will there be, what will place that moment on a higher level than it is now?

5. Now on the basis of your answers on Questions 3 and 4, consider and write what will be your next two or three steps toward point 10 on the scale. Steps which in the near future make it possible to say: "I'm a little bit higher than I was a short time ago!". Write about: what you'll be doing, where, when, how, in what way, who will help you and how, which of your thoughts and feelings will be helpful in such an enterprise.

If you now know what to do, put down that formula in a safe place and go do it! After all, you're able to influence some things in your life! Try to notice even the smallest signs of change - these are small parts of a big change. Do what works!

"DECK OF TRUMPS' - FORMULA FOR CHANGE -2

With this formula you can work on introducing changes and observing if / in what way these changes are good for you, or work well for you. You can decide whether it is worthwhile to continue what you do, and what needs to be changed on the way to achieving your goals!

1. In accordance with my planned steps, I've undertaken the following activities, which have brought the following changes:

<i>What I've done and how</i>	<i>Changes influenced by my activity</i>

2. Presently I estimate my situation on a scale from 1 to 10 to be at a:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. Write in a few sentences which of your abilities, strengths, features, or advantages you used and how you did it, when you took the steps you mentioned in Item 1

DECK OF TRUMPS FOR COUPLES

A shared life in a relationship can give so much, but it also requires so much from both of you. Every relationship goes through its happy times and difficult times. Later on, with passing time, under life's burdens, we may forget that creating a successful and satisfying relationship requires continuous care and activity. The everyday rush, troubles, and duties start to obscure the common sense of being together. In this formula we invite you both to look at your relationship in a way that can be helpful in eliciting forgotten or overlooked things, as well as developing new ones, that will make your relationship more successful and satisfying for both of you.

1. Consider now and write down some things that will let you know that your relationship is successful and satisfying for both of you. In what way will the situation between both of you be different from the present one? What will you and your partner be doing, what will be favorable, helpful, useful in creating a successful and satisfying relationship?

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2. Remind yourself of several times when you were convinced, even to some degree, that you both were creating a successful and satisfying relationship.

What specifically was favorable, helpful, useful for both of you in those times?	
What were you doing then; what was favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?	What was your partner doing then; what was favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?

3. On the basis of the above examples and those you may have in your mind, try to fill out the following table. What have you learned about what both of you can do? What abilities do both of you have? What kind of personality features do both of you have that are helpful in creating a successful and satisfying relationship?

<i>About me</i>		
<i>What was I able to do?</i>	<i>What abilities did I show in that situation?</i>	<i>What features of my personality did I show?</i>
<i>About my partner</i>		
<i>What was my partner able to do?</i>	<i>What abilities did my partner show in that situation?</i>	<i>What personality features did my partner show?</i>

4. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means: “currently at a low level we’re creating a successful and satisfying relationship” and 10 means: “currently to a large extent we’re creating a successful and satisfying relationship”, estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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What specifically is favorable, helpful, useful, that already exists between both of you? What helps you evaluate your relationship on the above scale at the level you gave it, and not lower about 1 or 2 points?

What are you doing already that is favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?

What is your partner doing already that is favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?

Now, please, talk with each other about the answers you both have given on particular questions. Think about how these answers will be useful and helpful for you both, and for your relationship!

If both of you want, and it’s possible to introduce some changes into your relationship to make it more successful and satisfying, please take the “Formula for Change” and continue your work together of introducing the desired changes and achieving your goals! Good luck!

DECK OF TRUMPS FOR COUPLES – FORMULA FOR CHANGE

In the preceding formula (Deck of Trumps for Couples) you answered many questions. You characterized how you imagine a successful and satisfying relationship. You reminded yourself of some of the moments in your life together when you were convinced, even to some degree, that you both have been creating a successful and satisfying relationship. You also defined your own abilities, skills, talents and advantages that could be helpful to you both in creating a successful and satisfying relationship. It may be that you found out that, to some degree, you're already creating a successful and satisfying relationship.

If you want to continue preparing and introducing further changes in the process of improving your relationship you may go on to the questions specified in the following formula.

1. On the scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means: "currently at a low level we're creating a successful and satisfying relationship" and 10 means: "currently to a large extent we're creating a successful and satisfying relationship", (re-) estimate your present level in this area of your life.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. On the basis of: a) your and your partner's imaginations about what a successful and satisfying relationship looks like and how it works out, b) moments from your past, when you were convinced, even to some degree, that both of you were creating a successful and satisfying relationship, **please imagine in the near future a moment when you'll be able to estimate the situation in your relationship a little bit higher than you've done it on the scale above.**

In what way will the future situation between the two of you be different from the present one? What will place that moment on a higher level than it is now?	
What will you be doing; what will be favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?	What will your partner be doing; what will be favorable, helpful, useful for your relationship?

3. Now on the basis of your answer on Item 2, consider and write down the first two or three things you can do to move you up on the scale. These are steps which make it possible to say in the near future: "We're a little bit higher than we were a short time ago!" Write about: what, where, when, how, in what way - you'll be doing things differently, who will help you and how, and what sort of thoughts and feelings you have that will be helpful in taking these steps. As you will notice, this Item is mainly about your activities, but you can also talk with your partner about the things you like her/him to do to make your relationship more successful and satisfying.

Step 1
Step 2
Step 3

If you now know what to do, put down this formula in a safe place and go do it! After all, you're able to influence some things in your life! Try to notice even the smallest signs of change - these are small parts of a big change.

Do what works!

(After taking some actions you can move to item 4 in this formula.)

4. In accordance with my planned steps, I've undertaken the following activities, which have brought the following changes:
(you can also observe and write about activities undertaken by your partner)

<i>About me</i>	
<i>What I've done and how</i>	<i>Changes influenced by my activity</i>
<i>About my partner, what I've noticed that she/he has done</i>	
<i>What my partner has done and how</i>	<i>Changes influenced by my partner's activity</i>

5. Presently I estimate our situation on a scale from 1 to 10 to be at a:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Now, please, talk with your partner about the answers you both have given on particular questions. Think about how these answers will be useful and helpful for you both, and for your relationship!

If both of you want and it's possible to introduce further changes into your relationship to make it more successful and satisfying, please take a new "Formula for Change" and continue your work together of introducing desired changes and achieving your goals! Good luck!