



# Lavoie Solutions

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## Can you see?

*Can you see Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so?* This is a casual question people ask when they want to refer a person and to check if you have room in your schedule to see them. But, when you stop and think, can you really see them?

Can you see who they are beyond their diagnosis?

Can you see the person behind the challenges?

Can you see they are greater than their flaws and deficits?

Can you see the dreamer who's still holding on, even though they feel helpless?

Can you see what still matters to them when they're holding on by their fingertips?

Can you see their hopes between the lines of despair?

Can you see the hero underneath the victim?

Can you see the kindness in their eyes that can be lost when their words are so harsh?

Can you see their best self? The person they wish they were more often? The person they manage to be sometimes?

Can you see their light when their words are so dark?

Can you see the efforts they are making to stand, even if they are not moving?

Can you see that this is my daughter, my father, or my best friend, even if they look like a client to you?

Can you see who that indifferent-looking teenager wants to become, if they can just get through this difficult time?

Can you see the younger version of this person who still in there, even if they no longer have the words to tell their story?

And because seeing is believing, can you help them brush off the dust and see what you saw?

Many of my clients have told me that one of the things they appreciated the most was that they felt seen. In my profession, we talk a great deal about listening and the importance of being listened to. At this point in my career, I wonder if we got it all wrong. What if it was more important to see them?

You might argue that we see them through listening, but if we know this is what we are doing - that we are listening to see - it will change the way we listen and what we chose to reflect. I want to use a mirror that can help them to see what I see. Then, we will be able to say, *“I see you,”* or *“Did you see that? Did you see what I saw?”*

Next time you are listening, pay attention. Do you listen to understand and reflect their problems, their deficits, their suffering? Or are you listening to show them that you see that they are bigger than those 3 put together? Do you listen to understand and reflect their hopes, their competencies, their efforts?

As we are turning the page on 2021, I wish to be more explicit about the solution-focused stance, which is much more important than the techniques, but much more difficult to explain. I still want to be pragmatic and give you tools you can use, but sometimes, I will offer you food for thought. You can still use the techniques, but if you want to be SF, you will see the differences in the way you think about clients, the way you talk about them when they are not there, and what you pay attention to when you listen to them. I hope to translate these principles so they are more accessible.

So, this is my first suggestion, that you listen to see more from the people that you are listening to. Don't take my word for it. Test it and see for yourself the difference it can make for them and for you. Because I am sure that COVID or no COVID, we can all have a better 2022 if we manage to help people see and connect with their best selves and live a life that brings them closer to that version of themselves.

- Brigitte