



Solution-Oriented Thinking

Shift from blame and past causes to practical next steps.

THE TRAP

Why we get stuck

↻ RUMINATION LOOP • NEGATIVITY BIAS

01

Brain's negativity bias

Keeps us ruminating after setbacks, replaying what went wrong on loop.

02

Excessive problem focus ↑ anxiety

Over-analysis fuels stress and narrows our perception of options.

03

↓ creative problem-solving

When stuck in blame, the mind loses capacity to generate next steps.

THE SHIFT

From Problem-Focused to Solution-Focused

SOT shifts attention from blame and past causes to practical next steps and desired outcomes.

PAST • STUCK

Why is this happening?

Ruminates on history, assigns fault, stays in analysis loop.

pastblameanxiety ↑



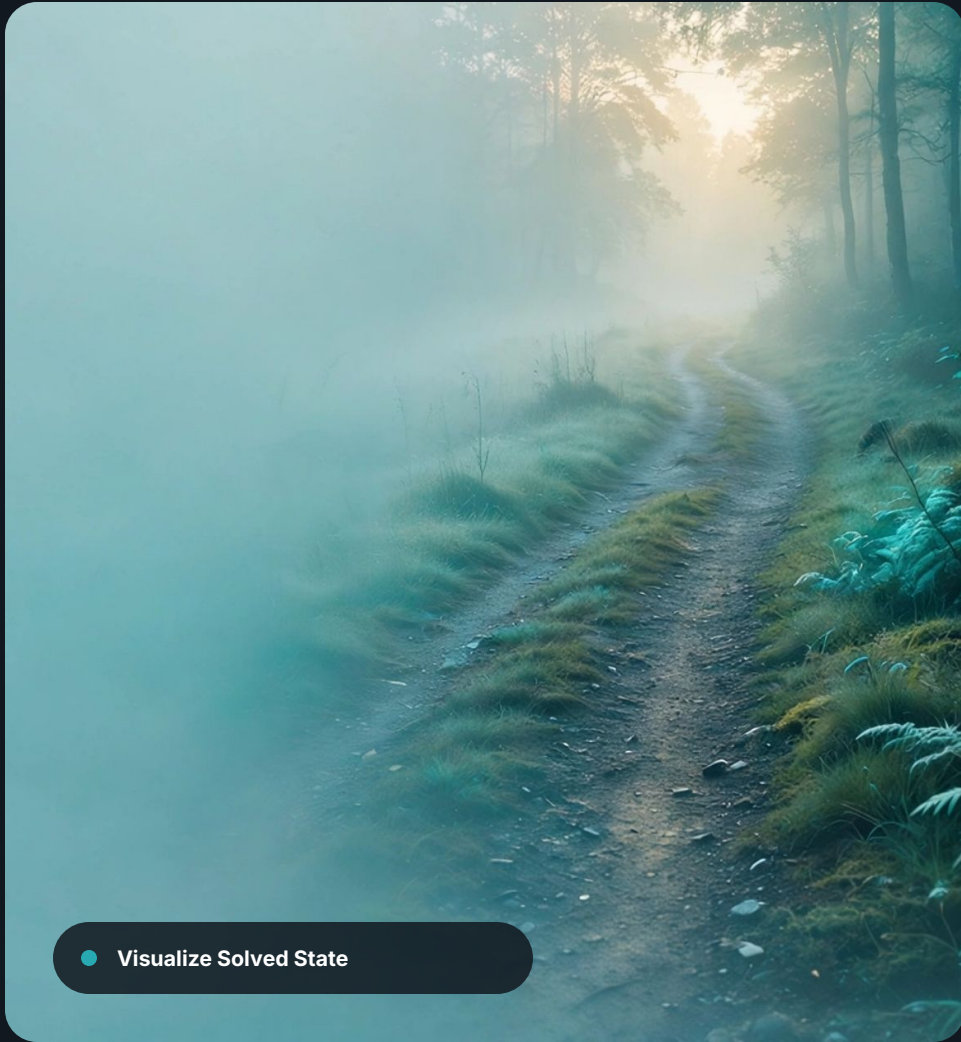
FUTURE • MOVING

What can I do next?

Orients to desired future, identifies one actionable step.

futureactionclarity ↑

Same situation, different question → different brain state



● Visualize Solved State

1. Ask the Miracle Question

"What would be different if the problem were already solved?"

How to use it



Picture the morning after

How would you know things are better?



Work backwards

Trace from that solved state to one tiny clue.

2. Take a Resource Inventory

Before fixing, map what you already have. Solutions build on existing assets, not from zero.



Existing skills

What have you done before that worked, even partially?



Support & people

Who can offer feedback, time, or perspective this week?



Tools & past successes

Templates, access, proof you've solved similar issues.

SKILLS

3 active

Writing, analysis, calm under pressure

PEOPLE

5 contacts

Mentor, peer, partner ready to help

TOOLS

Docs + time

Notes, 2h block today, laptop

EVIDENCE

2 wins

Shipped similar fix in Q2 & Q3

REFRAME PROMPT

What do I already have that helps?



TOOL 3 — ATOMIC ACTION

Choose an Atomic Action

Break a large problem into ONE small, specific, testable step you can do in <10 minutes.

AVOID • OVERWHELM

~~“Fix my career”~~

Setting vague, massive goals leads directly to plan overload and analysis paralysis.

- × Vague big goal
- × Plan overload (too many steps)

DO THIS • ACTIONABLE

“Send 1 email today”

A single, localized task that takes less than 10 minutes lowers the friction to start.

- ✓ One small, specific, testable step
- ✓ Unlocks momentum immediately

Rule: If it takes >1 step, it's not atomic. Make it so small you can't fail. **Small step → momentum**

THE CORE HABIT

One question changes everything

PAST • PROBLEM-FOCUSED

~~“Why is this happening?”~~



FUTURE • SOLUTION-FOCUSED

“What can I **do next?**”

THE HABIT IN ACTION

One small, specific, testable step. No fixing everything — just the next step on a clear path.

Begin today