

# Business Lunch

14 recipes for meaningful conversations  
in everyday working life

Developed by  
Solutionsurfers® ACADEMY

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# Healthy, hearty and meaningful

## Editorial

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If Jamie Oliver, one of the shooting stars in the field of cooking, states: "Everyone can cook!" – then we think: "Everyone can lead meaningful, target-oriented and appreciative conversations." That's why we have compiled this small recipe book with crispy and elegant ideas, showing you how you can drive effective conversations in your daily business, regardless of whether you are working in a leadership, project management or operational role.

In addition to saving time with this, you will become the initiator of the change that you have been longing for. In fact, so many people want more lightness, efficiency and appreciation in their daily work.

We can contribute to that by starting to talk differently – communication influences everything in a company: pleasure, achievement of goals, performance, motivation and relationships.

If we succeed in driving meaningful discussions, we can have a direct influence on these factors in all our conversations that we have day by day: in the corridor, in meetings, with our customers or employees.

With this little cookbook we would like to invite you to give a trial and to take part in this experiment.

Firstly we suggest to take the recipes of one or two dishes and cook them three to four times in similar situations.

Afterwards have another try with two more dishes. Do not be confused, as at the beginning it might be a bit strange to put these ingredients together – and be curious about the reactions of your guests.

### **We wish you a lot of Meaningful Conversations!**

Solutionsurfers ACADEMY

Daniel Meier

*PS: And if you find this recipe book very useful, you can pass it on or download it free of charge from our website:*

[www.solutionsurfers.com](http://www.solutionsurfers.com)



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Five minutes for self-reflection





# Change excitingly with appreciative communication

Solution focus – the basic recipe

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## Ingredients

- 1 expressed will to replace the “why” with a targeting “how”
- 1 belief that being conscious where to go is more important than knowing from where you want to stay away
- 1 good portion of heartfelt persistence and a little patience
- 7 or more heaped tablespoons practice of precise, solution-focused questioning technique
- 1 big portion of appreciative curiosity
- 1 solid belief in the resources, the talents and the experiences of your dialog partner

## Preparation

Mix all ingredients, and let it rise. Enjoy as often as possible. Refreshing these activities on a regular basis will enhance the beneficial effect. Especially digestible with a large portion of appreciation.

# Vitamin-rich stimulant for every occasion

Heartfelt compliment is always welcome

*Expenditure of time: 2 minutes - Effect: often over weeks*

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## Ingredients

- Attentive eyes and ears
- Focus on what is useful and helpful - and / or has already done well
- Conducive verbal and nonverbal expressiveness

## Preparation

Heartfelt compliment is everywhere and always welcome. With a little practice and good intention, there are many possible uses: response to an observed or told performance; as a serious appreciation of a resource that made it possible to survive a difficult situation; as reference to something that you like about the Other; independently from the situation. It is especially tasty if it is concrete and comes from the heart.

## Serving suggestions

- Directly: *"Wow, I'm really impressed how you have just mastered this difficult situation!"*
- Indirectly, *"What do you guess the customer thought about you, after talking so much time for him?"*
- As a suggestion for self-compliment: *"How did you manage to keep such a cool head in this stress?"*

Caution: Giving a hearty compliment nourishes both the giver and the recipient.

## Also worth trying ...

Keep your eyes open for ways to compliment untypical situations, such as giving feedback to an angry employee: *"I find impressive how distinctly you can stand up for your needs!"*





# Sauces and spices

Simply, radically different

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**These ingredients should be available all the times:**

- And what else?
- What instead?
- Yes and ...
- Accepted ...
- Good enough?

## And what else?

This flavor enhancer is a real jack-of-all-trades. It allows our guests to think even further, bigger or more precise, and can bring true surprises to light. *"And what else?"* Refines savory and sweet dishes and is also very popular for finger food. Wide usage of this very own taste will highlight each dish and make them especially enjoyable.

## What instead?

If your guest is afraid of over-salting his food (*"I'm always so scared ..."*, *"I do not want more ..."*), you can turn the taste back to positive and concrete goals, with a joyous *"How would you like to respond instead?"*



## Yes and ...

Your guest expresses the idea of seasoning the jointly created strawberry soufflé with garlic, and you want to express your concerns? A consternated "Yes, but ... " appears on your tongue? Try it with the much softer "Yes, that's a brave idea, AND I wonder what alternatives are otherwise available?" This little light dip is not too heavy for the stomach, as it appreciates the guest's idea and allows at the same time to expand the viewpoint.

## Supposed ...

If you have a firm realist as a guest, it may be the case that he struggles to get with change. Or it may happen that he can barely get involved in dreamlike visions of the future. Your guest is likely to stick with a "But that's not possible ... " In this situation, a pinch of "Let's imagine that it would be feasible: What would that make possible for you?" can give him a hypothetical leap into the desired future.

## Good enough?

This spice is perfect for adding the final touch to a dish. As soon as you get the impression that your guest starts to become full, you taste the dish with an "Is it so good enough?" And, if the answer is positive, you can end the meal accordingly. This way, you don't risk unnecessarily overfeeding of the guest.





# Quick Lunch

Short conversations beside additional activities

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## Ingredients

- 7 minutes time
- 3 substantial questions
- 1 portion of crispy appreciation

## Preparation

**We have seven minutes, so let's start:**

- *"What's your best hope on the impact of our conversation?"*  
Fry the question for a minute ...
- *"If this best hope could become reality now, what would you do? And what else?"*  
... stir for two minutes ...
- *"How does this, that you just told me, make a real difference to you and your environment?"*  
... let the question rest two minutes, accompanied with a smile ...
- *"And what would your very best friend say about all this?"*  
... and confidently consider what happens.

With these simple ingredients, you can conjure meaningful conversation in the room that doesn't take any preparation time. This quick course should be available in every office household all the times. After following this recipe few times, you will discover how to start experimenting more and more, and developing your very own quick lunch.



## Room 2 Bloom

Challenging appraisal interview

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### Ingredients

- 100% pronounced resource focus
- 1 sheet of white paper
- 1 basket full of solution-focused questions
- 1 conviction, that conversations are better when they are led as dialogue
- 1 belief, that development works easier and it is more sustainable when you focus on what's already there and it is working out well
- 1 portion of goal orientation
- 1 big dollop of joy in helping to grow those around you

### Preparation

#### APPETIZER

Take a sheet of white paper. On the right side note down the tasks, goals, and priorities your employee should cover as part of his/her role. Now write down on the left hand side what progress and achievements you have seen the employee make over the past week/month/quarter in terms of his/her tasks and goals.

#### MAIN COURSE

The main course is prepared together with your employee. Start with two pinches of nourishing appreciation and express your conviction that dishes prepared in dialogue are much more nutritious and healthier in the long term.



**Now use some pre-selected solution-oriented questions, for example:**

- What were you particularly satisfied with last month? And what else?
- What progress have you made? And what are you proud of?
- Compared to the goal you set last time, where are you now on a scale of 1 to 10?

Complete his statements with your resource-focused discoveries.

**Now add 1 portion of goal orientation and mix them slowly:**

- What would be your best hope for the next three months?
- How would you realize that you are already one step closer to your goal?
- What resources could you use for this?
- Who / what could help you?

The more you listen and ask questions in-depth, the smoother and creamier the court becomes.

**Finally, season with a pinch of appreciation and empowerment.**

**For example:**

- It impresses me how clear vision you have about your goal.
- I have already observed how you have done this in the present context, and I am confident that you will make progress in the new context as well.

**DESSERT**

The dessert can be taken after some time passed. Find opportunities to watch the employee with your keen resource vision: *"I'm impressed with the progress you've made in such a short time."*



# Easily wholesome motivation dinner

## An employee complains

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Although it seems that conflicts are hard on one's digestion, if they are properly seasoned with the necessary portion of serenity, they can be suitable as tasty and healthy main dishes.

### **Mise en place**

An employee complains to you about a colleague or a colleague.

### **Ingredients and preparation**

Gratitude and understanding: *"Thank you for the explanation, and I can certainly see your point. I appreciate you bringing this to my attention, and I am impressed with the resilience you have shown thus far with coping with this yourself up until now."*

A pinch of concrete hope: *"What has happened differently in the past when the collaboration worked better? And what else? And what did you contribute to that?"*

Refreshing perspectives (from the herb garden): *"What would be a first small step towards a solution for you? What would your colleague answer to this question?"*

A bunch of confidence (finely cut) in the feasibility: *"What or who could support you? How can I help you with this?"*

Some sustainability in the finish: *"Thank you for your trust. Pay attention to the slightest signs of improvement in the next few days. And in a week we meet again to discuss the progress."*

This recipe is suitable for those with conflict allergies, and contains a handful of helpful vitamins to help you along the way, including motivation, satisfaction and cooperation.





# Create a crispy future perspective

## Resource Oriented Interview

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To prepare a wholesome job interview, you need interested applicants and a vacancy to fill. The discussions are prepared directly at the table and are based on the ingredients available from the guest. To prepare a conscientious mis en place is obvious.

### **POPULAR AND USEFUL KEY QUESTIONS ARE:**

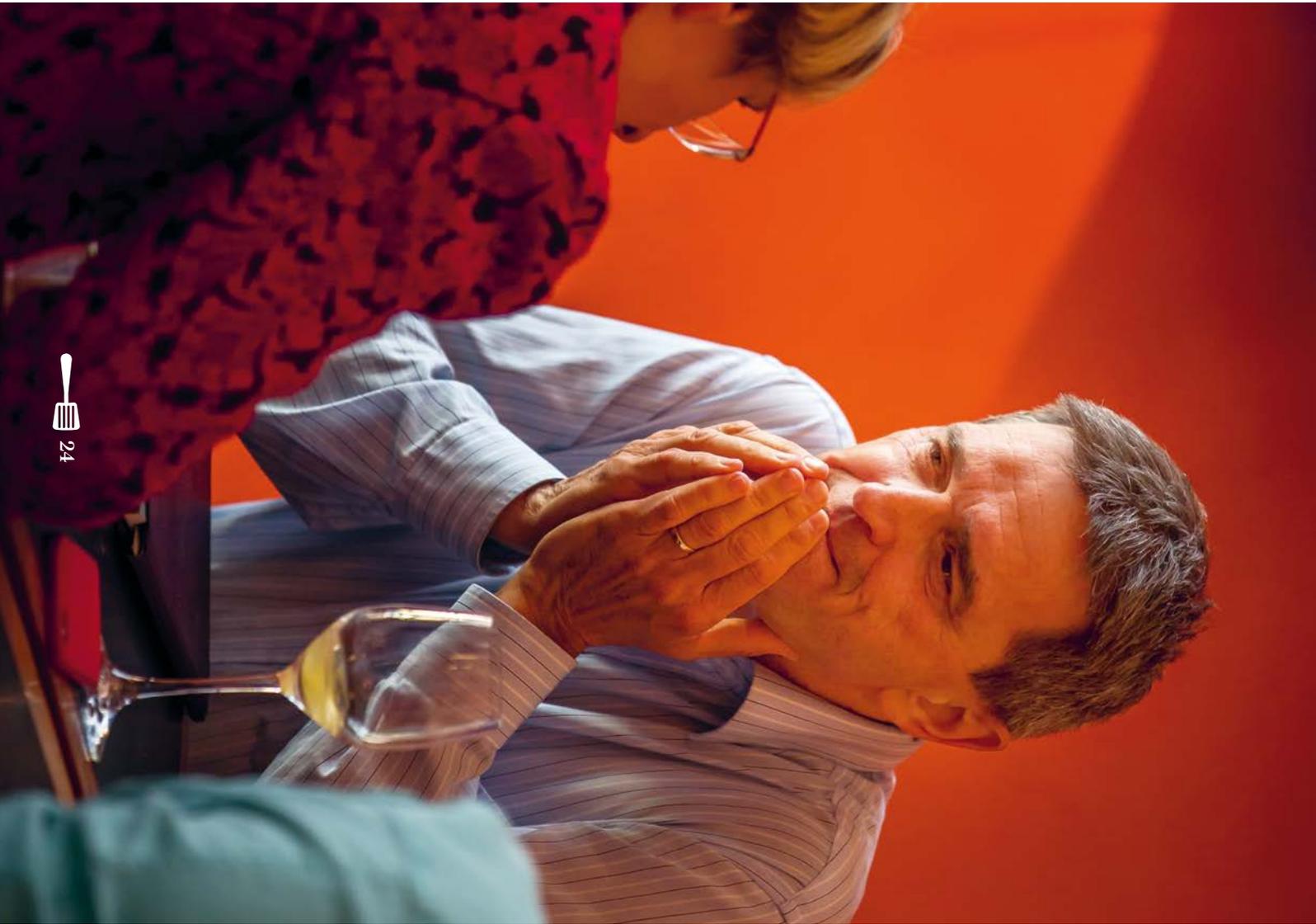
- What three success stories from the last few months can you tell me?
- What are you proud of in your previous work? Who else noticed this achievement?
- Assuming that you could fully develop your skills here in the company, what differences will you make here?
- Your previous colleagues: What three behaviors did they particularly appreciate?

### **QUESTIONS THAT ARE WELCOME:**

- What is your best hope for this position? And what else?
- Scaling questions: For example, the scale «Confidence that you are the right person for the position».
- Differences: What would your friends notice about you working in our company?
- Suppose the first three months of our collaboration have been incredibly successful: how will we do it? How do our customers notice this? What was your most important contribution to this?

This dish can prove to be enjoyable and useful to all parties involved, and provides a solid foundation for another good shared cooking!

Attention: the small, fine questions could steal the show from your previous favorite question.



## Lunch for new beginning with a positive effect

### The review

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From time to time you may be dissatisfied with specific behavior of one of your guests. This main course, which already needs a bit of tact and experience, helps to make the discontent a new start for constructive cooperation.

### Preparation step by step

(Please adapt to the particular situation and if necessary supplement with personal ingredients such as clarity-spices and appreciation-broth.)

*"Thanks for taking the time to talk. You are known as a reliable and collegial employee. Now, as I heard / saw, the following happened yesterday: (description of the situation).  
I would like to find ways together with you to change this reliably in the future."*

*"What ideas do you already have, how could you react in such situations in the future? And what else?"*

*"On a scale of 1 to 10: How confident are you that this will work? Which five points make you so confident?"*

### Maybe as a side dish

*"This proposal may work well. And could we consider other possibilities? What else would be possible? And who or what can support you in this situation?"*

And finally, with a good portion of real appreciation:

*"I'm impressed how seriously you take this issue, and I'm looking forward to further cooperation!"*



# Progress happens anyways

Evaluate the effect

## Ingredients

- 2–3dl of fresh tap water
- 150g trust that everything is already there
- 150g confidence about the guest's problem solving skills
- 6–8 refreshing, solution-oriented questions
- 4–5 mature, serious appreciations

## Preparation

In preparation, mix your trust and confidence into a creamy, wholesome and attentive attitude. Also, have a glass of water and greet your guest with a friendly smile.

As a first ingredient, add the question, *“What has become better since the last conversation about this project / purpose?”* And patiently let it draw a little bit. Then add a few *“What else ...?”* to taste and stir gently.

This dish can be refined with an enthusiastic *“Wow!”* – and maybe with a pinch of *“How did you do that? What was your contribution?”* Decorate the whole thing with precise, well-placed appreciation.

Maybe at the end a *“What do you think were the five key success factors?”* Carefully add, *“What would others (team members / customers) answer to this question?”* As flavor enhancers, we recommend to use bit of *“And how did that affected?”* from time to time.



# The round finish of your menu

How to close a conversation effectively?

## Ingredients

- One remarkable look at the clock
- One portion of reviewing objectives, hopes and previous steps
- A shot of “*Good enough?*”
- A handful of benevolent-curious questions
- Bunch of serious appreciation (have always plenty on stock!)

## Preparation

You see: time for the conversation is slowly coming to an end. Take a quick look at the clock and point out the remaining time: “*We are now about ten minutes before the end of our conversation.*”

Take a final quality check with your guest, whether the menu corresponded to the hopes mentioned at the beginning, eventually what is missing from feeling satisfied, comfortable and complete during the rest of the day: “*What else is left to be able to close this conversation most effectively for you?*”

Whatever your guest says, follow his/her ideas and wishes so that together you can complete the menu harmoniously.

Do not hesitate to finish the meal with a shot “*Is this good enough?*” to make sure that your guest received everything that was possible during time of conversation.

Prepare your guest for the fact that, even with the utmost confidence, later on he/she could feel hungry again or things may not go as smoothly as planned.

Ask him how he/she would handle these situations.

If desired, serve an appreciative digestive, a fortifying dessert or a refreshing coffee to complete the menu.



# Business Brunch for Groups

Meetings with Emphasis

## Ingredients

- 1 large friendly room - like a professional kitchen - with everything a group of master chefs may need
- 1 portion of goal orientation
- 1 package of kitchen gadgets (= flipchart, paper and pens)
- 1 round of success stories
- 1 bunch of useful questions
- Several pinch of appreciation

## Preparation

### MISE EN PLACE

First, we set the framework for the business brunch and pick up a portion of goal orientation: *"What is our intention, the hoped outcome of the meeting?"* Here we take our kitchen gadgets (= flipcharts and pens) and collect all the ingredients. The chef discusses with the master chefs on the spot which ingredients fit together and how the main course can be prepared most successfully. Sometimes there are also one or two ingredients that may leave temporarily in the fridge for later times to come back to them.

### APPETIZER

As a starter, the chef gathers all the main course-related success stories to put together the different resources for the Business Brunch: *"What has worked that shows a little bit in the direction of our best hopes?"* - *"What small and big successes can we already report?"* Each success story is served on a silver tray and may be admired by all. Questions about the recipe for success may be asked at any time.



## MAIN COURSE

"If we look at all these success stories, what resources, skills and competencies can we build on?" Add a bunch of "What else ...?", and discover the big bouquet of resources that are thriving here.

Take some time to enjoy and put a dash of admiration to it.

## DESSERT

We garnish the conclusion with the question: "What would make us notice in the near future, that we have already taken a small step forward?"

Depending on your taste, these can be smaller or bigger steps, and after this everything can be mixed well.

These small steps are then collected again with help of the kitchen helpers and each master chef selects at least one to two steps, which he wants to work next time independently on, in his own kitchen, and afterwards take them to the next business brunch as a treat. This way many secret recipes have been created that were not even known to exist on the menu card!





# Basic recipe for successful cooperation

## The Resource-Gossip

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The resource-chitchat is a wonderful way to focus your guests on their strengths, abilities, and resources, and how energy and lightness will flow into the group.

### **Make small groups of three to maximum of five guests.**

One person in the group volunteers to be the person the others will talk about, so he/she will only listen to them in the next 4 to 5 minutes. The other guests in the group now gossip about the skills and resources they have been watching while the person is listening. There are two simple rules to follow:

1. It is collected only what is impressive, outstanding and admirable of the person being talked about – so only positive reinforcing feedbacks. Ergo we only gossip about the person's skills, competences and resources.
2. The group will gossip in third person about the volunteer, which means that the person is not addressed directly, but he/she can submit to the resource-chitchat without comments and enjoy all words like sweet honey.

Sometimes it helps if the person being gossiped about sits with his back to the rest of the group.

The following questions can be helpful to discover as many resources as possible:

- What do you value most about your colleague?
- What strengths does he / she have in your view?
- What did your colleague do particularly well lately?
- What valuable contribution to the team does he make?
- What were his greatest achievements?

Mix well for the next course, so that every guest can enjoy being cheated.



## Chinese Roundtable

Inventing solutions together

### Ingredients for ten to twenty guests

- 1 common topic that is important to all guests
- 1 comfortable chair per guest
- 4 well-tempered, solution-oriented questions

### Preparation for four courses

As a preparation, let the guests arrange their chairs to an inner circle and an outer circle, so that each guest sits exactly opposite to another guest.

Allow five to ten minutes for each course.

**First course:** Each guest now has someone in front, whom he greets in a friendly way. *"The first question may need some imagination now. OK? So: Imagine that the topic we talked about here is solved. Just like that. How would your boss notice this?"*

**Second course:** The inner circle moves one to two chairs further in a clockwise direction. *"How would your customers notice that this 'miracle' happened?"*

**Third course:** The outer circle moves two to three chairs counterclockwise.

*"What would be the first little sign of progress in this matter? And what else?"*

**Fourth course:** The inner circle moves so far that the same people meet as at the beginning. *"What could be your contribution to solve this question?"*

### **SMALL GREETING FROM THE KITCHEN**

Have your guests return to their usual sitting structures / plenary and ask for remarkable discoveries, new ideas and surprises.





# Gourmet cooking for yourself

## Five minutes for self-reflection

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Become a top chef - cooking instruction in four steps.

### Ingredients

- 1 clear cooking goal
- 1 measuring cup (ideally with dimensions from 1 to 10)
- 1 liter of the personal favorite beverage
- 3–4 teaspoons of crushed ice (in summer)

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Give yourself some rest and sit alone in the cozy corner bench of the kitchen. Think about your current culinary skills or a current topic in which you want to progress. Fill the cup with your favorite drink to the point where you estimate your current cooking skills. If you believe that you are barely able to make a fried egg, fill it up to the value of 1. Value 10 would mean that you have already won the Culinary Olympic Games and Jamie Oliver calls you every day to ask for your advice.

**Step 2:** How did you achieve this value (in the measuring cup)? Which five concrete contributions have you made?

**Step 3:** Which dishes / activities have been going in the direction of your cooking goal lately? How did you do that? And how else?

**Step 4:** Now if you fill the measuring cup one stroke up, and this new one stands for your personal advances in cooking, what is the first clear sign for you that you have arrived there? How will others see the first signs of your progress in cooking?

Enjoy every single sip of your favorite drink (if you wish with some crushed ice as well) and be proud of the fact that you have come so far!





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“Create Meaningful Conversations –  
Discover the Language of Change.”

**Solutionsurfers®**

Whether in everyday business, in leadership or in consulting: We would like to bring a bit more lightness, appreciation and efficiency into everyday work. The demand of this elegant easiness in progress has been our specialty since we began in 1997 to consistently offer solution-focused trainings in Brief - coaching. Meanwhile, there are Solutionsurfers present in more than 10 countries and on four continents and we became one of the world leading institutes for solution-focused work and training. And the solution waves are waiting everywhere.

**Solutionsurfers® ACADEMY**

The participants of the Academy 2016 (see side page) are a team of highly motivated practitioners who have dealt intensively with the application of the solution-focused working model in the areas of coaching and counseling, leadership as well as methodology and didactics.  
The recipes described here have been created an easily applicable result.

# Solution Surfers Lounge



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Business Lunch

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