What is Solution Focused?
It is an approach to coaching based on opening new options for the client by asking questions that focus her/him/them on designing solutions that can be reached instead of analysing problems in the hope of finding a way out of them.

Why searching solutions instead of analysing problems?
"Looking back" at the past and root-cause analysis are likely to result in somebody having to accept blame, thus causing resistance and conflicts. Envisioning a solution is much better suited for creating a collaborative environment where any past problem is overcome by the will of reaching a common goal.

Where does it come from?
The original idea came from the Milwaukee’s Brief Family Therapy Center, with Steve De Shazer, Insoo Kim Berg and Yvonne Dolan being the most known contributors. Its development started in 1978 and continues to date. It has been used successfully in psychotherapy and coaching, proving to be a very effective alternative to problem-oriented techniques.

How does it work?
The basic principle of the Solution Focused work is to discuss about solutions instead of problems. Once a solution has been identified, the path to reach it can be identified as well. The coach implies - with the usage of the present tense for the solution and the past tense for everything that relates to the problem - the client has already reached the solution and needs “only” to document the steps needed to reach there.

What practical methods do I have?
1. Systemic Questions
Systemic questions are a way to search for differences:
   • “What is there in the solution that is missing in the problem state?”
   • “What have you done differently to reach the solution?”
   • “What resources did you use to reach the solution?”
   • “How would you recognise you have reached the solution?”
   • “What else?” is a very useful question as it elicits additional options the client has not yet discussed
   • The question “Why” is to be used sparingly as it brings the client back to the problem state

2. Circular Questions
Circular questions are a way to bring other people’s viewpoint in the client’s perception. This is done to ensure a chosen solution is good also for the other people involved in the client’s problem.
   • How would another person do it?
   • How would another person notice it?
   • What would another person say?

3. Scales
Scales are a way of establishing a metric on a certain - normally unmeasurable - parameter, and planning improvements to reach a goal in small steps. On a scale from 1 to 10, where are you now? Where do you want to be? How would you recognise you have reached there? How would you recognise you are one “step” higher?
4. Miracles
The Miracle is a technique to drive the client into a future where the problem has disappeared, thus giving a framework for asking systemic and circular questions to find the relevant differences.
   - Imagine... a totally normal evening.
   - You do all the things you normally do before going to bed.
   - Then you sleep normally... and while you sleep... a miracle happens, and the problem you had is then gone.
   - In the morning you wake you and you don’t know about the miracle because you were sleeping!
   - How would you recognise the miracle had happened?
   - What would be different?
   - How would you react?
   - What would you do differently?
   - How would other people recognise it?
   - How would they react?”

5. Interviews
Like the miracle, the Interview is as well a technique to drive the client into a future where the problem has disappeared by simulating an interview. The coach is the journalist and is asking the client how did he/she manage to reach the solution of his/her problems:
   - I [the coach] am a journalist of the [newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, internet news...]
   - I'm here to interview you [the Client] because you have solved brilliantly the problem X
   - All our listeners/viewers/readers/... want to know how you did it
   - What was the last step to it?
   - What was the step before the last?
   - What was/is different since you achieved your goal?

How do I use it in Agile?
Solution Focused is really an attitude to asking questions and, in general, to thinking in terms of the solution space rather than being stuck in the problem space. Thus it can be used in any interactions. Typical applications in Agile are:
   - Retrospectives: “How do we work to be more effective?” instead of “What has gone wrong until now?”
   - Planning: “How should our product be at the end of the next iteration to be better/faster/bring more value to the customer?”
   - Interactions with the customers
   - Interactions among company departments

Will the slides for this presentation be available on the Internet?
Yes! The slides will be available on http://www.slideshare.net/ppugliese and on http://blog.connexxo.com/ in the next few days.

Where do I find more information about Solution Focused?
   - Steve de Shazer: Keys to Solution in Brief Therapy
   - Steve de Shazer: Clues
   - Steve de Shazer, Yvonne Dolan et al.: More than Miracles
   - Jeffrey Guterman: Mastering the Art of Solution-Focused Counseling
   - Peter de Jong, Insoo Kim Berg: Interviewing for Solutions
   - Insa Sparrer: Einführung in Lösungsfokussierung und Systemische Strukturaufstellungen
   - Paul Z. Jackson, Mark McKergow: The Solutions Focus: Making Coaching and Change SIMPLE
   - Peter Rohrig, Jenny Clarke: 57 SF Activities for Facilitators and Consultants
   - Mark McKergow, Jenny Clarke: Solutions Focus Working - 80 real life lessons for successful organisational change

Or just contact me at ppugliese [at] connexxo [dot] com!