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Working Universally - Expanding your modeller's mind

by Ken Smith

This is Module 5 of a series of 8 Clean Facilitation workshops run by Wendy Sullivan of the Clean Change Company.



Clean Facilitation is shorthand for Clean Language and Symbolic Modelling. It takes a stance of deliberately *not interpreting* the client's information. Instead, the coach uses a given set of questions with a specified syntax (Clean Language) to facilitate the client in building his or her own model of the problem they are experiencing and the outcome they seek, explicitly using the client's own metaphors (Symbolic Modelling).

While to a coach of an analytical persuasion Clean may at first glance seem a bit of a straightjacket, the effect of feeding back precisely the client's own words and inviting them to develop their own symbols and metaphors can be extremely potent. The "metaphor landscapes" developed through Clean questioning contain a wealth of information and energy, from which change emerges ecologically within the control of the client. In Clean Facilitation, the seed of change, of re-creation, is already contained within the client's ability to model their existing and new experiences.

Following earlier modules which lay the foundation of Clean Facilitation, Module 5 exposes delegates to the theoretical basis of Clean Facilitation and the opportunity to learn more about a number of universally occurring frameworks within which clients commonly present their experiences.

For example, some clients can move quickly to exploring desired outcomes; others need to get a lot of explanation out, before moving on; for others still, they have a remedy which just gives them more of the problem. Module 5 presents a way of utilising whether a client is talking about the resources they have, their explanations, problems, remedies or their outcomes. It also invites you to increase your awareness of how clients measure their problems; someone's meat can be another's poison but just how much does it really take to be toxic for your client?

Module 5 looks too at how Clean Language can illuminate a client's explanations of what stops them getting what they want; of what's hidden in that "because". The whole is presented within a higher level frame of systems thinking (Module 5 looks at "levels" of meaning as well), in that awareness of universal patterns assists a coach in helping the client model the *system* through which their problems, opportunities and remedies operate.

Wendy's training is practical, well designed, accessible and enjoyable and will give you a very solid grounding in the practice of Clean Facilitation. The March 2007 run of Module 5 was co-delivered with James Lawley and Penny Tompkins, a great privilege as it was they who took David Grove's Clean Language insights further to create Symbolic Modelling. Using Clean Facilitation conversationally in coaching can be challenging, as there is a risk that the simplicity of the questions and their repetition can feel artificial for the client. Nonetheless, with perseverance and

a little playfulness it brings considerable rewards and I have already found it an extremely valuable addition to my own coaching repertoire (and indeed in working on my own "stuff"). I would encourage you to take a look.

To find out more about Clean Language and Symbolic Modelling, go to: www.cleanchange.co.uk and www.cleanlanguage.co.uk

Should you be interested in such things, Clean Facilitation, like NLP, is an experiential constructivist intervention, according to the UK Council for Psychotherapy.