Imagery and metaphor
Engaging the Imagination

V/O Commentary
The human mind loves to make connections.

Caught off guard, in dreams and daydreams, it juggles images, plays with ideas, makes metaphors.

Robert Davis:
This is me. Dolphins are social animals, dolphins are different, I've got tiger stripes on.

Stephen Harrison:
I see myself as a Jalapeno pepper, and as a whole we make a fine pizza.

V/O Commentary
In this programme we want to show you ways of solving problems using the power of the imagery in metaphor.

Rupert Edgar:
…wild unconsciousness…

Diana Brown:
What was a badger says to the companion something like well that's no problem. There's a crow, I can do crow.

V/O Commentary:
But our workplaces tend to favour focused, rational thinking. Words, verbal reasoning,

Ian McDermott:
Verbal reasoning is very frequently going to engage you in conscious thinking. If you're gonna solve a problem you need to be able to step outside of the limitations of the way of thinking that's created it.

So you need to go to a new level. And one of the ways of very effectively doing that is to engage your imagination.

Caitlin Walker:
I find metaphor reaches such a variety of levels of information, that you're more likely to have something creative and fantastic pop up.

Rupert Edgar:
Boomph, there's a metaphor, and it creeps up on you from behind. You didn't know you had it in you, but suddenly out it comes.

Caitlin Walker:
Ohhh! Oh my God, look at all this information, see all this information come together at once, and then yes it can be exceptionally magical.

V/O Commentary :
Ian McDermot and Caitlin Walker are both experts at facilitating metaphorical thinking. Caitlin is visiting a small software company in Crowthorne, called New Information Paradigms, NIP for short. Caitlin specialises in a technique developed by the American therapist David Grove, called clean language. She's particularly interested in training business people to use clean language when working with metaphor.

NIP directors, Chris Vallé and Robert Davis, have been collaborating with her for several months. They wanted to develop ways of using metaphor and clean language in all aspects of their company's business. As a knowledge-based company, NIP is under constant pressure to innovate, adapt, communicate and collaborate. Chris and Robert have found that by encouraging their employees to make more use of metaphor, they're able to solve problems more creatively, and improve communication with each other and with customers.

Ian McDermott trains people to use the techniques of neuro-linguistic programming or NLP. This is a practice which models many aspects of good communication. Today he's running a seminar in London for business people interested in learning to use associative rather than rational thinking to approach problems. They'll be using metaphor to help mediate between the subconscious and the conscious, the verbal and the non-verbal.

Ian McDermott:
So Good Morning…

V/O Commentary :
We'll start by showing you some straightforward uses of metaphor that don't require a great deal of training.

First we'll see some employees at the NIP offices in Crowthorne creating a group metaphor. This is a process they've developed out of Caitlin's work, which now requires little input from her. Then we'll see Ian introduce his seminar group to two warm-up exercises to get their imagination going.

The second half of the programme will concentrate on some processes that use metaphor at a deeper level. These processes usually require some training, or the presence of a skilled facilitator.

We'll start with Caitlin doing a one-to-one metaphor elicitation session, using David Grove's clean language. Then we'll see Ian doing a one-to-one session using an NLP-based approach.

Finally we'll look at some general points about learning how to elicit metaphors.

So, let's start with the employees at NIP.