



## **Imagery and metaphor**

### *Clean Language*

#### **VO Commentary :**

So far we've seen metaphor techniques you can learn and use with colleagues, either as warm-up exercises to get your imagination going, or to help explore a business issue.

Caitlin's now going to use a process for eliciting metaphors at a deeper level. She's going to do a one-to-one session with Rupert, a software developer. Rupert makes his living from being creative, so he wants Caitlin to help him explore his own creative processes, to find out what sparks off a good idea. Caitlin is using language which follows a precise set of rules. David Groves' clean language. As Rupert tries to put his creative experiences into words, Caitlin trains her full attention on to his gestures and language. She uses the information she gathers to formulate clean questions. The questions mirror the information back to him, and also ask for more information as unobtrusively as possible.

#### **Rupert Edgar:**

If I do that with this one, and that one, then coalesce these together, and voomph, you've suddenly got a real nice solution that you can use for all sorts of things. It's cheap it's easy, and you're onto a winner.

#### **Caitlin Walker:**

And sometimes it does that, and sometimes it has more of an umbrella, and sometimes you know it's just perfect, and voom. And when voom... what happens just before?

#### **Rupert Edgar:**

Okay. Round in the back of my head there's lots of things I've done before, things I've read, things that gave me pointers that I know there's more information in there somewhere, I don't know necessarily where.

#### **Caitlin Walker:**

So that's round the back of your head. And does that 'round the back of your head' have a size or a shape?

#### **Rupert Edgar:**

It's kind of like if you imagine in the Earth just as it's forming and cooling down, there's like these pools of water where life is beginning to evolve in them. For me it's like those cos it's like there's this big area this big pool at the back of my mind where things float around, in sort of random chemical reactions.

#### **Caitlin Walker.**

I think we get seduced sometimes into believing that words are the most important form of communication because we write and we speak and... But if you watch people, particularly if you get interested in this stuff, they'll say "I don't know what this thing is that I need to work out".

But if you watch their body language a lot of information is in space. I don't think people think in their heads, people think holistically, not even just in their own bodies but in the space around them. So, you often hear people say "well, I know where I... what has to happen, but there's these barriers in the way, and every time I try and get there I get caught up". Now, what they're telling you is they've got a problem that has no answer to it but if you watch them they've mapped it all out for you.

**V/O Commentary :**

Rupert sometimes lets his language become analytical, so Caitlin gently draws his attention back to his imagery.

**Caitlin Walker:**

But the pools, round the back of my head, they're pools where life is just forming. What kind of pools are those pools around the back of my head?

**Rupert:**

They'd be like sort of a dark primeval - not evil but very emotive, almost like seedy there's an awful lot that goes on in this very small area that bounces around, and and it's it's wild and unruled and there's no law.

**Caitlin Walker:**

It's dark, primeval, wild, unruled, and no law.

**Rupert Edgar:**

Yeah, that's right, it's this unkempt place, and anything can happen with anything. You're not limited by anything in that particular bit of it, it's like : there are no rules, you can mix salt and sugar and it doesn't matter.

**Caitlin Walker:**

So there's no rules in that place. And when *that place*, whereabouts is that place where there are no rules?

**Caitlin Walker:**

What I particularly was attracted to with clean language is that it doesn't alter or impose very much structure on what's going on. If you if I say to you 'so how do you feel about that', my... I'm directing your attention to your emotions or to you know to some sensation some physical sensation. If I say to you 'well it looks like this to me what does it look like to you' I'm directing your attention to make images.

Does that ..... have a size or shape?

What kind of .....is that?

And when ....., whereabouts is that .....

Is there anything else about .....

Clean language doesn't have any representation words in it that means it doesn't talk about seeing things feeling things or hearing things, it leaves the receiver of the question open to bring up any information they have available to them.

If you are a traveller going out you don't you're not imposing your culture on somebody else's, you keep yourself as blank as possible, so that you can learn as much as you can from that system in its way, you go and become a part of it, do as - when in Rome, do as the Romans do - and it's it's got that feel to it and I really respect that in language - it leaves other people intact.

**Rupert Edgar:**

You're sort of like looking inside yourself all the time and what Caitlin is asking, you're only sort of kind of like hear on the outside, they're just sort of kicking you along in your mind, your mind is like trying not to be interrupted by what Caitlin's saying, and that's one of the very important things I found about the clean questions is, if she puts any content of her own in or something, that will probably take me out of where I should be going. If she can keep it clean questions then I don't get interrupted in my flow and you can go off and explore. You'll know when you've hit on it because it holds true and yes there is a real feeling of: yes we've cracked it we've got it right. And that's really nice.