

“I want a clean house” - Going live with a desired outcome

By James Lawley | Published 26 Feb 2017 | cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/blogs/98/

The following transcript comes from the start of a [Symbolic Modelling](#) session facilitated by **Penny Tompkins** over Skype. The client is in her home.

The session is of particular interest because it nicely demonstrates:

- (a) how to use the [Problem-Remedy-Outcome \(PRO\) Model](#) to facilitate a client to identify and begin to develop a rich description of their desired Outcome landscape.
- (b) how a desired Outcome (that is both physical and metaphorical) can be worked with ‘live’, i.e. the client self-models their here-and-now embodied experience.

Words introduced by the facilitator are in **bold** to highlight Penny’s use of David Grove’s [Clean Language](#) questions.

| | Facilitator (F) - Client (C) Transcript | My annotation |
|----|--|---|
| 1F | And what would you like to have happen? | |
| 1C | To have a clean house. [Long description and examples of the current situation.] I hang on to this stuff ‘just in case’ - internally as well as externally. | Desired Outcome, followed by a Problem. |
| 2F | And when you hang on to this stuff ‘just in case’, what would you like to have happen? | While Penny could have developed the Outcome statement, she used the PRO model with the Problem for three reasons: (1) The use of the metaphor ‘hang on’, which (2) applied both ‘internally’ and ‘externally’, and (3) this is what the client was paying attention to. Note how this PRO question accepts the client’s description of the Problem and invites a desired Outcome <i>when</i> there is a Problem (<i>not</i> instead of the problem). |
| 2C | I want to be free of that gripping. The holding on, just in case. | A proposed Remedy: ‘to be free’ of the Problem. |
| 3F | And when you <i>are</i> free of that gripping, then what happens? | Classic PRO question for a Remedy. Again, the model completely accepts the client’s proposed Remedy and then invites them to consider what happens <i>after</i> the Remedy has happened. |
| 3C | I’m not sure. It’s a wobbly experience. The space around me is bigger. I would be more fluid (not dragging so much around). I would be able to successfully point at one thing and stay with it for a while (not cluttering up what I do). I don’t know if I’ve ever experienced this. | A metaphorical description of a desired Outcome sandwiched between present-tense meta-comments at the beginning and at the end. The latter suggests the client may have to create this way of being from scratch. |

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| 4F | And is there anything else when the space around you is bigger, and you are more fluid, and you successfully point at one thing? | Three desired Outcome statements selected from all the other kinds of information. |
| 4C | Decisions are easier to make. Things take on a different hue. The level of importance differentiates. It's brighter. The more important things can find their way up to the top. | Further description of the desired Outcome landscape. |
| 5F | And so what is one thing you would like to stay with for a while in this session? | A brilliant contextually clean question that invites the client to apply their desired Outcome to the session (3C: 'to stay with one thing'), i.e. Going Live. |
| 5C | Oh! [pause] What I get is, a sense of space around me. Like high Alpine prairies that are vast, clear and uncluttered. The mountains help, you know exactly where you are in space. | |
| 6F | And where is your sense of space right now? | Penny could have developed the 'high Alpine prairies' metaphor but chose to 'stay with' the here-and-now embodied experience, 'sense of space' first mentioned in line 3C. |
| 6C | Not quite out to arm's length. Internally a sense of space is in my chest. A more open chest, even if a more cluttered head. A sense of ballast in my hips, of right weight, balance. | |
| 7F | And is there anything else about your sense of space, internally and externally? | Staying with the one experience. |
| 7C | I just got a sense of my space moving and bending around things. Oh look, it's bending around the things I don't really want to do, there in my clutter corner. | A description of the Problem happening in real-time. |
| 8F | And when your space bends around the things you don't really want to do, what would you like to have happen? | Use of PRO model with the in-the-moment Problem experience. |
| 8C | To have a clean house. Not to collect all these notes, bits and bobs, bills, printouts, etc. [holds up a pile of papers]. To value my sense of space more than I value the things in it. | Repeats original (external) desired Outcome. Followed by (external) Remedy and (internal) desired Outcome. |
| 9F | And is there anything else about value your sense of space more than you value the things in it? | Penny continues to invite the client to attend to their (internal) desired Outcome. |
| 9C | There is a hierarchy to this sense of space. Bills on top, creativity on the bottom. Out of sight, out of mind. The objects help me remember times and places that keep memories alive. That way I can hang on to those memories. And I want a sense of space inside and out. | Explanation of the value of the current 'hierarchy' and restatement of the desired Outcome, which applies to both the client's external physical and internal metaphorical worlds. Note, "hang on to those memories" rather than "hang on to this stuff" (1C). |

The session continued with the client developing and embodying the sense of their internal desired outcome and relating that to the here-and-now external context. Cluttering thoughts that occurred during the session were acknowledged and utilised as in-the-moment experience from which the client could self-model their current patterns and find a more preferred ways of being.

Note, Out of the 450 words in the above transcript (which do not include the description at the beginning), Penny only introduces 22 words in to the conversation – now that's staying clean! Here are those words:

Facilitator introduced words

- 1F And what would you like to have happen
- 2F when
- 3F then
- 4F is there anything else about
- 5F so
in this session
- 6F where
right now

Postscript.

I asked the client to comment on the above and this is their reply three weeks after the session:

At the beginning of the session my mind was so full of the kinds of clean – physically clean, clean language clean, drug clean. All I really knew was that I couldn't keep going the way I have been in the past and the strategies I had applied, all very good advice, were not helping me sort my mind and space (internal or external). Actually, most of the strategies were quite stressful in themselves.

One way I know the session was powerful for me is I have that slightly amnesic sense that makes it difficult to remember the level of anxiety that existed about losing an idea, losing or giving away something that I might need (in the future).

After the session I went through the paper pile - threw away what I was not going to get to, made an electronic file for the notes I wanted to keep and spent about two days getting the smaller projects done that had been sitting there waiting for me to get to them. I have not gathered papers and notes since.

Before I pick up a pencil, I wait for a minute and find I do not need to make a note. I only need to do what I am thinking about or continue with the task I was on. When I am tempted to write a note or collect something 'that I might need later' I ask myself "is this something I can do now?". If so, I do it, rather than writing about it. What I have left in my work space are the binders for my more substantial work projects. I have also gone through and given nearly a full car load of clothes and other useful items to the goodwill.

One of the most interesting things is my ability to sit longer. Before, I had a sitting practice, 15-30 minutes a day to let my mind soften, take time to sense the space inside before moving on to work. I would sit or do Yoga and thoughts would fly through my head like crazy. Without a pencil and paper I would feel anxious.

Now, I just sit, sometimes for 10-15 minutes, letting the space happen before I decide what I will work on. This is a soft sitting, no flying thoughts. And the time I am able to stay on a particular piece of work has extended as well. It is all much more 'real' time.

Most importantly, the session and work that was done has remained present in my insides. I can't quite say brain, but the inside of me and I have continued to be able to attend and extend what was developed.