Clean Language: a methodology for individual systems and systems of individuals.
Our aim

To provide Coaching Psychologists with an understanding of the practice of Clean Language: 10 questions, designed to reduce inference and be ‘clean’ of the facilitator’s interpretation / metaphors.

To describe how Clean Language is currently employed in coaching and related disciplines.

Present examples of the current literature on Clean Language.
Clean Language Questions

Where? Whereabouts?

What kind of ....? Is there anything else about ....?

What happens next? Then what happens?

What happens just before? Where does .... Come from?

That’s like what?

What would you like to have happen?
Where is Clean Language used?

Coaching
(Hartley, 2012)

Peer Coaching
(Nixon, 2013)

Peer coaching as an organisational change tool
(Doyle, Tosey & Walker, 2010)

Clean Language as a research method
(Tosey, Lawley and Meese, in progress)
“I have to defend my people”; “I blew up”; “His method is to drill you and then attack”; “The troops are falling by the wayside” and “I can lose it in the heat of battle”.

“I’m shell-shocked!”

“[I’d like to be] playing in an orchestra. “

‘Am I participating like a member of the orchestra? When I chair the meeting, are we all playing the same tune and am I conducting appropriately?’
The students who compared themselves to a cat and the marathon man both talked about how they would have to adapt if they were to work together.

The student that was cat said “I know that I have to shift my working patterns to fit in with others and knowing what they need makes working in groups so much easier”.

The student that was marathon man said “Using the metaphor does two things, I can ensure I am ready to start running and put myself in that place and I can also use it to tell others where I am up to and if they know my metaphor they will then be able to understand what I need and be able to support me”.

“I didn’t get it at first; I thought it was a bit weird comparing yourself to something else, but when I used the words to explain what I needed to learn at my best the idea for the cat just came and it fits so well with my ways of working”.
Peer coaching as an organisational change tool (Doyle, Tosey & Walker, 2010)

“Right now, the company is like what”?  
“If the company were to be evolving in a way that was just right for you, it would be like what”?

Questions that led to an understanding between members of what was not working with the business and continued practice that gave rise to new methods of working.
Clean Language as a research method
(Tosey, Lawley and Meese, in progress)

What is the image you carry around that drives you action today?

The ‘edge’ of knowing cited 104 times

Work Life Balance at its best?
Work Life Balance not at its best?

“Whilst most authors reject the idea of a uniform criteria for quality, the potential for improved rigour and transparency in methods is widely acknowledged.”

“The key difference is that [CL] adds significantly to the ability of the interviewer to elicit and probe metaphors in real time, whilst also remaining authentic to the interviewee’s own metaphors.”
**Strengths**

- A phenomenological data collection method that controls for researcher effects.
- Wide application across client groups and interventions.
- Stimulates meta-cognition for coachee.

**Weaknesses**

- Evidence base is incomplete, no RCTs and a lack of theory re: ‘active ingredient’.
- No regulation or control of best practice.
- Lack of initial face validity in for some coachees.
36* Articles referred to on www.cleanlanguage.co.uk

37 included above, to include the accepted but unpublished BJM article
Evidence base in coaching

What determines the attention a process receives in research?

- **Appreciative Enquiry**
  - 67 Articles (Science direct)
  - 305 Articles (PsychInfo)

- **Solution focussed coaching**
  - 27 Articles (PsychInfo)

- **Clean Language**
  - 0