From Pain to Calm Clear Sky

The following transcript comes from our fourth workshop with a group Ukrainian psychologists and psychotherapists who want to use Clean Language and Symbolic Modelling to support themselves and their clients. The aim of the session was simply to demonstrate Symbolic Modelling 'live'.

Transcripts of previous demonstrations with this group are available:

1. Developing a resource metaphor: Journey with whales

2. Developing a desired outcome: Coping with Un-safety

3. Starting to feel the movement of life

The client's responses and our questions were translated by **Anna Stativka**.

This transcript is illustrative of a number of features:

• Working with a client experiencing physical and emotional pain during the session.

• How we acknowledge and incorporate the client's painful *current reality*:
 - her body is in pain (C2, C8, C51)
 - she can "lose control over the world" (C18)
 - a "dark cloud comes" (C39)
 - she "cannot do anything about circumstances" (C45)
 - and is living with a painful dilemma (C47).

• Some ways to respond when a client answers "I don't know" (C45, C49, C57) to a question.

• How we make use of a number of varieties of the "And when … what would you like to have happen?" question (J1, P22, J44, J46, J48, J50).

• That even with the ongoing suffering, a valuable resource metaphor and several perspective-changing realisations can emerge.

After the transcript we provide an illustration of a Symbolic Modelling map or schema of the client's symbols and process between rows C12 and C27.

Key: C = Client, P = Penny, J = James.
         The format of the Clean Language questions are in **bold** to make it easier to see their structure.

Row	J/P C	Transcript	Annotation Of Symbolic Modelling process (Note 1)
1	J	**And what would you like to have happen?**	
2	C	I want to feel better. I want to feel less pain, and I want to have better sleep	"Better" and "less" are indications of Remedies according to the PRO model (Note 2).
3	P	**And when** you feel better, **and** have less pain **and** have better sleep, **then what happens?**	Standard PRO response to a Remedy.
4	C	I will have more energy for surviving.	Desired Outcome.

5	J	You'll have more energy for surviving. **And what kind of** energy **is that** energy for surviving**?**	Facilitating client to develop her desired Outcome.
6	C	Maybe I will feel that I'm more calm, more balanced – and as if I exist in this world. Also I would feel that I have some control over this world because without it now, I feel as if it's too much for me.	
7	J	So you will feel more calm and balanced and as if you exist in this world and have some control. **And so when** you exist in this world with calm and balance, **how do you know** you exist**?**	Inviting client to become aware of her experience of "exist in this world".
8	C	I have an impression that there is some consequences of actions. And when I see these consequences and actions I have a feeling that my body functions. But functions not like now, because now it's like my body is broken and chaotic, and in a lot of pain	
9	J	**And when** you have the impression of the consequences of actions then you will feel that your body functions. **So what kind of** feeling **is that** feeling **when** your body functions?	Continuing to facilitate the client to develop her desired Outcome (and, *for the moment,* not attending to how her body is now).
10	C	When the body is functioning, there is not a feeling of itching. There is some localisations of pain but it's not in the whole body but in some local parts only. I want to say that before our conversation I was not aware that I have this itching because I try to stay away from my body. Only now, when we started to discuss my body feelings I understood that inside I have it now.	The client's meta-comment (Note 3) describes a new awareness of her in-the-now feelings.
11	J	Inside. **So whereabouts** inside **is this** feeling **that** you're now aware of?	Honouring the client's (Problem) experience.
12	C	It's located in my chest. I have to do something with my hands because I have like ants running all over. So I have to do this [nonverbal] in order to get rid of this feeling, and inside I feel coldness. I feel cold inside. It's not cold outside of me but it's like an inner cold. And to get rid of this, some inner warmth would help.	A proposed Remedy.
13	J	So the feeling is inside the chest, and it's cold.	
14	C	It's not a feeling of coldness. It's some idea or concept of coldness. I don't feel it, I just know. It's not like I feel cold, it's like I cannot get warm.	Client corrects James' mis-modelling.
15	J	**So when** it's not a feeling of cold, **what is it that** you're feeling in your chest **there?**	The client has described what she is "not" feeling, and this non-standard clean question invites her to describe what she *is* feeling.

16	C	It's heavy. It doesn't let me breathe, and it's like sweet honey, the consistency of honey and it's sweet.	
17	P	Okay, **anything else about that** feeling **when** it's heavy **and** like sweet honey**?**	
18	C	Now my heart has started to feel pain because of this honey. I now see that when I get close – when I feel this feeling of this honey, and this heavy – in this moment I have a feeling that I've lost control. I begin to feel this trembling and after that I have an impression that I lose control over the world.	A sequence of events leading to an unresourceful and unwanted state: 　As the client gets "close" she feels the "heavy honey" feeling, and "begins to feel trembling" and then she feels she has "lost control".
19	J	**Okay,** you get trembling and a feeling that you've lost control over the world. **And so what happens just before** trembling**?**	There would likely be little value for the client continuing into a state where she is "trembling" and has "lost control over the world". This question invites the client to attend to what happens *before* trembling, i.e. to 'pull attention back' to where the client still has some control.
20	C	Just before this trembling I begin to feel a contact with my body that usually I don't feel. I begin to feel that this feeling is coming.	
21	J	So you begin to feel contact with your body, and that this feeling is coming.	
22	P	**And when** you feel contact with your body, **what would you like to have happen?**	
23	C	I want to stop it.	
24	J	You want to stop feeling contact with your body?	
25	C	No, I want to stop this feeling.	Client corrects James' mis-modelling.
26	J	Okay, you want to stop the feeling **that lets you know** the trembling is coming.	
27	C	Yes, I want to stop this feeling. It's like I have inside something like [nonverbal] and it's very unpleasant.	
28	J	So you would like to stop the feeling, **and when** you stop the feeling that the trembling is coming, **and that** you will lose control, **then what happens when** you don't have **that** feeling it's coming?	Inviting the client to consider what happens *after* the Remedy "to *stop* the feeling" has happened.
29	C	I become calm and can accept my life.	
30	J	Become calm and can accept your life. **And when** you become calm **like that, where is that** calm?	Facilitating client to locate her desired resource state.

| 31	C	[Pause] When I'm thinking about calmness – and why I am silent – is because now I feel, I feel in my body relaxation and wellness. And this calmness is also in my chest because now I don't see anything there, only something clear, like the sky.	"Now" is the first indication that something is changing in real time.
32	P	**And is there anything else when that** calmness is also in your chest, like clear sky**?**	We start *maturing the change* by inviting the client to attend to the new metaphor "clear sky".
33	C	Yes, there's some light in my eyes, and the world becomes more light. And they see everything around.	
34	P	And you see everything around. **And when there's** light in your eyes, **and** the world becomes light, **and** you can see everything around, **then what happens?**	We continue maturing by inviting the client to consider the *effects* of the change.
35	C	I become calm and I stop hating everybody, myself and all the world. I become calm, and joyful, and not angry anymore.	
36	P	Not angry, and you're calm, and you stop hating yourself and everybody. And joy. **And then what happens?**	
37	C	I live.	
38	J	You live. **And** you live **and there's** calm in your chest, like a clear sky, **and** light in your eyes. **And where could the** calm in your chest **like that** sky **come from?**	Inviting client to identify the *source* of her resource metaphor.
39	C	[Long pause.] It exists always, but this dark cloud that is coming from time to time holds it and covers it.	"It exists always" is a vital attribute because even when "dark clouds" come and "cover it", the "sky" is still there.
40	J	**So** the calm exists all the time **and then there's a** dark cloud that comes. And when that **dark cloud comes, from which direction does that** dark cloud come**?**	Rather than focus on "dark clouds" this question goes *adjacent* (Note 4) by asking about the *direction* of the cloud.
41	C	It's difficult to say because when I'm inside my body I have an impression that it's comes from my head.	
42	J	An impression. **And anything else?**	
43	C	And also it comes from my pelvis.	
44	J	And from the pelvis and from your head is where the dark cloud comes from. **And so what would you like to have happen *just before the* dark cloud comes?**	Using the PRO model format *just before* the Problem ("dark clouds come") often identifies a choice point …
45	C	[Pause] I don't know because I think about this like circumstances that just happen, and I cannot do anything about them, and this makes me angry.	… although not in this case.

46	J	And it's circumstances that you cannot do anything about. **And so when there are** circumstances you cannot do anything about, **what would you like to have happen when** you cannot do anything about the circumstances**?**	Repeating the format, this time incorporating the *given context,*"*when* you cannot do anything about the circumstances".
47	C	I want it to stop and at the same time I don't want it to stop. Because if it will stop that means my child will die. [Voice breaks] And because of that when I'm waiting for her death, I feel very guilty.	A painful dilemma.
48	J	So you want it to stop and at the same time you don't want it to stop. **And so when** you want it to stop **and** don't want it to stop, **what would you like to have happen – when** you want **both?**	Repeating the format, this time incorporating the given dilemma with "*when* you want it to stop *and* don't want it to stop".
49	C	[Pause and big sigh.] I don't know. Sometimes I want this to stop, and sometimes I want it to stay like it is.	Remaining in the dilemma.
50	J	So sometimes you want it to stop. Sometimes you want it to stay like it is. **And when** you sometimes want one and sometimes want the other, **what would you like to have happen right now?**	Repeating the format, acknowledging the dilemma, and inviting the client to attend to "right now".
51	C	[Pause and big sigh.] Right now I want my body to stop feeling so much pain. I understand that this pain from my body reminds me that it exists. At the same time I would just like to feel less pain. And I want to sleep better because now my sleep is very bad.	A restating of the client's opening Remedy (C2).
52	J	And so you want to feel less pain. **And that** pain is your body reminding you that it exists. **And where is that** calm, clear sky **that** always exists, **right now?**	Acknowledges *both* the desire for "less pain" and its role/function, *and* invites client to attend to the resource metaphor that "always exists", *at the same time.*
53	C	In my chest	
54	J	It's in your chest. **So what's happening** in your chest **when there's that** clear sky**?**	
55	C	I feel it becomes easier. I feel more warmness in my hands. But at the same time I feel like heaviness in my head. [Long pause.] Now I see the exit from all of that. It seems that I'm thinking too much. Thinking, thinking, thinking about what will be tomorrow, what will be the day after tomorrow. And if I stop doing this, and if I just live here-and-now, day-by-day, then this will be better and everything will come together.	

56	P	**And when** you see that exit from all that, **where is that** exit**?**	Taking the spatial metaphor "exit" literally and inviting the client to locate it in her perceptual space.
57	C	I don't know.	
58	J	And you don't know where the exit is, **and you do know that** if you stop and live moment-by-moment – **And so what needs to happen for** you to stop and live now?	Since the client doesn't know (in this moment) we invite her to attend to what she does know and to identify the *conditions necessary* for the proposed Remedy-Outcome to happen.
59	C	Now I think that I have to stop thinking too much, but I'm happy that now I realise it – that I have to stop thinking too much. But I have a habit, and my habit not-to-think is only to block. I will try not to see all this. Just to switch off these images – stop the prognosis, stop thinking about the future – and just live without it. I will try.	The client's realisation has had a valuable effect *and* she recognises it has a potential downside ("a habit … to block"). However, she now has the awareness that she is *choosing* to "stop thinking about the future" and that is different to a habit.
60	P	**So take all the time you need** to start to not think about that future.	
61	C	Now I feel better, I feel no pain. I don't feel this itching, and I don't have anything cloudy in my head.	
62	J	So you will switch off and stop. **And my recommendation is to put some attention on that** clear sky, **that** clear, calm sky **that's** always there.	
63	C	It's good idea. I like it. And I think that it would be a good resource for me.	
64	P	**And you can also draw that** clear sky, a**nd put that drawing up somewhere where it needs to be. So you can see and think about it.**	
65	C	Thank you very much	
66	P	Thank you.	

Notes

1. Lawley, J. & Tompkins, P. (2011). Symbolic Modelling Emergent Change though Metaphor and Clean Language. In Chapter 4 of L. M. Hall & S. R, Charvet (Eds.), *Innovations in NLP: Innovations for Challenging Times,* pp. 60-79. cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/346/1/Symbolic-Modelling-Emergent-Change-though-Metaphor-and-Clean-Language/

2. Tompkins, P. & Lawley, J. (2006). Coaching for P.R.O.s., *Coach the Coach* (Feb.). cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/31/1/Coaching-for-PROs/

3. Tompkins, P. & Lawley, J. (2010). 'If only God would give us a sign': The Role of Meta-Comments. *Acuity,* Vol.1, No. 1. cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/192/1/The-Role-of-Meta-comments/

4. Tompkins, P. & Lawley, J. (2006). Proximity and meaning: A 'clean' approach to adjacency. *The Model,* December, pp. 1-10. cleanlanguage.co.uk/articles/articles/56/1/Proximity-and-Meaning/

Modelling A Client's State

sweet heavy
HONEY

because

HEART
feels pain

ANTS running all over
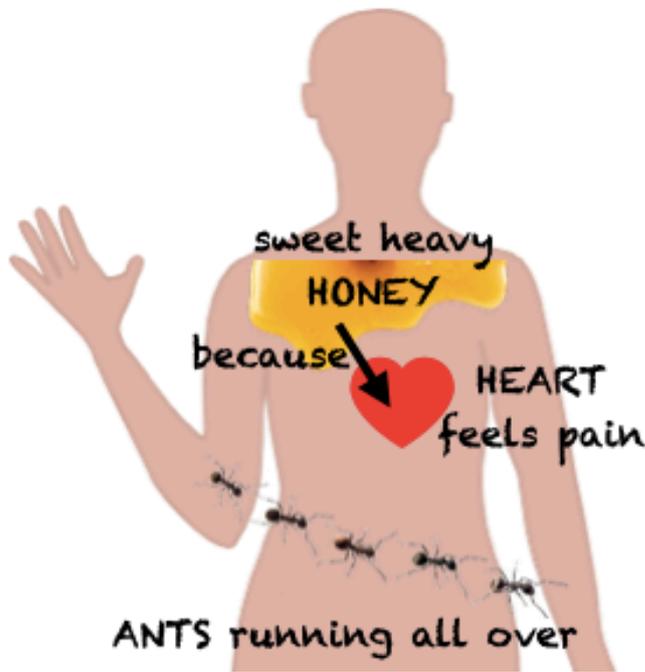
Name
Attributes
Address

HONEY
sweet heavy
in chest

HEART
feels pain

ANTS
running
all over body

Schema of the Sequence of Events (C12-C27)

lose
X
feel have some
control over

get close to

in this moment
feel a contact with my body

trembling

very unpleasant
feeling