

Starting to Feel the Movement of Life

The following transcript comes from our third 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'. The two previous demonstrations provided links to articles about the Symbolic Modelling process and the transcripts are available here:

1. [Developing a resource metaphor: Journey with whales](#)
2. [Developing a desired outcome: Coping with Un-safety](#)

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

The client's and our reflections on the session follow the transcript.

Key: P = Penny, J = James, C = Client

The format of the Clean Language questions are in **bold** to make it easier to see their structure.

Row	J/P C	Transcript	Annotation
1	P	And what would you like to have happen?	
2	C	I am a bit excited and there's even some kind of pressure in my throat because this is actually a problem for me. So I would like to feel the movement of life.	Desired Outcome.
3	P	And feel the movement of life. And is there anything else about feel the movement of life?	Facilitating client to develop their desired Outcome.
4	C	It's like the key of ignition in a car. I feel it in my body and experience it in my mind. It's like something is obstructing me.	Structure: desired Outcome <i>but</i> Problem.
5	J	And is there anything else about feel the movement of life when it's like the key for the ignition of a car?	We note the "something obstructing" and, for the time being, continue developing the desired Outcome.
6	C	I probably have. I am familiar with this feeling, with this experience when this ignition, when this movement of life is in my life. But there's too little of it, I have too little of it. Yeah, when I have some ideas, some meetings, it feels like being in the flow.	Same structure as C4 with the problem being the <i>amount</i> of the feeling, i.e. "too little".
7	P	And you're familiar with the feeling of the movement of life that you have too little of. And when you are familiar with that feeling where is that feeling?	Inviting the client to attend to those times when the desired feeling <i>is</i> present in her awareness.
8	C	[Sigh] It starts from the head [gesturing] and then goes along the backbone and then to my hands and legs. And then some kind of action starts. [Several big exhales during a long pause]	

9	J	It starts in your head. And when that feeling of movement of life starts in your head, whereabouts in your head?	Inviting client to attend to the “start” of the feeling process.
10	C	Probably somewhere there [Touches forehead].	
11	J	Somewhere there [Points to client’s forehead]. And when it starts, the movement of light starts somewhere there in your head, what happens when that movement starts there? What happens in your head there?	
12	C	Ah, [Touches forehead] it's like points but very, very tiny, very small points, which feels like some kind of activity there.	
13	J	Tiny, tiny, small points there in your head that starts the movement of life. And so what kind of points are those tiny, tiny points?	
14	C	I see like a trajectory to my desired outcome to what I would like to have happen.	
15	J	And when you see a trajectory to what you'd like, what's the first point that you see?	A “trajectory” implies a series of “points” in a direction. In general, the first point (or event) in a series is often significant, because without the first, none of the later points can happen.
16	C	[Big exhale] The points are so small that I don't see them, but I feel them.	
17	P	And you don't see them, you feel them. And where do you feel that first point?	
18	C	In the middle of my forehead.	
19	P	And what kind of feeling is that feeling of the first point of that trajectory?	
20	C	There is activity in my body, and in my thoughts. It's like I'm searching, searching, searching, searching [Big exhale and shake of body]	
21	J	And you're searching, searching searching. And there's that feeling in your body and your thoughts. And what happens just before that feeling in your body and your thoughts, of the first point?	Inviting the client to discover what starts the “searching” process.
22	C	I have some impulse [Touches chest]. I have some impulse here.	
23	P	And does that impulse have a size or a shape?	
24	C	Oh, it's like one of the sparks of Bengali fires. [Laughs]	

25	P	And is there anything else about that one spark of that fire, that Bengali fire?	
26	C	I don't know why but I want to cry. [Several big exhales] I don't know why but I see the boot that smashed this sparkle.	"Boot" may be the "obstructing" agent mentioned in C4. Although the "impulse/spark" did not have the capacity to withstand "boot", the fact that the client sometimes has a sense of that spark means we can infer it still exists in some form.
27	J	And you see the boot that smashed that sparkle. And so where did the sparkle come from, before the boot smashed it?	Acknowledges "boot". Since attending to "boot" may well lead to a very dark place lacking creativity, we continue to invite the client to attend to "sparkle" <i>before</i> it was "smashed".
28	C	[Pause] I don't know. It just was. And here, now I feel emptiness here [Touches midline].	
29	J	And so when that sparkle, just before the boot smashed it, what kind of sparkle was that sparkle before it was smashed?	David Grove devised this question to invite the client to attend to the features of a symbol <i>before</i> it experienced a traumatic event since these commonly will be exactly the features the clients' needs more of.
30	C	[Big exhale] It was joyful, and alive.	
31	P	And when it was joyful and alive, it was joyful and alive like what?	
32	C	Like a child's love. Like a child's play. [Big exhale] Like love. Like dance. Like a holiday. Like celebration. [Several big exhales during a long pause]	
33	P	And that sparkle was like a child's love. Like a dance. Like a holiday. And what would that sparkle like to have happen now?	Inviting the personified <i>symbol</i> to voice its intention in the here and now.
34	C	[Big exhale] She wants to be alive. She wants to live. [Tearful eyes]	
35	J	She wants to live. And that sparkle wants to live. And what needs to happen for that sparkle to live?	Inviting the client to consider the conditions in which the desired Outcome (of the symbol) can occur.
36	C	[Pause] Maybe acknowledgement that she exists [big exhale].	
37	P	And where could an acknowledgment like that come from?	Inviting the client to attend to the <i>source</i> of "acknowledgement".

38	C	Maybe from my opened eyes. Now I begin to understand that I was afraid of this boot. I was scared, I was scared to live. I was scared to carry inside of me this sparkle. Because if I have the sparkle inside of me the boot can come and smash it.	This new realisation likely indicates that something is changing for the client.
39	J	And you were scared to carry the sparkle inside of you because the boot could come and smash it.	Acknowledges the Problem ...
40	P	And that sparkle wants to live. And acknowledgement that she exists. An acknowledgement that comes from open eyes. And anything else about open eyes that can acknowledge that she exists when she wants to live?	... <i>and then</i> invites the client to attend to the <i>concurrent</i> desire of "sparkle" and the source of the acknowledgment she needs, "open eyes".
41	C	I am a bit surprised by everything. I didn't see my fear. And I didn't see the sparkle. And when I started to see and acknowledge this fear, it is an important point for me. I didn't see that this is so deep.	Client provides a meta-comment on what is happening for her.
42	J	And now that you acknowledge the fear and you acknowledge the sparkle. And when you acknowledge the fear and you acknowledge the sparkle, what would you like to have happen?	Honours <i>both</i> aspects of the client's experience and invites her to set the next direction <i>when both are true for her</i> .
43	C	[Clears throat and smiles] I would like the sparkle to become bigger.	
44	J	And can that sparkle become bigger?	Finding out whether the client considers the desired Outcome possible or not.
45	C	Now the sparkle is like a salute on the day of independence of Israel [Big smile] and now I begin to understand that this story is about Holocaust. [Tears]	A sudden shift of form to a "salute" and a meta-comment that puts what she is discovering in a wider context.
46	J	And now the sparkle is a salute [pause]. And when a sparkle is now a salute, then what happens?	Attending to the <i>effects</i> of the change.
47	C	People have joy. [Big smile and several exhales]	
48	P	And people have joy. And is there anything else about that sparkle now that there is a salute?	
49	C	I don't know but now it's enough for me maybe. And I'm grateful that you work with me on this journey.	

50	P	And when people have joy and you're grateful, what happens to feel the movement of life?	One last question which invites the client to consider what has happened to her original desired outcome over the previous 35 minutes.
51	C	I feel myself among these people who have joy. They are a different people, but we have something in common. We are continuing something. This is celebration. Thank you	

After the session the client reported:

I'm grateful for your work and this problem was a big deal for me for many years. I tried to deal with it with different methods and maybe now it's time for this problem to be solved.

Our post-session reflections

In retrospect almost the whole session was facilitating the client to identify, develop and experience the "impulse", the "spark" that starts the "feel the movement of life" process. Why? Because we were following the *logic* of the client's metaphors. The client's original metaphor was an "ignition key". Without an ignition key doing its job, a car can never be driven. Even before that, an inherent feature of the client's original desired Outcome, "I would like to feel the movement of life", that a movement has to *start* somewhere and requires something to set that process in motion (in this case, a "point/impulse/spark").

While we acknowledged the client's problematic symbols and events – "movement of life that you have too little of" (P7); "you see the boot that smashed that sparkle" (J27); "scared to carry inside sparkle inside because the boot could come and smash it" (J39) – we did not invite the client to dwell on them. Problems are noted, to be included later – if necessary. In this case it wasn't necessary because the client got sufficient insight and change of feeling without delving deeply into the problematic aspects of her experience.

In the following days and weeks the client will discover whether her experience in the session was sufficient to start a new trajectory. If not, then the problematic symbols may need to be addressed in a later session.

We do *not* assume problems have to be solved *before* a client can start to make valuable changes in their lives. In fact we start with the opposite premise: that people have sufficient resources and capacities to make productive changes from the first session (even if they continue to have problems).