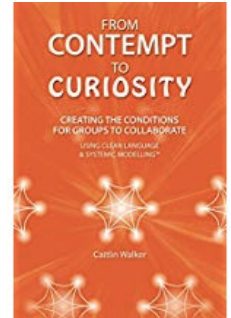


# Clean Language

www.UnconsciousAgile/clean\_language

## Developing Questions

- What kind of X (is that X)?
- Is there anything else about X?
- Where is X? or (And) whereabouts is X?
- Is there a relationship between X and Y?
- When X, what happens to Y?
- That's X like what?



## Sequence and Source

- Then what happens?
- What happens just before X?
- Where could X come from?

## Intention Questions

- What would X like to have happen?
- What needs to happen for X?
- Can X (happen)?

## Power Switch

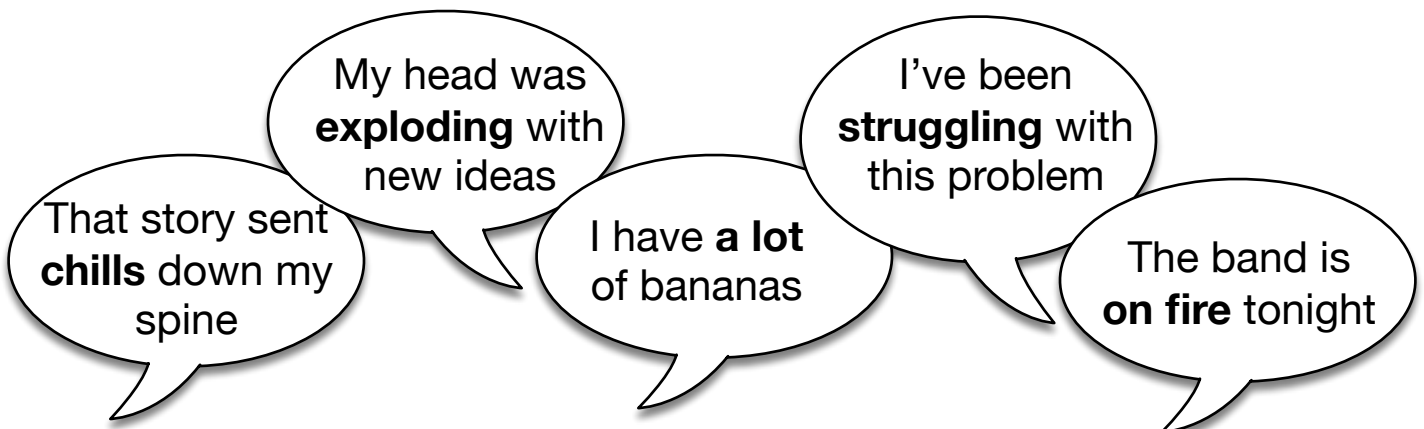
- And when X, what would you like to have happen?

## Metaphor

noun

- a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance
- something used, or regarded as being used, to represent something else

source: dictionary.com



## Overview

Clean language questions are specifically designed to avoid introducing new metaphors into the conversation.

Our brains process an incredible amount of information through the use of metaphor (comparing one thing against another). When you listen carefully to the words we use, you will begin to notice how often metaphor is used in conversation.

"I was **struggling** with this problem until **the lightbulb came on**." There are two metaphors in here: we weren't really physically struggling and there was no actual lightbulb.

Sometimes the metaphors are blatant such as "My head was **exploding with new ideas**" and sometimes they're very subtle such as "I have **a lot** of strawberries". What you'll begin to notice however, is that they're everywhere.

## Instructions

In each case, replace **X** and **Y** with the clients own metaphor. So if they had said "I'm **struggling** to understand" then we might reply with "What kind of **struggling**?" or "What kind of **struggling** is that **struggling**?"

For questions that have both an **X** and a **Y**, these are different metaphors that we are somehow comparing or contrasting. They might have been used in the same statement as shown in the first example, or they might have been from completely different parts of the conversation. The point is that the client has used both of these metaphors and that we are asking about the relationship between them.

Note that **X** doesn't have to be a metaphor, although it's more powerful when it is. It can also be used with verbs or even nouns.

## Tips

- ✓ Repeat back the clients words.
- ✓ Speak slowly and calmly - rushing will break rapport
- ✓ Match the clients intonation and gestures where possible without appearing to mimic them
- ✓ Stick to the first two questions until you're feeling really comfortable with them. You can have a whole coaching conversation with just those two.



Your facilitator, **Mike Bowler**, is a long time agile coach, having started his agile journey in 1999 with XP. He has a keen interest in understanding unconscious behaviour - why we do the things we do - and that has led him to a variety of interesting techniques such as clean language.

[www.GargoyleSoftware.com/mike\\_bowler](http://www.GargoyleSoftware.com/mike_bowler)  
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