How To Ask Clean Questions

The syntax of Clean Language is peculiar and may sound strange if used in ordinary conversation. For example, all the questions begin with "and" and are oriented to the clients 'perceptual present'. This means that everything is treated as 'now' - a memory, feeling, etc. - they are all questioned as if it is present tense.

There are three parts to a clean language question:

1. Acknowledge

> The first thing you'll say is **AND** ... This acknowledges what your client has just said and joins the question you are going to ask with whatever experience they are having.
>
> Then you will simply **repeat back some or all of their words, non-verbals** communication (gestures, spacial marking...)

2. Direct Attention

> Next choose which of their words, phrases of gestures you want *them* to pay attention to.
>
> You will be *directing their attention* to this aspect of their experience by using the words **And when** followed by their phrase that contains the chosen word or words.

3. As A Question

> Finally combine the chosen word with a **Clean Question**. To start with simply use one of the four main

1. Acknowledge: **"And" (match the clients words / non-verbals)**
2. Direct Attention: **+"And when/as" (match clients words / non-verbals**
3. Ask a question   **+ ask a clean question**

How to Ask Clean Questions

Depending on the client and context you can vary how you use Clean Syntax:

Three Part Syntax. This is where you use all three parts:

1. Acknowledge   "And (match the clients words / non-verbals)
2. Direct Attention   +"And when/as (match clients words / non-verbals
3. Ask a question   + ask a clean question

Three part syntax is best done when starting a session, when something new arises, or when it seems to be a highly embodied experience for the client.

Two Part Syntax, is when you use two of the parts. The most common variations are:

2. Direct Attention   +"And when/as (match clients words / non-verbals
3. Ask a question   + ask a clean question

1. Acknowledge   "And (match the clients words / non-verbals)
3. Ask a question   + ask a clean question

Two part syntax is good for when a client is moving swiftly, they are highly engaged in their imagination, or when their landscape (metaphorical or conceptual information) is well known to them (either through development or familiarity)

One Part Syntax, is when you use only one part of the syntax model.

1. Acknowledge   "And (match the clients words / non-verbals) or
3. Ask a question   + ask a clean question

One part syntax is great for asking clean questions when in conversations with others, when doing a brief session on something fairly well known to the client, or when the client seems to be moving quite quickly in their responses.

What I recommend in my trainings is to practice using the three part syntax so you become familiar and comfortable with the pace of it - it is much easier to

move into one and two part syntax than three. Practice creates fluidity in your facilitation.

Tempo

A second part of asking a Clean Question is tempo. When repeating back the persons words, use their tempo and general vocal expressiveness (or lack of it) as a way of mirroring back in a similar way their words were delivered. Then, when asking the Clean Question, slow down just a bit, giving the person time to hear and take in the question being asked.

David Grove, the innovator of the clean questions, had an almost poetic style of asking the questions that moved them from our everyday common style and speed of speech.

Sometimes I use the analogy of telling a bed time story to explain how we ask clean questions. Part of their design, in English, is the flow of the words and how they fit together.

Be sure to give your client time to go on a search of self discovery to find the answer to the question they were just asked. By slowing down the question we are also queuing to the client, that "there is no need to hurry, no rush, take your time and find the answer that is right for you".

Take your time, ask with an open neutral curiosity and a willingness to accept any answer that is given. This is an emergent process and sometime a client's answer can surprise even them!

Most of all have fun experimenting and finding out what works for you and your clients.

15 CLEAN LANGUAGE QUESTIONS
from DAVID GROVE

What would you like to have happen?

Is there anything else about … ?

What kind of … is that … ?

Where/whereabouts is … ?

That's … like what?

Does … have a size or a shape?

How many?

Then what happens?

What happens next?

What happens just before … ?

Where does/could … come from?

Is there a relationship between … and … ?

When … what happens to … ?

What needs to happen for … ?

Can …?

www.cleanlanguage training.com

THE CLEAN

LANGUAGE
INSTITUTE

Clean Language is for

Coaches
Business People
Therapists
Parents
Teachers
Mentors
Anyone
who helps others
think clearly

Discover the simple and effective power of **Clean Language** and how it can help your relationships, your business, and your life.