

CLASSIC EDITION

CLEAN Q's

by Sharon Small | Clean Language Institute

CLEAN QUESTION CARDS

For Self-Inquiry

Classic Deck Edition

(for download)

CLEAN QUESTION CARDS *For Self-Inquiry* Classic Deck Edition

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Attributions: A great debt of gratitude is due to David Grove for his many years of work in developing the clean questions and to Penny Tompkins and James Lawley for creating Symbolic Modeling, a way of working with others that that has proven itself adaptable & highly useful in areas as diverse as coaching, therapy, teaching, mind-body work, interviewing, management, team building, personal relationships, sales, marketing, and more.

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INTRODUCTION

What is Clean Language ?

Clean is a metaphor for a questioning model that is 'cleaned' as much as possible from inference and pre-supposition. Its inverse is not 'dirty' but more unintended influence. Saying "avoid unintended influence" is a bit unwieldy, so let's stick with 'Clean'.

Clean Language questions, although appearing quite ordinary, are designed to keep your assumptions and unintended influence, as a questioner, to a minimum while providing the maximum opportunity for the other person to express themselves in their own way.

Learning this skillful way of asking more elegant questions will change how and what you pay attention to and how you target the information you are meant to be gathering.

Although this was written to help you with your own self-inquiry, each exercise can be used creatively with others as well. I may vary between the use of 'you' and 'client' within the text.

What Are We Up To?

Clean Questions and the Symbolic Modeling Methodology are up to some very interesting things.

1. They help others give you quality, authentic information from their perspective.
2. They help you work in a fun and generative way with the natural metaphors that happen in language.
3. They give you a robust self-inquiry method that will insure you are working towards what you would like to have happen.

Clean questions help direct attention (ours and others). However, the questions are designed, by using a client's own vocabulary, to not directly influence the answers that are given.

There is more, of course. The Clean Questions are a gateway to more authentic information from ourselves and others. These questions help us step past the 'shoulds' and 'woulds' - and point our attention towards what we *would like to have happen*.

GUIDELINES and PRINCIPLES

Are there any rules or guidelines I should follow when asking Clean Questions?

There are only two rules of thumb in Clean Language.

- 1.** Only use the other person's words
- 2.** Only use 'clean' questions

These 'rules' are meant to be held lightly and by practicing them diligently you may be amazed at the difference it makes when working with others in team building, coaching, therapy, and management.

Using these cards will help you begin to apply those rules of thumb to all of your conversations and self inquiry. The 9 classic questions are the clean questions that you can use with yourself and others most easily.

The magic isn't as much in the questions, although they are designed for the purpose of helping us keep our 'stuff' out and bring other peoples 'stuff' in. The magic is in the kind of information that you will be gathering.

As you can see from the table of contents there is more to this booklet. A fun copy will be available for purchase as its own reference guide and companion to the printed CleanQ's Classic Card deck. And for now, lets get started at the beginning.

**“Begin at the beginning,” the King said gravely,
“and go on till you come to the end.”
*Alice In Wonderland***

GETTING STARTED

It is time for you to give these questions a try. See what you notice and, if you'd like, you can read more about what we are up to with these questions and the thinking behind Clean Language further down this document.

In the course room I like to have participants do an exercise then come back and share what happened giving each person's personal experience an opportunity to inform their

learning.

OK, Let's Get Started

For this introduction we will be sharing two “mini-models” aimed at freeing up your imagination and associate mind. Mini models are pre-designed question sets you can begin to work with right off the bat. Over the next several weeks you will be introduced to more mini-models that you will be able to use for yourself and others.

Here are a couple of fun ways to begin:

Imagination Activation & Finding Out More

Imagination Activation, the first mini-model you will be introduced to is meant to get your imagination warmed up by putting the questions to work for you. It is created with the intention to prompt and free up your associated thinking. Associated thinking is a great primer for the imagination - giving us more mental flexibility and creativity and it can be very fun to find out what pops up in your mind.

Finding Out More, the second mini-model, is a continuation of Imagination Activation but with a Desired Outcome (something you want to have happen) as a starting point.

You will also be introduced to two questions that are not in your card set and a very clean way of ending a set and checking what you noticed and gained from your exercise. You will see them at the end of the sample session given in each exercise.

To begin, print your cards (see the back of this booklet) and cut them out individually. Get a note pad and something to write with or a recording device and let's get started!

IMAGINATION ACTIVATION

Mini-Model 1: Imagination Activation (associative thinking)

Spread all the cards out on a table in front of you, question side down. Mix them up really well. Now, Pick a card, any card, and answer the question with the first thing that comes to mind.



For purposes of showing Clean in action, here is a sample session.

We have color coded different parts of the process. For those of you using black and white printers the words will be in bold, italics or underlined.

The clients words that are repeated will be in **orange** (or bold) and the clean questions will be in *green* (or italics) whilst explanations will be in blue (or underlined),

It might go something like this:

Q: And (____), And when (____), And where/whereabouts is that (____)? (randomly selected from the deck)

A: **In the cupboard** (I, just answering with the first thing that came to mind - a completely random answer that surprised even me)

Continue to pick cards and remember to use the 'syntax'

Q: And **in the cupboard**, And when **in the cupboard**, *then what happens?*

A: I look to see what I would like to snack on

Q: *And* **look to see what you would like to snack on**, *And when snack,* *what kind of snack is that snack?*

A: A yummy crunchy snack. It makes me think of Triskets

Q: *And* **a yummy crunchy snack, it makes you think of Triscuits,** *And when a yummy crunchy snack,* *what happens just before?*

A: I imagine a salty yummy taste. I imagined myself eating the cracker. Haha, I think before the cupboard I was a bit tired and bored. I just wanted something to do!

Q: *And* **a bit tired and bored and wanted something to do,** *and when tired,* *anything else about that tired?*

A: Yes, I get this way when I don't give myself breaks. This is funny.

Additional questions if you like:

Q: And when all of that (referring to what happened in the session), what do you know now, that you didn't know when you began?

Q: And what difference does all of this make?

It might go something like this:

Q: *And when* **all of that**, *what do you know now, that you didn't know when you began?*

A: That a lot of my snacking is simply from a poorly planned schedule.

Q: *And what difference does all of this make?*

A: Maybe if I take proper breaks I might snack less. This would be great...maybe even lose a pound or two (client laughs)

Now you give it a try ...

Pick a card, any card and begin to free associate in anyway you like. It may feel silly at first and just go with it. I think you will be glad you did.

FINDING OUT MORE

Mini-Model 2: Finding Out More

Begin with the starting question card What Would You Like To Have Happen?. Next, spread all the rest of the cards out on a table in front of you, question side down, and mix them up really well.

Write down your answer to the starter question, What would you like to have happen?

Answer: _____



This can be in relationship to work, your relationship, or any part of your life where you would like to experience something different to how it is now.

Next, pick a card, any card, and answer the question with the first thing that comes to mind (remember, this is in relationship to the answer to "what you would like to have happen?"). Choose a word or short phrase from your answer and inquire on this. Then, if you like, you can pick a second word or phrase and continue with this exercise until you have more information about your answer to "What would you like to have happen?" If you pick a card the doesn't seem quite right. Don't worry. Just replace it back in the deck and choose another.

Here is a sample session as an example...

It might go something like this:

Q. And what would I like to have happen?

A. I would like an easy and fun holiday season.

Q: *And an easy and fun holiday season, and when easy and fun, is there anything else about that easy?*

A: I want it to go smoothly, like all the arrangements come together and everyone is loving being there.

Q: *And easy and fun, and when fun, what kind of fun is that fun?*

A: The kind of fun where I find myself smiling and feeling the laughter come easily. I feel mischievous as I find and wrap gifts and look forward to the enjoyment of the holidays.

Q: *And fun, and when fun, where is that fun?*

A: I can see my family in my mind's eye with the tree and gifts and wrapping paper all over the floor and tables. But, really I feel it in my chest, like expanded out from my heart.

Q: *And fun, and when fun, what happens just before fun?*

A: Oh, I have to be open. (I was actually surprised by this. Funny isn't it how such a seemingly simple answer can come as a surprise?)

Q: *And you have to be open, and when open, then what happens?*

A: I can take everything in...all the noise, the mishaps, the adventure of seeing what's next. Holidays are always so full of surprises.

(Here I picked Question Card: And where/whereabouts. Decided to return that and try for a different card.)

Q: *And you can take everything in, and when take everything in, what happens next?*

A: My holidays are easy and fun!! Haha. I always have such a hard time during holidays. This is going to be great.

Q: *And your holidays are easy and fun and this is going to be great, and when this is going to be great, is there anything else about that great?*

A: Everyone else is going to enjoy themselves more too. It will be easier and funner for them as well.

Additional questions if you like:

Q: *And when all of that, what do you know now, that you didn't know when you began?*

A: That so much hinges on me - my attitude effects more than just my enjoyment of the holidays.

Q: *And what difference does all of this make?*

A: I mean, I guess I knew it, and doing this really helped me find a space where I feel more easy and fun! It will help me stay better tuned to how I need to be to have a really good holiday season.

OK, Now you give it a try ...

And what happened?

SOME QUESTIONS AND TIPS

Imagination & Association

Our imagination may be the one thing that truly sets us apart from other mammals. We may be the only species that has the ability to think about how we think. Part of this is imaginative thought and the mental flexibility to make associations between things.

Making associations has been attributed not only personal awareness, but also to a person's intelligence. Win Wenger has reported a person's IQ going up by as much as 20% simply by exercising one's ability to make quick and creative associations. But let's just begin with the most important kind of intelligence: knowing more about ourselves and our thoughts.

Making associations can come in brilliant insights or at the oddest times and sometimes when we really want to put together that link...we simply can't. We can learn how to have more associative thinking, more 'imagination activation' through the act of being curious and asking questions.

By prompting ourselves to make associations of one thing to another, or to answer questions about part of our thinking, we begin to strengthen both our associative mind and our imagination.

“This is what we storytellers do.
We restore order with imagination and
we instill hope again and again.”

(Walt Disney, *Saving Mr. Banks*)

And we are ***all*** story tellers.

More About The Cards and How to Ask Clean Questions

I see the cards are separated into different categories. Is this important?

The cards are broken up into four categories: identify, develop form, relate across space and relate over time. The 'develop form' questions are the real heavy hitters of the clean language questions. We call them 'the developing questions' and are used nearly 60% of

the time in Clean facilitation. The number of cards you are given has a ratio that is most similar to what you might use in a session - making working with the cards randomly actually quite effective.

Every language uses the physics of space, time, form and identity to describe experience. The Clean Questions have been leaned down to work in those categories of thought to help our attention stay on those primary aspects of experience. This in turn will help you not to get caught up in the context, but rather stay in the experience.

We will share more about the four categories above in a later email. For now, lets look at how we use our voice and ask clean questions to their best effect.

Using your voice when asking clean questions

In delivering clean questions it is best to use a tone that conveys a light, open, neutral curiosity. Using an open, curious and neutral tone helps the person you are working with relax, feel comfortable, and find out more about what they are up to.

The other aspect in how to ask clean question is the use of tempo. Slow it down, way down. Take your time, let the mind wander, think, reflect, there is no hurry here. This is not about getting bullet lists of information, but more about gaining insight, knowledge and useful new information.

Asking clean questions in this way, and sticking with the classic clean questions, does something else that is subtly helpful to both yourself and others - it removes the tension that can happen when we don't know what is going to happen next. By staying 'clean' and using the same format over and over again, you and your client can relax because you know the kind of question is coming next and how it will be asked. No need to protect yourself from clever thinking or shifts in attention caused by non-sequitur questioning or another persons agenda.

The intention is not to 'get some place' or to make something happen, it is to create the conditions for change through self revelation.

Is there anything else I should know about asking clean questions?

There is a structure to asking clean questions. In Symbolic Modeling we use a 3 part questioning model we call "syntax". Syntax is used to 'set-up' the clean question. By using the 'full syntax', as shown below, you will begin to develop the habit of listening more exquisitely to both yourself and others. By repeating back what has been said, you and your client, are in essence, listening a second time.

The syntax is particular and may sound strange if used in ordinary conversation. For

example, all the questions begin with "and" and are everything is treated as 'now' - memories, feelings etc., they are all questioned as if it is present tense.

There are three parts to a clean language question:

1. Acknowledge
2. Direct Attention
3. Ask a Clean Question

You will notice that all of the cards have an:

"And ()"	Acknowledging what has been said
"And when ()"	Choosing a particular word or phrase to ask about
"And [Clean Question]?"	Sending on a search for more information and knowledge

By acknowledging what has been said without trying to change or amend it in anyway you are creating an atmosphere of being heard. This syntax helps to slow down your thinking while letting the question move in and create a space to access deeper knowing.

It may seem to be a silly thing to do, repeating yourself so many times. And you may have some concerns that if you repeat back this way to someone else they might not like it or get irritated. Don't worry. Later we will send you information on how to reduce the syntax you use, still stay clean and successfully add clean questions to your everyday conversations,... and yes, without being annoying.

Syntax is primarily used for, preparing the mind (and body) to go on a quest of self knowledge through slow and steady repetition of what has been said followed by a Clean Question.

If you use this with you own self-inquiry I guarantee that you will become more fluid, skillful and flexible in your question asking when syntax matters most - when new information arises, emotions are high, and the stakes are important.

Full syntax, the use of all 3 parts, is primarily used in a therapeutic or coaching frames.

So when working with others pay attention to the context and whether the person has invited you to work with them in that way. You can be more relaxed in a conversational setting and simply use the clean questions as they appear in appendix I of this document.

Could you say more about why we should use syntax?

Along with slowing both ourselves and our client down it gives the other person an opportunity to listen to what they said at the same time joining up what they have said before with the Clean Question you are going to ask. It is a most important process when working with someone new, something new or anything you and or your client know very little about, yet.

Directing attention: By choosing a particular word or phrase to ask about, the "And when ...", it gives us a chance to decide what word or phrase to point our attention towards. It may seem Pollyanna and at this point and my recommendation is to point your attention towards what you want to have happen or more positive aspects of your answers. As you gain skill and experience you will be able to work with more pressing information as it arises.

Acknowledging what has been said ("and ...") and choosing a word or phrase ("and when....") set up the clean question to be most useful in sending us on the for self knowledge.

Are you still a bit concerned about how others might experience all of this?

Here is what clients have said about being asked clean questions in this way:

"I felt fully listened to in a way that was different than regular coaching."

"It is like opening a back door to the unconscious"

"I went right inside"

"I hadn't heard myself say that and yet when you repeated it, it made so much sense."

"I could feel the questions start to move my thinking."

Relax, use the syntax and enjoy the results.

Why Metaphor?

Everyone uses metaphor most all of the time, sometimes more than six metaphors a

minute! (Geary, 2011). Many of these metaphors are simply what we might call 'figures of speech' and yet they contain a lovely logic all their own. Have you ever heard someone say "life is like a game"? Or how about "my work life is a mine field"? Metaphors like this are helping the individual to express complex experiences in a simpler, more graspable way. This expression of complexity is why they are so important.

Metaphor is essentially one thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson). As I mentioned above, this lets a person express complex ideas and gestalt experiences in a simple way. We use metaphor as an overarching term for anything that is symbolic in nature - simile, analogy, symbols, and, of course, actual metaphors.

CONCLUSION

What would you like to have happen next?

We have come to the end of this introduction to Clean Questions and how you can begin using the cards as a tool for applying Clean Questions to self-inquiry.

I hope that this was informative and fun for you. Perhaps you would like to take a moment and answer these two questions:

And when all of this, what do you know now that you didn't know when you began?

And what difference does knowing all of this make?

I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to send any questions, noticing's, and even your session transcripts to info@cleanlanguagetraining.com.

Here is a Quick Review and Bonus for You

The above activities can be useful for working with others as well. After using these questions to learn more about yourself, you can then find others who might want to play

Clean Question Cards. The mini-models above will be the same, only you will be asking someone else the questions to their benefit.

As you become more fluid with the question you will then be able to move these questions into daily conversations in a neutral and curious way.

A very important aspect of Clean Principles in action when questioning others is to remember it is not to satisfy our own curiosity, but to develop and increase the self-curiosity of the person being questioned. Keeping ourselves out of the equation is a life long learning!

There are so many ways to use Clean Language and the Clean Cards – **if someone shared this document with you**, be sure you are on our mailing list to receive additional activities to further your adventures into Clean.

www.cleanlanguagetraining.com

Remember to keep an eye out for your next Clean Language Question Card mini-model coming soon to your inbox.

As a bonus, here is a short video by Phil Swallow showing what can be done with just a few Clean Questions. It is animated and without sound but quite interesting when you watch the outcome.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCX8VpPgs2A>

Would you like your own Clean Q's Card deck?

Clean Question Cards are available in pre-printed packs on thick, glossy stock. Each deck consists of 50 Clean Question Cards printed on durable card stock giving you an ample number of cards to make up new ways of using the questions and introduce what you are learning to others.

Cost: \$40.00 USD plus shipping costs

You can order your pack by sending an email to

info@cleanlanguagetraining.com



For more information about Clean Language and how you can experience this methodology in person or add it to your current skill set, visit

<http://cleanlanguagetraining.com/>

or schedule your Clean Consultation by clicking here:

<https://cli.coachesconsole.com/v3/calendar>

if you would like to share this work, please refer interest to
<http://cleanlanguagetraining.com/>

Appendix I: The Nine Classic Clean Questions

What are the nine Classic Clean Questions?

What would you like to have happen?

Is there anything else about (.....) ?

What kind of (.....) is that?

Where is (.....)? or Whereabouts is (.....)?

Does it have a size or shape?

Then what happens? or What happens next?

What happens just before?

That's (.....) like what?

When (.....), what happens to (.....)?

NOTE: The (.....) indicates either your words when self facilitating or your clients words when working with someone else.