



Clean Language By Wendy Sullivan and Judy Rees (Crowne House Publishing Ltd 2008)

## Clean language – how you can use it with your child



Aisha Ahmad | [Follow](#)  
Helping anxious teens & young...

6 0 0

When I say Clean Language, I don't mean as opposed to obscenities!  
Clean Language is a term coined by counselling psychologist David Grove, and is a simple yet powerful questioning technique which helps the person being coached explore their ideas without being influenced in any way by the values, thoughts or opinions of the questioner.





I first came across it when I was doing my NLP training and utilised variations of the 12 questioning types when doing my coaching training a few years prior to that. I'd dipped into the book 'Clean Language – Revealing Metaphors and opening Minds' by Wendy Sullivan and Judy Rees at the time, but when a colleague in a coaching group I'm in mentioned the book last month, I bought it again and feel like I'm now reading it with fresh eyes as I sit here in my coaching space in Bedfordshire. "Fresh eyes" – well there's a metaphor, and since reading this book, I've found myself listening out even more closely for metaphors that people around me are using in their everyday conversations.

In a nutshell (oh, another metaphor!), Clean Language helps us understand ourselves and each other, by becoming in tune (oooh another one!) with our internal metaphors and the way we use language to experience and understand the world around us. So, for instance, in the first chapter, I read of how a mum utilised two of the most commonly used Clean Language questions:

(And) what kind of X (is that X)?

(And) is there anything else about X?

(The X is the exact word or phrase the person you're speaking to is using).

The mum had just learned some Clean Language and when she went to collect her daughter, Jenny, from school, she was shown a picture of a house she'd drawn in class. So Mum asked,"



Join now

Sign in

enjoyable and longest after-school conversations they'd had for a long time.

Now as a mother of teens myself, and, having taught boys and girls of all ages groups, I know it can sometimes be difficult to get anything more than a grunt out of them, let alone get them to look up from whatever gadget they're on and make eye-contact with you for a millisecond.

However, give these questions a try at the start of a conversation and see what kind of information you elicit from your child; you could ask them about a football match they've played in, a book they've read, a movie they've watched...anything really, as long as you're showing an interest. It may feel unnatural at first to ask questions worded like this, and your teen may look at you a bit oddly and wonder what's happened to you, but ... nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Published By



Aisha Ahmad  
Helping anxious teens & young a...

Follow

Ahmad  
Clean language – how you can use it with your child #NLP #Coaching #Parenting

0 comments



Sign in to leave your comment

More from Aisha Ahmad 14 articles

Activities to lift your mood, recharge your battery and alleviate anxiety.

**Activities to lift your mood, recharge your...**

February 19, 2020

Experiencing mindful moments

**Experiencing mindful moments**

September 13, 2019

Serving your c

**Serving your**

July 18, 2019

© 2020

Accessibility

Privacy Policy

Copyright Policy

Guest Controls

Language

About

User Agreement

Cookie Policy

Brand Policy

Community Guidelines