



## Training Attention Case Study A Team in Transition

### What did the client want to have happen?

This case study is from when Nancy Doyle first discovered Clean Language, and Caitlin's 'Metaphors@Work' process. Nancy and her team of recruitment consultants wanted to explore the process of using metaphors and Clean Language to understand each other better.

The team had been a close knit of three staff. Recent growth had led to two new members of staff, and one had left for maternity leave. The team was in transition and we wanted to develop new relationships.

### What did we do?

Nancy asked everyone: "when you are working at your best, you are like what"? She worked with her staff, asking clean questions, to develop their answers. Nancy says:

"In my team was a consultant who said she was like a machine gun when she was at her best - firing out then stopping to re-load. Her way of working had distinct sections of time and a linear process - first this, then that. Also in the team was a really smooth cog in a machine who was shiny and well-oiled, she continued to turn smoothly and consistently. Her way of working did not have an end goal in mind, her attention was on maintaining equilibrium".

In the metaphors it is easy to see the mismatch between two working styles - outcome versus process. What did this mean in practice?

"These two would sometimes get into conflict about when a job was started or finished. The cog thought that the temps coming in and out of the office were ongoing and would continue as one big machine. The machine gun thought of each individual as being distinct and being ready for work and not ready for work. The machine gun relied on the cog to process applications so that she could find work for the temp.

During the session they realised that if a temp had been interviewed for a job already they might need to go through the cogs of the machine a bit faster than usual, and that this had been causing conflict. Instead, they could now talk in metaphor - how can I get



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systems thinking in practice

this person through the cogs quickly so I can fire her out? Is there anything I can do to get this person out quickly”?

## What happened next?

Nancy quickly realised that metaphor language has additional benefits for talking to her staff about their work performance and state of mind.

"I'm noticing that you're not firing at the moment, how can I help you re-load?"

"Where can you get some more ammunition from?"

These questions are a lot less confrontational than "you're not performing" or "what's wrong"?

"Your cogs are really turning smoothly today, everything's moving consistently through"

"You're really hitting the mark"

These compliments are going to mean more than "well done you've worked hard" because they recognise the specific talents and patterns of the individual.

By knowing the patterns of the people we work with we can understand how our own conflict and compliment. By using metaphors to hold the patterns we develop a user-friendly, light hearted language to talk about serious things. We can engage our creative brain in solving logical problems and take the heat out of everyday communication.

This case study is based on our Metaphors@work process if you would like more information please contact Nancy on [nancy@trainingattention.co.uk](mailto:nancy@trainingattention.co.uk).