

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE AT WORK

In a series showing how the tools and models featured in “Tools of the trade” work in practice, **Lorenza Clifford and Angela Dunbar** show how they have helped coachees develop with Emergent Knowledge and Clean Coaching techniques

**A**ngela: I taught Lorenza to use EK (Emergent Knowledge) and Clean techniques last year and was impressed with how she took to the techniques and quickly applied them to her executive coaching clients, generating a series of quite amazing results

Lorenza: I like using EK in my coaching because there are specific questioning techniques that fit well with my way of coaching.

A series of questions act like scaffolding to help individuals glean knowledge from their subconscious and work to integrate it helpfully into their conscious thoughts. The process is very interactive – my client indicates where he wants to build next. The skill of the coach is in picking up these cues and working out what scaffolding is required for that work. Towards the end of the session, often having worked quite deeply, ‘clean’ action questions help my client integrate their thoughts into their choice of ways forward.

The cases below give an example of how EK and Clean can be deployed to help a client move forwards.

### Lorenza’s case study

Richard (not his real name) works for a Big Four international accountancy and professional services firm, in a client-facing role at senior manager level.

I was working with him following some feedback he had received about his detached, cooler style in relating with others. There was no ‘big problem’, but Richard knew that building close relationships would always be a highly important part of his work, and so he was keen to develop in this area. He explained at the beginning of the session that, even after careful thought, he was unclear about what he could do.

This session was our second, and was held in a meeting room with a long table and eight or so chairs. I started by asking him to write or draw something that represented his goal for the session. He wrote “stronger relationships”.

We started by putting the goal in a space in the room that felt right to him and then making sure Richard was in the space that felt right. Richard placed “stronger relationships” on the table, as that was where he felt they would usually be. He stated that standing by the door, as if he had just come into the room, felt right because he was coming in with something he had to share with other people.

Almost immediately, he reflected that perhaps he should sit down at the table because, to have a relationship, you normally do that, whether at a meeting, in a pub or eating at a restaurant.

On sitting down, he reflected that height was important – matching the other person, not above and aloof, but together with them.

As I invited Richard to move around the room, it became clear that he had choices about whether to move towards or turn his back at any moment. It was possible for him to influence the strength of the relationship, but that it required more effort to approach, make contact and engage.

Richard discovered that the potential was *always* there to make the relationship stronger, and it was his actions and choices that would make the difference, even where there are barriers.

Some barriers were internal and some external but, as we explored them, they changed and did not look as big or impassable, and he could manoeuvre his way around them.

By the end of the session, Richard felt that he had lots of ways of changing his behaviour and taking action in relationships, many of these centred on his ability to “just get on with human beings – as a starting place that would increase their comfort and mine”.

The different places in the room served as an “unforgettable” metaphor for where he is with various relationships, and what he can do to make each one stronger. This metaphor, together with some simple but effective actions, such as having a time each week

to think about what moves he would make and pencil them into the diary, would make a big difference to him.

Three weeks on, he felt that he was making more impact with people and uncovering potential new business as a result. Where previously Richard would procrastinate for as long as one or two months on non-essential contact with clients, he now says he has “a different psychology: I can turn, I can see, I can move, I can get so close – I can reach out and touch”.

Getting closer has resulted in being in the right place at the right time to pick up new business opportunities.

### Angela's case study

Jane (not her real name) works as a business coach within a coaching consultancy and, as part of her EK training, she wrote/drew the following goal, which I coached her on using the Clean Hieroglyphics technique (see diagram above right).

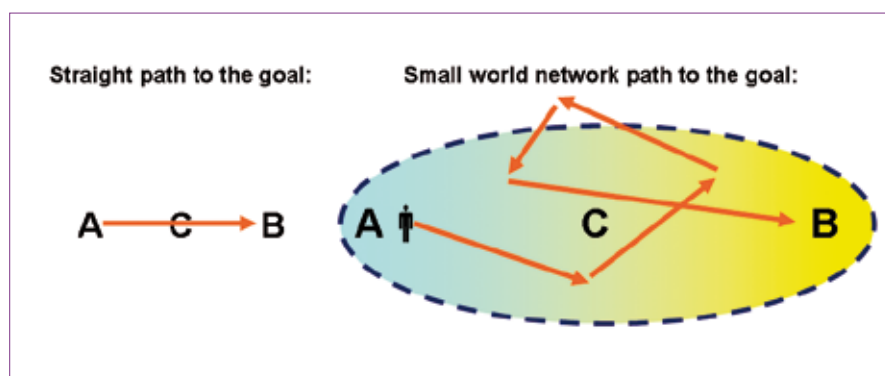
In this exercise, the client is encouraged to keep adding words, phrases or pictures as they come up, to the same piece of paper. This has the effect of building up the layers of information necessary for emergent knowledge to occur.

The picture above is a representation of Jane's goal, not the real drawing/writing.

Jane came across as a confident, assertive and highly competent woman. Her issue was with not being able to hold direct eye contact with certain people on occasion, and this was something she admitted she had explored previously with other people and to which she had not yet found a solution.

I asked her what letters on the page in her drawing were capturing her attention, and she commented on the *Is*. So, we explored the various *Is* on the paper, asking the EK question: “And what does that *I* know?”

It is a strange question, but



when delivered in the right way at the right time, the client can find himself doing some kind of mental ventriloquism act, in that he has to imagine himself as a letter on a page, then wonder what he would know if he was. The question grants permission for the subconscious mind to ‘fill in the gaps’ and for the answer to come from a deeper wisdom inside the client.

In Jane's case, she replied: “It knows but it won't tell me.” It seemed as though the answer could be just outside her conscious awareness so I stuck with the process and continued to ask if there was anything else that the *I* knew. After six attempts, Jane realised that she actually needed to trust herself to admit, out loud, that sometimes she feels small and insignificant. This was quite different to how she appeared, which was strong and confident.

The eyes drawn on the paper seemed to hold significance: ‘eye’ and ‘I’ sound the same and were another indication that something was just outside of reach in the subconscious.

After exploring those eyes, we then looked at what words could come after the words that were on the paper and Jane began to tell more of a story, as she felt emotional and angry about how she felt. She said: “How dare you make me feel like that!”

Afterwards she said: “But it's only me making me feel this.”

I asked Jane to put everything

she said on the piece of paper. And then, at the end, I asked: “And where could all those words have come from?” She quickly replied “me”... but then, a few seconds later, the knowledge finally broke through to the surface and she realised that most of the words were from someone else in her past who had, indeed, made her feel small and insignificant.

Having recognised this, she could now deal with it and scribbled out some of the word on the paper.

At the end, I asked: “And what do you know now?” She said: “I feel taller. I am stood next to the wall and there is a place where I have previously marked my height, and, weirdly, I seem to be looking down on that... how strange.”

I have kept in touch with Jane and she no longer has a problem with direct eye contact. ■

**Lorenza Clifford** is a coach, facilitator and development professional. She runs her own company, Coachange Ltd, and can be contacted at +44 (0)1264 739480 or at [headoffice@coachange.co.uk](mailto:headoffice@coachange.co.uk). **Angela Dunbar** is a coach, training consultant, Master NLP Practitioner and course director of the Clean Coaching with EK distance learning programmes. She can be contacted on +44 (0)1628 810638 or at [angeladunbar@cleancoaching.com](mailto:angeladunbar@cleancoaching.com)