



DAVID GROVE

AND CLEAN LANGUAGE TRIBUTE

by Eve Menezes Cunningham

Best known as the inspiration behind Penny Tomkins and James Lawleys' *Metaphors in the Mind* and *Clean Language*, David Grove's recent death has saddened people across the globe. Here is a selection of tributes to him:

Fran Burgess, Director and Trainer at The Northern School of NLP (www.nlpand.co.uk), met David at a small weekend group experience in West London. She says, "Through the work of James and Penny, I have

richer for it."

Sue Knight, international NLP trainer and author of *Introducing NLP*, *NLP Solutions* and *NLP at Work* (www.sueknight.co.uk) met David about 12 years ago. Sue says, "I was inspired by his way of working and the way he used language. Since Penny and James modelled him, *Clean Language* has been used by me and many other people." Sue decided to use a metaphor to describe David, "as he was so fond of them: It was like the first time I saw a shooting star. I think he was a very modest man and I loved the way he preferred anonymity. I wonder if he had any idea how many people he affected. I'm in India at the moment and so many people here have been influenced by him. I think it's fantastic that Penny and James modelled him. At least we have a way of accessing what he did."

Judy Rees, one of the two Directors of the Clean Change Company (www.cleanchange.co.uk), says, "David really was a maverick genius who you couldn't keep pace with. Ideas would be bouncing all over the place. He would be coming up with amazing schemes. He didn't have a home, didn't have a partner and was constantly moving on to find new people to play with, find new inspiration and suggestions. He came out with huge transformational ideas which no one else had thought about. It is a loss that those ideas aren't going to be coming from him any more. I can't claim to have been close to him but he was clearly a brilliant bloke."

Judy has been talking to many people since David's passing and has been struck by the impact he had on people who knew him 30 or 40 years ago as well as more recently.

Wendy Sullivan, her Co-director at the Clean Change Company says, "I was really shocked initially because he was not universally clean in his language at all." Rather than using her metaphor, he suggested that she change it. Because she trusted his insight, Wendy was happy to do this. Others in the group said they wanted to keep their own metaphors and David easily used their exact words back with them. He truly was a genius with creativity seeping from every pore. I remember him as someone who's made enormously significant contributions relating to understanding the nature of what makes people tick. He was very charismatic man who had a great sense of humour and a great deal of warmth. There was something about the rapport that he managed to build up. Often, when he wasn't Clean [with his language] he absolutely hit the nail on the head. The sense was that he had such great insight into people that he was able to shortcut. He was constantly moving on, not a person for dotting 'i's' and crossing 't's' at all. He needed to be exploring new ideas perpetually keeping himself entertained. He was a real maverick."

Carol Wilson is MD of Performance Coach Training Ltd and Co-founder of Clean Coaching featuring Emergent Knowledge (www.performancecoachtraining.com) with David Grove, now headed jointly with Angela Dunbar. She remembers David's "Good sense of humour. He was very true to himself. I discovered David's work through Penny and James' website when I first entered the field of coaching and David's



another highly effective modelling process to offer clients, and another illustration of Constructivist thinking. I often cite him with our learners when we are exploring the area of rapport. Anyone who believes that rapport is established and maintained through matching or mirroring physiology hadn't met David.

"He would be slouched in his chair, apparently paying absolutely no attention to me whatsoever to the point that I could be talking to the fireplace, yet he was profoundly and intently taking up residence in my map. He was a master of second positioning and intuitive modelling. He was an innovator, went outside the confines of his own map and the map of many other people, sometimes with astounding effect. We are the



work has influenced everything I have done.”

She had “3 sessions with Penny and James in 2002. Using the techniques they developed from David, they cured me of a life long fear of public speaking, now my key professional activity. David liked to practise new techniques on me and I remember a session we did about the sense of panic I experienced about taking on too many projects and not having enough time to do them properly. I didn’t want to cut down on projects, just lose the uncomfortable sense of panic. Two hours of David working with me about time saw the panic off forever. Now I can happily work on too many things without minding a bit.

“Over the last few years I committed a lot of time to work with him on developing his new theories concerning Emergent Knowledge. We created Clean Coaching featuring Emergent Knowledge there. We talked about writing a book together. I intend to write that book in the way that I believe he would have wished.

“I remember small kindnesses. Shortly after my mother had died I mentioned that she used to give me the crosswords out of her newspaper and that I had just finished the stockpile. The next time I saw him he had bought me one of the newspapers! He dedicated every waking hour to the development of his work; every scrap of energy and every penny he earned went on that.”

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home in Normandy where I have arranged for him to give seminars to ‘les femmes fatales de France’. We laughed and experimented and played with his new ideas about numbers. I am sure that the explosion of projects that he offered us will bear fruit. How can we not go on to realise some of his plans for him, when he has given us so much with his untiring generosity and friendship? His Clean Language was the start of so much for us. We learnt to be rigorous but non-intrusive, to stand beside without pushing, to watch and wait and then to see structure emerge. Thank you David, you will be with us for a long time in spirit. May you rest in peace with your ancestors. We thank you deeply for your irrepressible ability to be yourself and no-one else!”

Penny Tompkins and James Lawley (www.cleanlanguage.co.uk) say, “It is as important now as when we first met David to keep his thinking and his work alive for others to learn from and enjoy. He was a creative genius, an inspirational therapist and one hell of a man.”

If you would like more information, or want to make a donation to the David Grove Memorial Fund (to help with the high costs involved in bringing David back to his Maori homeland), please visit www.davidgrove.org ●

And keep an eye out for the world’s first ever Clean Language Conference in London on 21st and 22nd June 2008 (www.cleanchange.co.uk).

When a childhood friend tried to get him to buy a house for security, Carol says, “I remember David saying, astonished, ‘But then the money couldn’t go into Emergent Knowledge!’ As if the idea was completely preposterous. I would like people to remember how kind he was in small ways and that when he made life difficult, it was only in order to achieve something that he felt necessary in his work – it was never for his personal gain or comfort. He was endlessly kind both in thought and deed – helping practically around the house and by building things, listening and never counting the time to help people with their problems.”

Jennifer de Gandt (www.innovativepathways.net) says, “In the last five years David has come to my