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Mireia Mujika: Hi everyone and welcome to this new episode of “Ways to Grow” podcast, where every two weeks, I will interview experts to help us understand and discern different disciplines that will help us grow, improve our well-being and be better leaders. With this aim, we will travel from east to west, from the pure psychological studies to the ancient humans. We will look at every field and you will take what interests you. Join me on this journey of learning and discovery. My name is Mireia Mujika. I’m a personal and executive coach. And for this episode, I have invited Linda Berlot to join us. Linda is an entrepreneur and a certified executive and team coach. She is a PCC or professional certified coach and an ORSC organization and relationship system coach certified by the ICF, the international coaching federation. She is the founder and CEO of Berlot group, which is a team coaching organization and she's a partner for CRR global. CRR global is a global training coaching and consulting organization that uses assistance approach to leverage relationship systems intelligence within organizations, teams and communities. So, as partner for CRR global, Linda is licensed to deliver the ORSC coach training program to leaders and executive groups throughout the GCC. As an experienced team coach she coaches multicultural teams that are usually seasoned by focusing on their team dynamics, so they can come together as united teams to meet their objectives. Linda is also a senior faculty member at CRR global and hosts the position of global faculty development director, responsible for the recruitment and development of all the international trainers, responsible for delivering the ORSC courses across the globe. Linda is Italian and has been living in the UAE and working in the region since 2004. Her clients include Emirates, EMBD, Mar, Electrolux, SCB, Cleveland clinic, Michelin and many others across all industries. Listener, if you want to know how to understand and improve your teams or your families or any other systems dynamics, this episode will help you do that. But before we start, let me remind you of our website waystogrowpodcast.com, where you will find the details of all our guests and also the books and resources they recommend. And if you like this podcast, please follow and rate us so that we can keep growing. And finally, welcome Linda, thank you very much for being my guest today.

Linda Berlot: Hello Mireia. Thank you for asking me. It's a pleasure for me to be here.

Mireia Mujika: Oh, it's a pleasure, it's a pleasure. So, yeah, I'm very excited today because finally we're going to give a meaning to these ORSC, which is always ORSC is organization, relationship, coaching, what is it exactly? So, Linda, tell us, what is ORSC exactly?

Linda Berlot: Well, ORSC stands for organization and relationship systems coaching. It's a model of coaching systems. A system is either a pair or a team, a family, a group and actually as an individual inside us is the first system. So, it's a model of coaching which helps us coach the system as one united entity rather than coaching the individuals in the team or the system.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, I see. And where is it coming from?

Linda Berlot: That's a great question. Two fantastic leaders called Marita Fridjhonand Faith Fuller, they are the founders of the ORSC program. But also of CRR global, which is the organization accredited by the ICF to deliver these programs worldwide.

Mireia Mujika: Okay, that's great. So, what fascinates you most about the systemic coaching?

Linda Berlot: You know, I think, as coaches we are all different, right? Some people are really thrilled about coaching the individual and they love that. I feel lost doing that. I find myself coaching a large group or a system. And what I love about that is that, you know, when we're asking a team to change behavior, which is when they come to coaching usually because there's something they want to change. It's easier for the system to hold each other accountable and change rather than asking an individual to change and then go back to a system, which may be dysfunctional. What I love about systems coaching is the magic it creates. And I don't use that word lightly. For me, when we learn how to be in better relationship with each other, with ourselves first and then with each other. Or in teams, if we support them to be, for their team dynamics, to be more skillful and healthier, they start to be more productive. And I love to see that.

Mireia Mujika: Now you were saying that, I mean, I think, for me it's fascinating that actually you can say that for you it's easier to coach a big group because... well listener, I have actually

joined the first the fundamentals of ORSC with Linda here. And for me, which is completely different. I really, I went back to my times doing my fundamentals for individual coaching, you know, I was completely lost, trying to coach three people at the same time. Because I was like okay, so these two people that have this relationship, then these other two have this sort of relationship, then there is a relationship between the three of them. Now there is a relationship with me in this coaching scenario. So, I was a little bit lost trying to hold all that. But I find it fascinating.

Linda Berlot: It is fascinating. And, well, in the first course it is maybe confusing and a challenge, it's only your first course out of five and it's also new muscle, right? Especially if we're individual coaches, we're really taught to focus on the individual. When we're coaching a system of two or more people, now we have to take a more helicopter view, and keep the whole group in our sights. And it becomes almost like, as if we are a conductor in an orchestra, we have to keep in mind all of the instruments. And we may have to ask the trombone to lower, in order for the little symbol in the corner to be heard. So, taking that helicopter view allows us to have that Meta view, and then to be able to help the system.

Mireia Mujika: I see. I see, now that, sorry, like we're going off topic a little bit...

Linda Berlot: Okay.

Mireia Mujika: Now that you're saying so, we have to tell someone maybe to load down so that another one can arise. So what do you do, if actually there is, so imagine that you're coaching something and there is a toxic person, what do you do in that moment?

Linda Berlot: I love that question. I can't tell you how many of my CEOs or team leaders have said to me, Linda, can you please coach my team? Because that person, and if that person doesn't change, they or other people are going to have to leave. And the first thing that we do is we educate the team leader and the team themselves that all behavior belongs to the team because it's in the dynamic that we are toxic. If you are toxic to me and I don't like it, I will shut it down and walk away. If there is a team member who is displaying toxic behavior, I will never point them out. I will rather ask the team wow, I've noticed x, y and z toxic behavior, how do

you, as a team, want to be with it? Does it serve you? What is it giving you? Because if you haven't shut it down, how is it serving the team in some way? And if it is serving the team, we could perhaps come up with different ways to having that lived, which are more skillful and healthy. And if it's not serving the team, then we would look at, okay well, how do we help each other to shut it down when it does pop up. So, it's not a pointing fingers exercise, it's really about taking the behavior away from the individual, and addressing it in the dynamics of the team.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. So, I guess, you have to see where it's coming from? So, where's this behavior coming from?

Linda Berlot: Right. Well, it belongs to the team. Have you ever been in a team, for example, and you've had a disturber?

Mireia Mujika: Yes.

Linda Berlot: Right. And then eventually, they leave because they are fed up and they can't stand it anymore. And what happens? Someone else steps into that disturber role. So, we start to see that these behaviors belong to the team. Of course! Maybe as individuals, we like that behavior, so we pick the role up. But if the team needs that role, it will stay in the system.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. Yeah, I remember also, like one of the things that I had, there was this joker, you know, like in order to break the eyes when attention was horizon, we just drop a joke. Yeah, I used to appreciate that.

Linda Berlot: Exactly. And so sometimes, when we're working with teams and we really want them to have conversations at levels where they may not have had before, it's a vulnerable space. And so, what happens when people feel vulnerable and are not used to having those types of conversations? They feel awkward, a little bit on edge and they will drop a joke. And so, for the coach, it's important then to notice that and then ask the team, you know, what's it like to experience a joke in that moment? And maybe they will say, oh, thank goodness because it

lightens the energy or they will say no, it's distracting. And in that way, the team will auto correct itself.

Mireia Mujika: Awesome. As you said, it's kind of magic because the team does it, you know.

Linda Berlot: Right. That's exactly it. So, as the systems coach, it's not my place to tell the team what to do or advise but rather just to be a mirror and reveal what we see, with more information a team can make different decisions, take different actions.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, I see. I see. So, yeah, you're just guiding them, so that they can actually do whatever they need to do. Nice. Why does normally a team come to you? What do they need normally when they come to you? Or why would they need coaching?

Linda Berlot: Yeah, more and more teams are coming to team coaching, more and more leaders are asking for it, particularly after COVID has had such an impact on the team. So, teams sometimes come to me when they are doing really well but they're not sure what makes them high performing.

Mireia Mujika: So, they don't want to lose it.

Linda Berlot: That's right. So, they want to figure out what is it that we're doing that's so good. And I would start the process with an assessment. So, I can reveal that to them, you know, here are your strengths. In the coaching, let's look at how we maximize that, no, there's nothing broken here. How do we maximize that? Other teams instead come because, for example, after COVID they've all been virtual, they've kind of lost some team spirit, so they want to come together and define who they are as a team. Or sometimes there's conflict in the team, very often in this part of the world there are multicultural issues which impact the team. You know diversity is a gift, really. And of course, it comes with challenges, it comes with communication challenges, we misunderstand each other and so sometimes they need some guidance around how to work with those issues. Other issues could be silos, misalignment towards goals, change; sometimes teams are not aligning to the change or not buying into the change.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, so many reasons.

Linda Berlot: Many reasons indeed.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. And normally, who sees the need for team coaching? Is it the manager? Is it HR? Is it the team itself?

Linda Berlot: It could be all of those. Usually I get contacted by either the HR manager or a learning and development manager or the CEO themselves. So, my clients are usually CEOs and their teams. It doesn't mean that other teams don't need team coaching. Of course they do. I just know that I'm more effective at that level. It could be any one of those people that highlight the need for team coaching.

Mireia Mujika: I see. I see. So, let's say that these CEOs hired you because she has this team of five, six people and she needs coaching. So, how would that process look like?

Linda Berlot: That's a great question. My background is in corporate. So, I've all my life led learning and development departments. So, I know very well what it's like to be a client. So, when I approach my clients, I have a very clear process that I follow. Once I'm in the workshop then I have my coaching hat on, firmly on my head. But the process would start from the first conversation, so understanding the client's need. Once that's done, there's a proposal, there's a sign off and we can then identify and move forward from there. The first step then after that would be for me to meet with a team as a whole. Sometimes I meet with individuals, particularly if there's a lot of conflict. I meet with the team to assess what the team dynamics are, what the strengths are, what possible areas for development, but also what the goals could be for this team on this team coaching program. Then I will analyze all of that. I may also use assessments, online assessments and there are many psychometric assessments to use. And then I would collate all that information into a report. And I would create what we call a coaching plan that will meet those needs for the team. I present that to the team leader and all the key stakeholders. We align around that. We have signed off and then I will meet with the team on maybe a one or two day workshop. And then there's usually a follow-up plan, not

always, every team is different, but if we're looking to really change behavior that takes time. So, I would take my team on a journey of four, six or nine months.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. And during those first, six or nine months, how many times would you meet them for how long?

Linda Berlot: It very much depends and every team is different, every budget is different.

Mireia Mujika: Of course!

Linda Berlot: So, I may meet the team in that initial immersion one or two days. And then I could meet them maybe once a quarter or every two months and it could be a half a day follow-up, every so many weeks.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. And every time that you meet them, what can someone expect to happen in this team coaching? In this team coaching, I mean is it like, I'm imagining many pos- its or not, is it, do they have to play, what they do?

Linda Berlot: Yeah, that's I get asked that question a lot. So, as a team coach, we have some tools like blue tape, posted notes. So, what they can expect, they can expect to walk into room, this is for me, every team coach might be very different.

Mireia Mujika: Sure.

Linda Berlot: So, for me I like to have a large room, not just to meet COVID requirements but also to move around freely. They will be seated in a semicircle. I'm in front of the circle. And there are no tables in between them. So we can have, you know, open conversations without hiding behind anything. We, as team coaches, use tools and skills, then to kind of deepen the conversations. And very often I have tape, blue tape, taped on the floor. And I use a tool where

people will stand up and I facilitate the movement of them, you know, around the tool because we believe that when you move your bodies, you access different intelligences which are not just IQ. So, sitting down, we are forced to think in a very particular way; when we stand up and move our bodies, there's a lot more freedom and new information pops up.

Mireia Mujika: Energy moves.

Linda Berlot: Energy moves, exactly.

Mireia Mujika: Okay.

Linda Berlot: So it's fun, it's light, they normally enjoy the process, there's a lot of conversation, although there are some educational elements I don't talk, I ask questions and they do the talking and there's also depth and heart and very often vulnerability. Some of the toxins present in teams are painful and so to get them to talk about that and own some of those behaviors. It's sometimes vulnerable work.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, it's hard. Yeah, I can imagine. Yeah. So, who is the client that would benefit the most? I mean, you were talking a little bit about this before but who is the client that would benefit the most from having a process with you?

Linda Berlot: Well, my niche is teams, so leadership teams across organizations. However, I have many of my colleagues that use the same model that work in different niches. So, what we're teaching is how to be in right relationship, first with myself and then with each other. And, you know, we're always in relationship with something. We're in relationship with coffee, with time, with food, with our bodies and of course with other which is, you know, each other. And the greater, the god, the universe, the world, we're in relationship with all these areas. So, when you find a systems coach, they could coach teams and organizations such as myself. But they could also coach couples, families and more. I have colleagues that work in the educational system in governments, our work has been used in South Africa and the truth and

reconciliation, you know process. In Palestine it's been used. So, it's being in relationship or being in right relationship is world work.

Mireia Mujika: Yes, it is. Okay, so the two things that you were saying that caught my attention. So, well first of all, like we were talking about systems, so what is, for ORSC, what is the definition of a system?

Linda Berlot: We should have said that at the beginning. So, a relationship system is a group of interdependent entities.

Mireia Mujika: Interdependent entities.

Linda Berlot: That has a common goal or a common focus.

Mireia Mujika: A common goal.

Linda Berlot: Yes. So for example, if a group of us go to the movie, we have a common goal and focus but we are not interdependent, which is why it's so hard to ask the person with the crinkly packet of chips next to me to keep quiet.

Mireia Mujika: True.

Linda Berlot: But in a team when there are interdependencies or in a family or couple, it's easier to say, you know, when you do that, it impacts me in this way; would it be okay if we try this? And there's more, it's easier than to have people align towards a common goal.

Mireia Mujika: Exactly, alignment. I remember from the fundamentals like alignment and not necessarily agreement. I think that's something that is important. So, Linda was saying in that fundamentals course that I did with her who was amazing, really eye-opening. So that's how important it is to find alignment and not necessarily agreement.

Linda Berlot: Correct. We believe alignment is always possible. But here's what happens in times of conflict, right? If you and I are in conflict, there's a belief that I am right and therefore you are wrong, which polarizes us. And if we keep talking about our positions, we become pretty entrenched in our positions.

Mireia Mujika: Yes, I am right, I told you.

Linda Berlot: I'm right, I told you.

Mireia Mujika: Exactly.

Linda Berlot: So, sometimes what's more useful is to kind of move away from these polarized positions. To finding a place of common interest like where is the place that we can find alignment. So, to people arguing about where to go on holiday, can agree that they do want to go on holiday, right? And once we find a place of alignment, we as a team can come up with solutions that include both. So, we don't like the word 'compromise' because it shuts part of us down. So, if we were to find a solution that included both mountains and see what would that look like or both activity and downtime what would that look like.

Mireia Mujika: Okay, alignment, listener alignment. And also you were saying, when I asked about who is the client of ORSC for example, right? You were talking about families. So, how does this relate to family constellations?

Linda Berlot: Well, the point of difference that ORSC brings to the table is the relationship systems intelligence, right? And that builds on emotional intelligence the 'I', the social

intelligence the 'you' and relationship systems intelligence is about the 'we', you know, being able to see that I am part of a system and everything I do or don't do impacts that system. But we also include bodies of work that come from other giants, Arnold Mindell process work, Virginia Satir and Bert Hellinger, which is the constellation work that you're referring to. However, we apply a coaching application to those tools. So, when we are training our coaches, we are using a more coaching approach to the tools.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. And this word constellation find like, it looks like; I don't know something about the stars. So where is it coming from? What does it really mean?

Linda Berlot: I like that you ask that because when I went through my courses I thought what they are talking about. And this is the explanation, the cleanest explanation I can come up with. In a system, a team or a family, we all have opinions around particular topics, these opinions are all different but they drive our behavior. So, sometimes these opinions are known, other times they are not. So, if you imagine the opinions like a scattered constellation of stars. But not everybody knows or understands each other's opinions. So, the constellation tool is a tool that allows the invisible to be made visible because it's a tool which is physical, you would be moving around the room. And by your body position you are demonstrating your position to a particular topic. So, it's a tool that reveals the dynamics to the team or reveals the system to it.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. So you do constellation. So constellations are a tool that is used for team coaching as well as family coaching.

Linda Berlot: Yeah, so something like that. Yes. So for example, constellation as a tool could be used in an organization around the strategy, assessing how resonant the strategy is for the leadership team or how effective do they feel in executing it, and all of a sudden now you start to see that wow we're all bought into the strategy but maybe we don't feel empowered to execute it. So, depending on the information you're looking for you would ask a particular series of questions and by standing in different positions or different places. The team would demonstrate how they feel about that.

Mireia Mujika: Okay, beautiful. I mean, yeah, magical...

Linda Berlot: The team or the family by the way.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. Now Linda, we have this friend whose name is Mike, Mike is an assertive hearing in this podcast, he's the manager of a team of five and they're all suffering from burnout at work badly. So how would you help them?

Linda Berlot: You know this is a very real question for what's happening in the world at the moment. I think in COVID, we were all working on adrenaline and overwhelm. Then as business started to open, you know everybody was of the mindset we've got to make hay while the sun shines, we've got to make the most of it. And now as we come into 2022, people are exhausted and burnt out. So, the more I meet with leaders the more it's clear that there are certain things that we as leaders need to make space for. We can't just keep driving like we did. Here are some of the things that I've noticed. So, as a leader it's important to create a safe space for team members to speak up, to be able to share how they are feeling without any fear that they may be judged. So, when someone says, you know, I'm really struggling, I'm not sleeping, I'm feeling overwhelmed, pay attention and allow them the space to talk about their feelings and their emotions. Feelings and emotions are not pathology; it's what makes us who we are. Find different ways to allow people to feel supported. So, maybe somebody needs to go to a healthcare professional. You know find a way of introducing that topic or if you know of anybody that can be a support, there are wellness coaches, there are other professionals that can help, psychologists, therapists, that can help if it's needed so... And encourage that into the conversation, mental health is just as important as our body health and physical health exactly. More importantly it's important for team leaders to make space for those conversations. For example when we go straight into a meeting, we are meeting to talk about x, y and z productivity tasks, make space instead just to talk about how are you feeling, how we doing, what's the... what are the emotions in the room today, you know, how are we doing as a team, you know, what is it that we need as a team. I had this conversation with my team last week. I was out of the team for a little while because I was working on a big project and when I came back, it just felt things were off. And in our team meeting we said, you know, the team said to me, we're exhausted, we're exhausted and I knew I can't push until eve. And say this is where...

Mireia Mujika: Wait until the break of Eid.

Linda Berlot: But it's another two weeks. Yes. So, we have immediately implemented rotating days off attached to the weekends or so that people can start to have longer than a weekend. I measure performance. I don't measure time in the business. But we also looked at flexi times and giving people the time that they need to kind of recover and do what's needed. We also had moments where we had disconnected moments. So, please give me time to focus on my tasks without having the need to keep hooked into the team and...

Mireia Mujika: Having to answer the emails and WA and whatever is...

Linda Berlot: Right. So, having email and WA three days of so that I can focus on my task and get stuff done rather than responding to the urgency in the team. And as long as those are rotating and as long as our work has been done, find ways to help your team. And here's the gift, the leader doesn't have to have all the answers. The answers lie in the team. If I feel that I have to have all the answers I'm one person smart. If I ask the team well what do you need and I listen to them and we kind of come up with solutions that work for the individuals and the business, we are as many people as are in the team smart, can be creative around solutions.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. So, asking the team one of the big solutions that we could actually implement. Yeah, that's great. And then final question, what book or other resources would you recommend to a person that is interested in ORSC?

Linda Berlot: We have two great books. One was a book, it was our first book, it's called **creating intelligent teams**, it's written by **Marita Fridjhon and Anna Rod**. And then we have a new one which is **systems inspired leadership**. And this is written by **Frank Uit de Weerd and Marita Frijhon**. Both of those titles can be found on amazon, and purchased through amazon. And systems inspired leadership really teaches leaders what they can do to take a more systemic approach to their leadership rather than leading the individuals in the team, which is of course necessary, because you have to manage performance of the individuals but how to also swap hats and lead the team as a united system.

Mireia Mujika: Interesting! And what other books would you recommend just books that you liked in the past? I don't know.

Linda Berlot: That's a huge list. I love all of Arnold Mendell's work. I love some of the John Kotter Change Management books, there are many.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. Well, listeners, if you want to know about these books or want to know more about Linda, then go to waystogrowpodcast.com and you will find everything that she has talked about today in there. And Linda, is there anything that you have like me to ask you? Anything that you like to say that we haven't said till now?

Linda Berlot: I think you've asked all the most powerful questions. So thank you for that. If I could just leave with a message about, we're always in relationship, whether we know it or not, we're always in relationship. And so the question is, how do we choose to be in the relationships that we are? And that question starts with the 'me'. Who do I choose to be in this moment, in this relationship? And people believe that we have no control over who we are and the qualities that we bring to the table and the behavior that we have. And of course, we can challenge that and say who do you want to be in any one given moment as a mother, as a father, as a sister, as a wife, husband, as a team leader or as a team member.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, whatever it is. So who do you choose to be in that particular moment, right? I think I mean we are influencing the system just by what we say, who we are, how we act, whatever we do...

Linda Berlot: Absolutely, we always have an impact. And just by walking into the room, we have an impact.

Mireia Mujika: Even just saying nothing we have an impact.

Linda Berlot: Right. But is it the impact we want to have? And if it is, fabulous, do more of that, if it isn't, then what do I need to shift within me to create the impact that I want.

Mireia Mujika: What's the impact that I want to have? Important questions! Linda, thank you so much for this amazing explanation of what ORSC is, and everything that you have shared with us. I think it's very enlightening for all managers and all team members and even for families as we talk about. Thank you so much for all this. And well I hope to see you soon again.

Linda Berlot: Thank you Mireia, thank you for inviting me on the podcast, it was a pleasure to be here.

Mireia Mujika: It was my pleasure. Thank you.

Linda Berlot: Thank you.

Mireia Mujika: Bye.

Linda Berlot: Bye-bye.

List of Books, Authors and Resources:

- 'Creating intelligent teams' by Marita Fridjhon and Anna Rod
- 'Systems inspired leadership' by Frank Uit de Weerd and Marita Frijhon
- Arnold Mindell– author
- John Kotter's Change Management books