

Caroline Quaife

Somatic Coaching

Mireia Mujika: Hi, everyone. And welcome to this new episode of ways to grow podcasts, 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 Germans. 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 Caroline Quaife to join us. **Caroline is an executive coach, facilitator, and leadership development specialist working for 30 years in the public and private sectors. She currently works as a coach with individuals, senior managers, aspiring directors, and CEOs to help them grow using all of our intelligences; intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Caroline has a deep passion for coaching people to become better equipped and be more confident to navigate the increasingly complex demands of work and life.** She does this by enabling people to explore and question their hidden mindsets and assumptions. Using practical somatic approaches to move beyond old blocks to a clearly articulated sense of purpose, stepping fully into the role in life. She provides the space for clients to develop and be true to themselves so that they can make intentional choices about how they want to be in the world. Listener, you have been listening to us, you know that we have a deep curiosity about the wisdom of the body. Well, in this episode, we will talk about that and how to access all this information that is within us. But before we start, let me remind you of our website waystogrouppodcast.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 Caroline and thank you very much for being my guest today.

Caroline Quaife: Thank you so much, Mireia. I'm really looking forward to talking with you and all of your listeners.

Mireia Mujika: I'm really looking forward because as I said, we have been talking in this podcast a lot about the somatic knowledge or the wisdom of the body or information that is in our body

that, well, there are many different names for that, right? So, today we will be talking about somatic coaching. So, what is somatic coaching, Caroline, and where is it coming from?

Caroline Quaife: Okay. So, great question. Somatic coaching comes from the word 'soma', which is the Greek for all of our intelligences. So, as you said at the beginning in the introduction, we have multiple intelligences as well as our beautiful brains. We have our emotions, we have our intellect, we have a spiritual intelligence and we have an internal sensing as well. So, a sensing of the body as well and so somatic coaching is about using the body as a way in to be able to gain nuance and differentiation so that you can integrate those different parts of yourself. So, it's a practical approach and an understanding of mind and body as well and how we can bring them together and kind of create ways to grow and ways to heal.

Mireia Mujika: Beautiful. I love that 'ways to grow'.

Caroline Quaife: Thank you.

Mireia Mujika: Where does it come from? Or well, I mean you said like a soma is coming from the Greeks already but is there –

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, the background is from many different sources. So, you've talked about the east and the west and actually, there is really that blend. So, there are somatic coaches that come from disciplines like tai chi and aikido, so that sense of the physical and also the spiritual and the mental. There are sources around Buddhism as well, around being able to be with what is rather than fighting what we have and what we experience. And so, I would say that somatic coaching pulls from many different sources, and I would say that each era needs a different way of being able to move towards these ways of growing and understanding ourselves as human beings, and in our lives and in the environment that we're in. And somatic coaching is, you know, that's kind of coming from what we need now and it's also backed by the neurobiology, by the neuroscience as well. So, there are really great somatic coaches who do come from a deep understanding of the neurobiology and what's great really is compared to when I was growing up, it was considered that we were kind of fixed by the time we got to 25, you know, that was it. Our brain was kind of all sorted out and it was just that was how things were and now, really there's the evidence is that the brain can rewire and so that is for me, a real sort of

message of hope and a message of being able to not have to stay with how things are now and a way into understanding how best to be able to shift if that's what we want to do as well. So, there are people that I go to have much deeper understanding than me around that neuroscience but it is backed around, it is backed by that as well.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. Well, I don't know if you were saying exactly this but from my understanding was that, so now there is a little bit more of understanding of what the body is, at least in the west, I mean maybe in the eastern side of the world, maybe this understanding has always been there but I think westerners, we lost a little bit the touch with our body maybe and now we are reclaiming that. Do you agree?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, absolutely. So, if you go back to Descartes, you know, I think therefore I am. So, that was a real split between the brain and the body. And really, the way in to all making sense of the world is through the body. So, as I say, **we have these beautiful brains but our bodies aren't just like a way of carrying around our beautiful brains.** It's not like a sort of donkey that's just carrying around this fantastic brain. **Actually, the body is a way in to deep understanding and to healing and that's what fascinates me about it and that's why I enjoy working in this way. I've been involved in understanding people for many years and it's somatic coaching that I love because it's so impactful.**

Mireia Mujika: So, I think maybe the difference between this intellectual coaching, maybe your intellectual way of healing compared to the somatic healing may be that it's a little bit more, let's say not hidden but a little bit, how we say, unconscious? Subconscious?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, a lot of it can be and as you said, very much in the west because **we are brought up to privilege our rational brain. We are brought up to privilege our thoughts and we are very skilled at problem-solving. You know, that's how as human beings, we've managed to spread all over the world and we're incredibly flexible and adaptable and can live in many different kinds of environments and a large part of that is our ability to be able to problem solve and to kind of deconstruct things and make things better for us.** So, that is an amazing thing that we have. Having said that, actually, it's that sense of then that being at the expense of understanding and being with the kind of rhythms of our body. You know, **our body, we're always in a rhythm. When you breathe in, your heartbeat goes up, when you breathe out, your heartbeat goes down. There's always that rhythm of kind of in and out of faster and slower and**

if we can kind of understand that rather than being fixated by 'I have got to do this, I've got my to-do list, I have got this meeting' kind of like always on this kind of forwards looking path then actually, we're not in that sense of that rhythm and that can be then at our sort of expense. And also, expense of society as well because we have many people now who are really very strong out and very in their heads and are kind of struggling with their lives and not enjoying their lives.

Mireia Mujika: Now that you were mentioning the breathing and the rhythm, so how can we be more aligned to that rhythm that our body has?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. So, in somatic coaching, I guess there are sort of three essential parts of it. So, there is somatic awareness, so that is being aware of what's happening in your body. So, we quite often are aware of our external senses, so the five senses, that's extra reception that's looking outwards but we're not necessarily aware of what's happening in our body. So, that's called interception and proprioception. So, interception is being able to sense my heartbeat, sense the tingling in my fingers, sense maybe a fluttering in my stomach. It's those kinds of senses. Social reception is being able to sort of sense your body in space, in movement. So, we have those ways of being of our body kind of always sending information and there's a lot more information, for example, that goes from your gut to your brain and vice versa and your gut can actually override the messages from your brain. So, there is a real sort of sense of complexity around it in terms of what your body can pick up. So, somatic awareness is one of those things. And then somatic practices are sort of second big part of it and one of the core practices is centering. So, that is being able to align our bodies so that we are at a kind of a place of rest because we always as human beings will respond to threats in terms of flight or fight or freeze. We're wired to be safe and so that's part of our inheritance and what we want to do with the centering is learn how to then go back into a place of being congruent, being safe, being at ease. So, centering is one of the main things. And then also in terms of coaching, I would work with somebody to find out the practice that is unique to them, that will help them to then go back into that place where they are most of ease and align to what's important to them. And by doing that, it's all around the body shape and so there is a phrase around somatic opening, which is that sense of your body actually changing shape through the process of doing this. So, give myself as an example. When I first got into this, I used to walk around and I'm doing it now if people can't see but I used to walk around on my toes and leaning forward and I was always thinking about what I needed to do and I love writing, you know, ticking off my to-do list and things like that. So, that held that in my shape and when I started centering, what I did was, for me, it was around walking so that I was walking more on my heels. So, I would center in

practice. When I was walking the dog and actually, walking not so much on my toes but on my heels meant that actually I was in the here and now. My brain wasn't busy thinking about what it needed to do. It was very much more open to the here and now, so kind of rather than going for a walk with my dog and just being in my own head, I would notice the trees, I would notice the breeze on my hand, I would notice the air, the light. So, it's much more in the here and now. That now is my space. I was more present and that now is my shape. So, through that sense of somatic opening, I now have a different shape. I hold myself differently.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. So, you're talking about body shape that is in accordance to how you are living your life.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, absolutely. So, there's three components. There's somatic awareness. So, you have to be aware of what's happening in your body but that's not sufficient. You then have to have some kind of practices and then there is that sense of that opening into a different shape and with the shape comes a different way of being. So, I experience the world in a different way now. I'm more open to other people, for example. I was in a pub a month ago and there was a drunk guy by the bar and he banged into somebody, she went off and he kind of turned around and spun at me. In the past, I would have run away because I've been like, I don't like drunk people, I'm quite scared of them but actually, I felt centered. My body just went into a place of being really grounded and feeling held and in that place, I was able to talk to him and we kind of had this interaction. And after several interactions of the same thing being said, he just kind of stopped and he kind of had said, we would be talking about him weaving his way and then kind of zigzagging. And then he just stopped and said 'well, I am a drunk and I have to learn to walk straight then, I guess' and it was like he had that kind of moment of silence.

Mireia Mujika: All right.

Caroline Quaife: And then he just walked off and he walked off straight and that was like such a different interaction from previous and it wasn't me thinking 'I need to be this, I need to do that' because my body took over and felt really kind of calm.

Mireia Mujika: Nice. Wow, amazing interaction, yeah?

Caroline Quaife: Indeed.

Mireia Mujika: So, well, we have been talking about this so, I mean from what we have been talking already, I think there are three essential practices or three essential things that we can do to go back to that rhythm of the body to that natural rhythm of the body, which is the awareness, the somatic practices and the opening to a shape then. Awesome. So, that sounds amazing already, great learning already in this ten minutes that we have been already talking, but how? So, when it comes to your sessions, so if someone wants would like to coach with you, so how is that process? How long does the process take? How long is the session with you? What can we expect to happen in one session with you?

Caroline Quaife: Okay. So, in terms of a typical session, I guess the starting point would be around exploring what's important to me, so the client really having the space to be able to explore that, what do I care about and connecting to what I care about and then from that physical as well as mental intellectual understanding of what I care about, then being able to kind of do some practices to be able to really tap into that and to bring that into their everyday life. So, for example, we might be doing an activity whereby they kind of experience their normal shape and then what you need is you need some contrast because we're so used to how we are, how we think, how we hold ourselves. All of ourselves, it's so familiar to us. We've been practicing it for decades that actually we need a little bit of contrast for the body to kind of go, oh there's something different and so that would be what we would be doing and then through that process be creating a bespoke practice for the client, which then as I talked about integration, it integrates the 'what's important to me' from the words, it integrates the body posture, it integrates that sense of like motivation and energy. It's all around kind of being able to tap into that life force and energy as well. So, if you like, I could do an activity with you now that might kind of give you a bit of an insight.

Mireia Mujika: Okay.

Caroline Quaife: Are you up for that?

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, sure. Of course.

Caroline Quaife: Okay. So, any listeners, don't do this if you are in a car or operating machinery.

Mireia Mujika: Okay.

Caroline Quaife: It's a little warning. You need to be kind of somewhere that feels okay, you don't have to do anything else.

Mireia Mujika: But our listeners can do it at the same time that I do it?

Caroline Quaife: They can do it now, absolutely. I can just take them through now and take you through now. Okay. So, what I'd like you to do is, I'd like you to think of something that is a little bit of a challenge to you, so maybe something in the coming weeks that you're not really looking forward to. So, it's not the sort of like oh my god this is really awful, like what a colleague and a teacher calls your best China, so it's not something that's really kind of triggering but it's something that you're kind of thinking, oh do you know I don't really want to do that, I'm not looking forward to it.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah. Can it be something that I have been doing and I know that I have to continue doing but I don't really enjoy it?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, absolutely. There's some discomfort there. Okay, perfect. So, you've got that in your mind.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, okay.

Caroline Quaife: So, what I want you to do is, I want you to put yourself in the shape of thinking about that thing and imagining that thing. So, put yourself in that shape.

Mireia Mujika: Yes. It's like oh, I put my hands in my hole and that's how I feel, like whenever I have to do this thing, I'm like oh. I'll tell you what it is. It's posting on LinkedIn, I hate it.

Mireia Mujika: Oh. Okay. So, what I want you to do is that posting in on LinkedIn, I want you to hold that shape for a little bit and hold it with some intentionality so that you are noticing your body. So, you're noticing if there's any contraction, any pressure and where that is in your body. So, sometimes, it can be in your shoulders, it might be in your stomach.

Mireia Mujika: Even on the lower back, yeah.

Caroline Quaife: And the lower back, yeah. And the gut so there's that sense of the maybe your gut kind of feeling, a bit like gloopy or something like that. So, really notice and hold it and if you can stay with it for a little bit longer, I know it's difficult because quite often, we're used to like oh we shy away from the thing that we don't want. Okay? So, when you've got a sense enough of it, what I want you to do is come out of it, have a bit of a wriggle, okay? So kind of just get yourself sort of like a wriggly, so you're kind of shaking it out. Yeah, absolutely. And now I want you to do five or ten percent more of that shape that you just had. So, if you were contracted in your shoulders five or ten percent more contraction. If you had your head down five or ten percent more of the head down. So, you're exaggerating the shape and again, noticing what happens when you're in that more contracted shape. So, this is a shape that you don't normally do. And notice the emotions, notice the mood, notice the thoughts that come in when you're in that place and what that's like. And again, if you can stay with it for a little bit of time then do that and then shake it off again.

Mireia Mujika: Oh, yes. It feels good to take it off.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. So, what we've done there is we've done that kind of shape then we've done more of that shape and now we're going to do a third position, which is like the opposite of that last shape. So, thinking about, you know, if your shoulders were hunched in a sense of opening and a sense of opening and a sense of ease in your body. Okay? So, all of the little movements that you need to do in your body so that it is a contrast.

Mireia Mujika: Stand up. That's what I have –

Caroline Quaife: Stand up, that's lovely. Absolutely.

Mireia Mujika: Because that's the opposite. Actually, I was scratching there as a baby, now I have to stand out.

Caroline Quaife: Yes, as a woman and you've got your arms out more and, you know, your head is up and things like that. So, again, what I want you to do is in that position, notice your mood, your thoughts, your emotions, what's happening in your body and kind of notice, just kind of what is with this different position and thinking about that original thing that you were feeling uncomfortable about. I want you to think about that thing, remember that thing but from this position and to notice maybe what's possible in this position now. And again, when you're ready, you probably won't need to shake this one off because it's more enjoyable but, so what we've done is we've kind of created an awareness of what's happening in your body and not just in your body but your thoughts and your emotions and your mood etc. and maybe any movement. And we've noticed, we've given it a bit of a contrast into different places. And so the next step is being able to sort of kind of have a sense of what's possible in that last position now in relation to the thing that you were thinking of. And you don't have to go into the specifics of it but just that sense of, if anything is different.

Mireia Mujika: Well, I mean, so in the second position, like in the opposite position let's say, like I feel more empowered, right? I feel like I'm worth it, like I can do this. I can actually do it. I'm a woman, I'm a grown up, you know. And also, I think my biggest fear when it comes to posting on LinkedIn is the judgement, right. Oh, my god, I'm exposing myself, I'm getting out there. I'm putting my thoughts and my opinions out there and what about if people don't like it.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah.

Mireia Mujika: But in this position like what I was feeling was like, and what if people don't like it, you know. And what if I post it and people like it. So yeah, I think I was feeling a little bit like the opposite feelings, I guess. But so I mean, this body shape takes me to –

Caroline Quaife: So excited to feel empowered.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, absolutely. And having that accountability as well like yes, you know, like these are my opinion and I'm accountable for them and I'm going to share them. And tomorrow, I will try to post on LinkedIn and I will be like oh my god, I don't know if I feel so brave right now.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, absolutely. And so there are a few things there. So, that sense of like, ah I can really do this from a different thing and it's not like an instant fix. So, what we would do in terms of the coaching session is we would move backwards and forwards. So, what we're doing is we're building a bridge from reactive to more resilient but we're building a physical bridge. And so what we do is we find ways for the client to be able to practice going back into that place, so then, you know, like me in the pub with the drunk guy, when I'm under pressure, my body just does it. My brain's not having to think, oh right, what was I supposed to do? You know, what did the coach say? The body just kind of knew what to do. So, there's that sense of kind of continuing to find the practice and to do the practice. So, there is something to be done by the client to be able to make that shift. And then the other thing you said was around safety and all that the body is doing for all of us is keeping us safe. So, that sense of like, oh I don't want to be exposed and like punching in and everything like that, that's to do with keeping safe and that is an essential part of being human is we need to feel safe. And so, all of where we are now, there's a sense of thank you body for keeping you safe up to now, for doing all of these things that it's doing, has been in response to the environment that I've been in and has been a way of keeping as safe as possible. And maybe there are different ways of doing it now. There's a compassion. There's a compassion for what we bring and who we are. And, you know, David Trevelen says, "The body changes with a yes." So, there's a sense of that in somatic coaching, we're not fighting things, we're not pushing things away, we're saying yes to what is in a very gentle compassionate way because we as human beings, we're wired for stability and so what we bring is our ability. You know, we've tried to become as stable as possible in the environment that we're in and so really the body will resist anything that changes that stability if there's a sense of it not keeping us safe. And so we always need to kind of work to make sure that at a very deep level, we feel safe.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, but as you say, it's like doing all these years, the body has been has been keeping us safe and it's sometimes the moment to say like thank you for all this work that you have done but now I have to step out. I have to have to go forward, I cannot stay here anymore.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, absolutely.

Mireia Mujika: Great. Well, we're saying what can happen or what can we expect to happen in a session with you. So, I guess there's movement.

Caroline Quaife: There is movement. So, I work a lot on zoom and I get people walking around the room. Yesterday, I was with somebody and she opened the door and she went out into the garden. There is a lot of movement, it's not a static thing at all.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. And apart from somatic coaching, what other disciplines do you incorporate in your coaching?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. So, I am accredited in relation to adult development theory. So, I trained with Jennifer Garvey Berger, who is just an amazing person and she's just awesome but her discipline is around adult development theory, which is, you know, as children go through stages and change so we wouldn't expect a five-year-old to be the same as a 15-year-old and vice versa, there is this theory which she studied with a guy called Bob Keagan at Harvard and so there is this evidence that actually as adults, we can develop and our brains, as I said, can rewire and that development is around our ability to deal with more complexity, which is what we need in the world now. There is more complexity and so we need to be able to deal with more complexity. And so adult development theory to me is a very hopeful way of approaching things because there is that sense again that how we are now makes sense and also there are possibilities for growth.

Mireia Mujika: Sorry. The name of the woman that actually developed –

Caroline Quaife: Jennifer Garvey Berger.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. Jennifer Garvey Berger. Okay.

Caroline Quaife: And the other approach that I use, although I'm not accredited is constellation work. So, I've always helped out on constellation. So, I have a very good friend and colleague

who used to do family constellation work and I would work with her to support the families and the children involved in that. And I've done that also in a kind of work context of teams doing some constellation work together. So, what I love about that is that sense that it's a systems perspective and it's about kind of creating coherence, it's about organizing and rebalancing, which again, really goes with the somatic coaching as well. So, you know, for me there's an irony. Coaching is very much one-to-one and individual and I see that as a really important way of growing but also, systems have such a big impact on us.

Mireia Mujika: We're in constant relationship with the system, right. We are part of everything.

Caroline Quaife: Absolutely. And so being aware of that and being able to be able to integrate that balance is really important as well.

Mireia Mujika: Caroline, for our listeners, can you explain briefly what a constellation is? I think we have several guests talking about this but –

Caroline Quaife: Oh, right. Well, they're probably a lot more informed than I am because they say I'm not accredited but in terms of constellation, there is an idea that as we've talked about systems, so a constellation is the different parts within that system and you can use it. So, for example, I used it with a client recently whereby those different parts of what was important, what was happening in their system, they just had like symbols and they moved them around and they kind of got a sense of how the system was working or you can do it so that individuals take on a role or a part of the system but again, it's a movement thing. It's about being able to see something in space, intangible. But what is really amazing, I think, in the work that I've done is that when individuals are asked to take on a role within a system, they don't have to be told who that, you know, I can remember we did a systems work and somebody played my mother and she just took it on. I didn't have to say anything about my mom. She just took on and it was like really so amazing.

Mireia Mujika: I have a friend who is very skeptical about all this, right. Everything that we have, we are talking right now here but his girlfriend invited him to a family constellation. She didn't want to go alone because it was something that was – she wanted to work something that was not very easy for her so she really asked him to accompany her and he had to play the

role of someone else, right. They asked him to play that role and he told me, Mireia, I was afraid. I was afraid because I was feeling that I was that person at that moment. Oh, my god, this is something. So, it's as you said, like someone picks up on that role and they play it.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. And I think what I love about it is that sense that we are more than the box that we've put ourselves in. We are so much more connected to other people and I've done some very healing work for myself around family constellations, which has been around the inheritance from my great-grandmother. So, my great-grandmother, in 1917, her husband died in the navy. So, he was bombed, I think he was in a submarine and he was bombed and she had a breakdown and as a result, her older daughter had to leave service and look after the family and her younger daughter, who became my gran had to go into service at the age of 13. And then, you know, so that completely affected her life and then my mother, when she was about 14 or 15, she had the opportunity to go to a grammar school and to study more but actually, the family couldn't afford her to do that and so she left that and went into work. And so there was this inheritance that I had around actually, you know, not being able to do what is calling you, having to serve the family and a sense of great poverty and a sense of all of the things that come with that. And so I've done a lot of work around that and feel like I'm not now going to pass that on to my daughter. So, that sense of deep poverty and all the emotions that come with it, a sense of pointlessness of not being able to pursue what's important. I feel like I have done enough work so that I'm not passing that on to the next generation.

Mireia Mujika: Generational trauma, yes.

Caroline Quaife: No, absolutely.

Mireia Mujika: Good for you. Congratulations on that.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, I think it's probably the thing I feel most, you know, enlightens me and I'm proud of really from the last days.

Mireia Mujika: Yeah, congratulations. So, I mean we were already saying, I mean I think you have already answered but like what fascinates you the most about the discipline that you work with? I think you have already said.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, I have. What fascinates me is humanity, human beings and also us as part of something bigger. So, I do have that sense and again, it comes from the body. I do have that sense of something, you know, a wider consciousness that we are part of and that we kind of get so caught up in being material beings and actually, that is part of us but it's not all of us and so for me, that connection to the spiritual is so absolutely fundamental, especially with all of the things that we are doing as human beings to each other in this world, you know, that enables me to have a sense of my place in humanity in the world, in the universe.

Mireia Mujika: Beautiful. I was playing in a code the other day. It reminded me right now. I was saying we are not human beings living a spiritual context or something like that. We are actually spiritual beings living a human experience.

Caroline Quaife: Yes. And absolutely. I love that and that resonates so deeply with me. I do feel like I've spent most of my life thinking that I'm only a material being and that like "oh my lord, maybe I'm not" has been so fundamental to me, so joyous as well.

Mireia Mujika: I'm into something more terrible than. So, who is the client that will benefit the most?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. So, I do work with leaders as you said at the beginning and they really benefit. So, I quite often work with leaders who have got to a certain place so they have got up, quite high up the ranks. They've achieved the things that they set out to achieve and now they feel quite stuck and the reason for that kind of goes back to what we're talking about before is that the body has taken care of things and got them to a place where they are but actually, those ways of being don't actually enable them to grow and so there's that sense of 'to be the leader that I want to be, I have to unlearn' so things that I really valued so, for example, an ability to control things and ability to segment things and do things on time and everything, I can still do that, really good at it but actually, I need to let go of control and that's my next step to be the leader that I want to be. And also, it's really good for employees as well. It really works

well for people that have become very anxious, very kind of sense of hopeless or lost or sometimes a sense of yearning, a sense of there is more to things than others. There's more to things than the way I'm living my life at the moment.

Mireia Mujika: So, those will be your perfect clients?

Caroline Quaife: Yes.

Mireia Mujika: Now, I have a friend. This is an imaginary friend but it's very known between our listeners. So, this is Mike and Mike is a 30 year old man who suffers from burnout at work. So, how could you help him?

Caroline Quaife: Right. So, burnout is a sort of mental emotional and a physical state that leaves people exhausted and drained. So, after COVID, you know, I was talking to clients and the things that they were talking about was that sense of soldiering on, hollowed out, can't concentrate, can't remember things and it is actually a physical state. So, one of the main neurobiological impacts of prolonged burnout and stress, for example, is the enlargement of the amygdala. So, the amygdala helps us to process fear and emotions and it plays a crucial role in other cognitive functions. So, for example, how we make decisions and also burn out affects the endocrine system, so that is the endocrine system influences our body state via hormones. So, there's a physical shift. So, with that amygdala actually growing, it's changed shape and so it's change shape so that it can be aware of keeping safe. It's kind of almost got, it's a tenor out for, you know, what's a threat.

Mireia Mujika: Like an antenna.

Caroline Quaife: Absolutely. So, remember I said that actually we can rewire our brains. Well, it's not just that we can rewire our brains. Actually, our physiology can change. So, the amygdala can shrink and what we can do is we can work together to be able to rewire the brains and to be able to bring the body back into that kind of balance that it had before. So, you know, we can change for the better. I think that for me is one of the sort of key things I would say and so in terms of that, I would say that self-compassion and understanding is absolutely essential. And if

you like, I could do another little quick process. So, let's go for a break here. So that you can really have a felt sense of what I mean by self-compassion because people say that and actually that there's a physical felt sense of it. So, what I'd like you to do for this and again, you know, don't do it if you're driving but what I'd like you to do is to think about some part of yourself. You don't have to say what it is but some part of yourself or some thought or something that comes up that you don't like and you tend to push away. So, we've got something?

Mireia Mujika: Yes.

Caroline Quaife: Okay. So, what we're going to do is we're going to have one hand as a fist and one hand not as a fist.

Mireia Mujika: Okay.

Caroline Quaife: So, you can have your thumb in or out, whichever feels most comfortable and it doesn't matter which hand is the fist. But the hand that's the fist is the thing that you don't like, that you've identified that you're kind of a little bit of war with, okay? And the job of the fist here is to be a fist. It's to hold on tight and be a fist. Okay? So, what I want you to do first of all is to try and open that fist. So, I want you to force it open with the other hand. So, like with the other hand, you're kind of going okay I'm fed up with you being a fist, just open, just get on with it and open. And so as you do that, again notice your mood, your emotions, what's happening in your body. I'm doing it and my body has got a bit sort of, my toes are curling up, my jaw is a bit more set, I'm a bit more tense. Okay, so now I want you to just shake that and allow your fist not to be a fist for a moment. And then again, the same fist, the job is still to be a fist. So remembering that this fist is representing this thing that you don't really like. Okay? And now this time, what I want you to do with the other hand is to hold it so you're kind of cupping your fist in your hand. And this fist, the cupping fist, the holding fist is kind of saying well done for being a fist, you're doing a really good job of being a fist. Fantastic fistness. Absolutely brilliant at being a fist, thank you so much for being a fist. And maybe there's a possibility that you don't have to be quite such a tight fist, maybe there's a possibility of a different kind of way, possibly. And again, I want you to sense your emotion, your mood, what's happening in your body and then we'll just shake that off again. So, the last one is that sense of self-compassion that I was talking about.

Mireia Mujika: I can see nothing. Yeah, I could feel my jaw but like, you know, getting hard and getting tight and stiff and then it was like, yeah I mean even like when you were asking me to open the hand, I really wanted to open it. I was like I really want to open this hand and let it go, I really want to and then like holding it was like yeah, like it's been enough, you know, like there's another way, like there is another way. So, just let me thank you for coming, for bringing me up to here. Thank you.

Caroline Quaife: Yes. Absolutely, we don't quite need such a great degree of being a fist. And that's the thing, you know. Clients come because there's some kind of conflict, some kind of war or, you know, some kind of not right, I'm rubbing my hands here together like, you know, so there's a sense of that and the essential part of semantic coaching is that sense of self compassion and that sense of 'can we lay down our weapons and find a different way?' so it's always about building that bridge between the reactive and the resilient. So, that would be with 30 year old Mike, that would be what we would be doing. We would be connecting to what he cares about, we would be building that bridge between reactive and resilient and we'd be finding practices that are unique to him so that he can remember that place when he's full of life and where he has energy, he makes good decisions, he enjoys life again and then has ease but it's a gradual thing, you know. And in terms of me sort of talking about the amygdala, the amygdala can shrink. You know, there have been studies that it only needs around eight weeks of doing a practice like centering, being kind of more mindful. It's a regular practice and physically, the amygdala will shrink. So, it's that sense of finding a practice that somebody can do because they've linked to what's important to them and so they've got the motivation to be bothered to do these practices and they physically can remember what it was like even when they've gone back into contraction and back to that sense of soldiering on and resignation and not being able to remember things and, you know, feeling really low. It can happen with burnout.

Mireia Mujika: Okay. So, building that bridge between reactive and resilience. That can help our friend Mike.

Caroline Quaife: Yes, absolutely. And the joy with somatic coaching is that each person is individual so he will be leading the process and I, as a somatic coach, I just follow and kind of, you know, that's what the joy is. He's absolutely there leading that process.

Mireia Mujika: Nice and beautiful. One question that I have. As you were saying in the beginning that we have two intelligences, the intellectual, the emotional, the physical and the spiritual. Are there people types? Are there people types who have more spiritual intelligence and less physical stuff like that?

Caroline Quaife: No. That's a really good question. I guess I'm not so into models which have people types anymore. So, there are models like the enneagram, and I have colleagues who use it and really think highly of it. And I don't know enough about it to be able to speak authoritatively to it because I guess, I have a sense with the body just brings enough information for somebody to be able to then be able to work out what they want to do to be able to live the kind of life that they want to live.

Mireia Mujika: Fair enough. Listeners will have actually someone now that you mentioned they need and we'll have someone talking about the enneagram as well?

Caroline Quaife: Perfect. Well, I will listen in on that then I might become a bit more informed about it.

Mireia Mujika: Cool. And I think we reached already the last question, which is what book or other resources would you recommend to someone that wants to deepen their knowledge on somatic coaching?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. So, one of my favorites is Amanda Blake and she has a book called 'the body is the brain' and she also has a website called "embright", which is really good, has lots of great things. And then also, there's a chat called Dan Siegel, and he is from Stamford and he's a neurobiologist and also a clinical psychologist as well. He's done a lot of work with children and families and done a lot of work to try and make this accessible so that people can understand the neuroscience behind it in a useful way, so that they can kind of go 'oh no, now I understand what's happening'. So, he also has a website with some really good little videos. He works with children so they really are accessible. He does something, a little kind of analogy of the brain, which is just like oh that's so easy to understand.

Mireia Mujika: Yes. I think I follow him on LinkedIn, I think I see him. And yeah, his posts are very spot-on and very quickly you can understand lots of things.

Caroline Quaife: Yes, absolutely. And also, if it's all right to plug my site.

Mireia Mujika: Of course.

Caroline Quaife: So, I have a website called coach.quaifeassociates and also people can follow me on LinkedIn. And if you don't mind, I've got a program that starts in September and I have created a code for people that listen to your podcast.

Mireia Mujika: That would be great.

Caroline Quaife: So, normally, my program is 360 pounds and for people on the podcast, I am offering 199.

Mireia Mujika: Wow, that's a great discount.

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, absolutely. With the code of the name of your podcast.

Mireia Mujika: Ways to grow.

Caroline Quaife: Ways to grow, absolutely. All lowercase.

Caroline Quaife: That's great. Thank you so much. So, listeners, listen to this. So, in September, there's this program starting on somatic coaching. Do you have a name specific for the program?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah. It's called 'the somatic sandbox'. So, the idea is that sandbox is a place to play and so it's for experienced coaches. I do get people that aren't coaches as well but it's for people who kind of want to start to use the body but don't quite know where to start, you know. They might have said to somebody, well, where do you feel that? And they say in my stomach and then they think right now what do I do? So, it's definitely a place of, it's very experiential, it's very private as well as giving some theory behind it.

Mireia Mujika: Perfect. So, listeners, you get a discount from 360 pounds to 199. Is that right?

Caroline Quaife: Yeah, that's right.

Mireia Mujika: Perfect. With the code 'waystogrow'. And also listener, you can go to waystogrouppodcast.com and you will find all the information that Caroline has shared today with us. You will find everything there, all the names she mentioned, all the books she mentions and all the resources. So, there we go. And Caroline, thank you so much for all this information, all these knowledge that you shared with us.

Caroline Quaife: It's been such a joy. Thank you so much, Mireia.

Mireia Mujika: Thank you. Thank you. And now listeners, I will see you in two weeks. Thank you for that and be well.

List of Books, Authors and Resources:

- 'The body is the brain' by Amanda Blake
- Embright– website
- Dan Siegel – neurobiologist
- coach.quaifeassociates – website