Episode 2 - Emotional Inauthenticity, burnout and coping mechanisms

Phil: Hi this is the latest episode of the Emotion at Work podcast, where we get geekly excited about the world of emotion, credibility, deception in the workplace. Thanks very much for listening and here comes tonight's episode.

So welcome along to this edition of the Emotion at Work podcast and today my geek is incredibly excited today. Part of what we want to do with the Emotion at Work podcast is get to chat with and interview a selection of business leaders, researchers and practitioners and what we have got today is our first guest that spans two of those domains. So they are both a researcher and a practitioner. It is going to be really interesting podcast from the perspective of finding out both what they think but also about what their research is telling them as well. For today's podcast I would like to welcome along SJ Lennie. Good morning SJ.

SJ: Good morning.

Phil: How are you?

SJ: I am very good this morning and you?

Phil: Yeah very well. Thank you, very well indeed.

SJ: Eager?

Phil: Yes very excited, yay.

SJ: (Laughs) geeks unite.

Phil: Geeks unite today. I mentioned earlier in my introduction that you're both a researcher and a practioner. Do you want to explain a bit more about what I meant by that? Give us a bit more of an introduction.

SJ: Yeah certainly. So I am presently I am a PhD doctoral student at Manchester Met University. My thesis is on emotional inauthenticity and I'm looking at the psychological impact of emotional labour on Police officers. How that comes about is I am actually a police officer aswell. I have been a police officer for 15 years for Hampshire Constabulary and more latterly in Greater Manchester Police. I had quite a successful career. There was a promotion scheme and I worked in a variety of roles and I was working as a Detective Inspector in South Manchester which is when I realised I was suffering from with my own mental health, anxiety, ptsd and stuff and in a response to the kind of crime that you would expect in South Manchester. Gang violence, gun crime, all the sorts of stuff but it was quite a surprise to me and I realised that I was struggling significantly and so much so that I had to make a very difficult decision to step away from my career and re-assess what I was going to do. At this point that I spoke to my colleagues about how I was feeling and I kind of got that reflected back to me that they were certainly distressed themselves, suffering themselves mentally, similar to a greater or lesser extent as I was, but nobody spoke about it at all. Nobody dealt with their emotions,

nobody acknowledged them, it was very stoic. It wasn't acceptable to discuss how you were feeling despite the obvious that this is very distressing, exceptionally distressing work. Involved long hours, contact with very traumatised victims and perpetrators as well and it really hit home how I just didn't think that from an organisational perspective it was a particularly clever way of going forward and getting the best out of your employees and on an individual basis I just didn't think it was acceptable. I thought there were probably, I suspected better ways of dealing with this. So that motivated me to go back to university. I did a masters in Human Resource Management at Man Met, did a dissertation on the work psychology unit looking at emotions and burnout and that's what lead me to my PhD and my passion to change how organisations and society view and discuss emotions and raising awareness around the importance of being able to acknowledge the emotions and deal with the tricky things in life because the solutions I feel are quite simple but it seems, it is a bit like trying to climb Everest to get to them. So that's where I am in a very long sentence.

Phil: (Laughs) so, there is so much in there that I would like to ask more questions on of which we will and I think part of the reason that I am so excited about today is because you and I both share a huge determination to change the narrative around emotions in the workplace and the way that emotions are talked about and dealt with and worked with and all those sorts of things and we're coming at it from I think two quite different backgrounds but with a really similar aligned goal behind that.

SJ: Absolutely.

Phil: Which is really good. Super excited about today. So I'd like to begin near where you started in terms of you saying your area of interest at the moment for your research point of view is emotional inauthenticity. Now I'm really intrigued by that as a title. So what made you choose that as a frame to put around your research and/or what do you mean by emotional inauthenticity? That was a rubbish question, let me try again. What do you mean by emotional inauthenticity?

SJ: What I mean stems I will always talk from two perspectives, my personal experience and my research and academic handle. So when I talk about emotional inauthenticity I am reflecting on how as an employee in the organisations, as a police officer I know that I hid my emotions and almost to an extent I hid my personality, my sensitivity to traumatic incidents and how I empathised with people and it also spans from my research. Now I focus on emotional labour which is part of my title and emotional labour is a construct from Arlie Hochschild. It was developed in 1983 and she identified feeling rules which have been more latterly developed into display rules and these are implied rules around what the organisation expects as part of an unwritten contract that you will display. So she was looking at flight attendants. They were expected to always be happy and despite what was said to them and what they were dealing with they were going to be happy and the customer was always right and a smile on their faces and they suffered quite a bit with this. So the inauthenticity comes from that, my own experience of actually hiding my emotions and the research that looked about how we are expected to on behalf of the organisation and how the devices that we employ to how those measure, so surface acting and deep acting were the two devices that Arlie Hochschild talks about and that's how I explore how we fake emotions and what emotions we deal and supress within policing as a concept of acting and deep acting and emotional regulation and dissonance.

Phil: So emotional labour, is that the process that happens inside people? So that is what individuals do within themselves?

SJ: It's two things, as I was eluding to as I was realising how long my answer was is employers have two options of how to engage with the feeling [inaudible 00.07.59] and this is what makes up the emotional labour. So the first one I said was surface acting and this is where it is an external display of the emotion. So being happy you can display happiness, smile, open gestures, eye contact but internally you can still feel, say if you were having a bad day or maybe you are depressed but you are hiding this by faking and acting out, auctioning out what people would normally expect as a happy emotion, even if you are not feeling it. Then there is deep acting and this is where employees can try and modify their internal emotion. Try and manipulate their feelings so they are actually in line with the requirement. This is really interesting in the scope of police work because a lot of the previous research hasn't focused on police work and says that internal regulation, so deep acting can actually help with your wellbeing and mental health. That all depends on which emotion you are internally regulating. So if you are a police officer and you are trying to internally regulate empathy for somebody that is significantly stressed, talk about rape victims or the family of somebody that has died in tragic circumstances, it can be quite distressing. So the emotional labour is how we choose to comply with the feeling and displayables. It is so complicated depending on the emotion and how you engage with it as to what impact it can have on you psychologically.

Phil: And I guess the context will then shape what the degree to which the display rules and/or the feeling rules apply. So if display rules are this is what I can show at the moment, this is what I can display, whereas the feeling rules is, this is how I'm expected/permitted to feel. These are the emotions that I am allowed so therefore I am going to choose the deep acting approach to change… so I might have a particular emotion triggered but I am going to change that and change that to something else because that is what is okay for me to do. I am guessing the context will change the degree to which they happen. I know for example a lot of work was done around display rules. So in emotion expression research there are some really interesting work done. When cultural universality of emotional expression, so when Paul Ekman did his research into what he called the seven universals, so happy, sad, anger, disgust, fear, surprise, contempt. Looking at the extent to which, when those emotions are experienced, what they look like on the face. One of the challenges was, are those expression universal and initially when research was done in Asian cultures, there was questions asked about actually they don't appear to be present, but then there was ones in particular where people in an Asian culture were shown a film either in the presence of others or on their own and when others were present they would manage the display of the emotion on their face whereas when others were absent the emotion would show fully if that makes sense. So where I am going with this, in the police force were there any context where those rules were relaxed? So for example, if you were just with your sergeant or with you inspector on a one-to-one type basis were the rules any different there versus when you were with your peers or with your colleagues?

SJ: This is a really interesting point and this is probably something that I find significantly impacted. So you would anticipate the feeling and display rules of police officers to exist at a scene. So when you have a police officer attending a scene with a member of public, victims, witnesses, bereaved parties, perpetrators, you would expect those rules to exist and exist in a very formal sort of sense

which most members of the public, anybody in society could anticipate, to take that control, to supress emotion, don't get upset and I don't think we could ever change that and that is the way it should be. My fascination, interests, concern is how these rules permeate throughout an officers life in all their relationships. So as you quite rightly said, how do they deal with emotion with their peers, their colleagues? Now bearing in mind that research shows that social support from peers, who experience similar or the same trauma is the best support for moderating ptsd symptoms, however these feelings will still apply when it comes to peers and colleagues so they are still not allowed to express emotion. The only emotion that is permissible, it would appear within the organisation is anger which is very odd, otherwise it's no emotion. They are not allowed to talk about emotions exist. Having emotions, feelings distressed, fear is completely unacceptable as a conversation, it just doesn't exist. You will manipulate people will talk and deep act, you will manipulate your fear into anger particularly out on the street to deal with something. Often you can't show fear when you are dealing with an angry man. A lot of this answers questions about police aggression, it is a lot of fear that is coming out but this permeates into relationships with colleagues as I said, but also supervisors, where rules apply here as well. Police officers perceive the emotion rules and emotion regulation is a requirement to supress and not have feelings is an unofficial performance indicator.

Phil: Oh okay.

SJ: So if you go off sick and you don't show any emotion, you come across as completely unaffected, then you are good egg, you are reliable and you are resilient and you are good bobby, but if you show emotion you are weak and you are not up to the job, literally the way of police officers. If you show emotion you are not up to the job, you need to get another job, quite brutal. What concerns me even further is it goes out of the organisation and into relationships with spouses, partners, families and social groups and I became interested in this from… so there is two different aspects there. Spouses and partners and family, police officers who are either married to other police officers, so the rules apply.

Phil: Oh okay yeah.

SJ: Or they are not and their spouse's partner's families are members of the public so they need protecting so either way… I will take you back to me, so my research is audio diaries, so I deal with a lot of narratives, people just tell me how they feel. "My husband didn't sign up for this. They're not a police officer, they don't want to know the distressing circumstances of what I dealt with today. My wife doesn't need this, I can't talk to them. They won't understand". These are the things that are said to me. So there is this continued depression for whatever reason but then you go into society and there is the social group and their friends and their police officers again, they are viewed as police officers in a public setting. They will go on a night out and say, there is a fight over there, are you going to deal with it? A bobby is like, really. I am interested in the literature, fictional literature and film and the perpetuation of the burnt out cope. The hardboiled policemen, how it has entered the public psych that these officers should supress emotion. That this is how they are. That it is acceptable that they supress emotion and their marriages fail and they end up drinking and getting old before their time and dying young, but it exists. So these feelings, as you quite rightly say are permissible in different places. Well there are some emotions that are permissible like anger,

but the rules seem to apply throughout their lives and they're very few openings for police officers. If we speak about sometimes, if they're with a colleague, they have been with for say 18 months, they have got to know them, they trust them, they don't think they are trying to gain promotion. There is a lot of work at the moment about identifying wellbeing and what are we doing to help somebody out with mental health. So people tend to be a bit suspicious of each other if they are going for promotions. Are you going to use me as an example on your interview?

Phil: Oh really.

SJ: Yeah so it takes a long time to build trust with people but that is the only time they are possibly moved to opening up a little bit. They might say, "Oh that was a bit hairy there, wasn't it". That's it, that's fear, that is the expression of fear. So it is fascinating and the whole thing just adds to this trauma that is experienced.

Phil: So there are a few things in that that I find really interesting. So from a non-police setting I'm really fascinated by the role that identity plays in the workplace. My background is much more of a corporate setting than yours and often people will talk about, well not often, I've heard people talk about there's a home me and there's a work me. I hear people talk about leaving organisations so they can reinvent themselves in a new one. So when they are in a company they have been bound by their history and their background and the experience they have had as an individual in that organisation and the roles that they have done and when they have moved to a new organisation they get set free in response to that, but also I hear people talk about different versions of themselves in different interactions that they have with different people. The delineation of identity according to context is something that I get really fascinated by. So there is a lady called Helen Spencer Oatey who is at the University of Cambridge, what she is doing in her research is she is starting to link together the more fundamental view of oneself as their identity with how that then plays out in their day-to-day interactions they have at work. So you have got someone like Erving Goffman who is a sociologist from the late 50s, 60s, 70s who did a lot of research into this concept of face and face being your representation in a particular interaction and it is quite distinct in the Goffmanian view as to, face is the version of you that you are bring to that interaction and people don't really link it back to identity and that is what Helen Spencer Oatey is trying to do and say, well actually if that is the version of yourself that you are bringing to an interaction it has got to come from somewhere. You have got to be bringing that from somewhere to be brining that to that particular interaction so it is coming from that identity that you've decided or given or negotiated or built for yourselves which is going to be shaped by what is around you. And I suppose if I then link that back to what you were talking about just now, about when a police officer is in multiple context and in context that is nothing to do with their work, so home, out with friends, so on and so on, that identity is brought with them both by themselves but also by other people that are around them.

SJ: Yes, identity is… and I struggle with this on a personal level because I am on a career break at the moment so I am still a police officer and that forms a very strong part of my identity. I was also brought up by two police officers so it is very much a part of me and I think I've got to let that go at some point and it's a conversation that I've had with my supervisor on more than one occasion and I have got more than one occasion. I have got a few years yet before I consider whether I am resigning or whatever which will be that point but I do think that you are very right. The identity,

there's also a bit about self-selection here. Why people join the police, what they identify, how they carry that but you are quite right is when you learn, when you first put on the uniform and you attend an incident people look at you and they stop seeing you. They see the uniform, the see what they believe a police officer to be. They impress certain expectations upon you and you as a police officer because a lot of the work we do is, I hate to say it, but manipulating other people's emotions to get them to comply with you. You don't use aggression and force all the time it is negotiation and manipulation and compromise. You try and be whatever it is in their eyes that they need you to be for them to do whatever is required at that time so you start to morph into people's expectations to get the job done. If you think about a shift for a police officer, say a ten hour shift, you are going to say, 15 to 20 incidents maybe, different incidents, different context, different people, different requirements, different crimes, different social situations. You are constantly manipulating yourself, your identity, what do people need, wanting to achieve here and you are fluctuating and I think the speed of the way that police officers are moving and defending themselves emotionally and moving in and out of these emotions and how they maintain a static identity of the police officer is fascinating and then as I said before, it spills out into social life. People, as soon as they know you are a police officer, I see it when I say that to people when I speak to them, they change a little and they identify with you differently. So it is quite impressed upon in a sense of identity as well, as well as being on duty 24/7. But on the idea of different faces and that not being able to identify. I don't know how it can't be, it is, it's your choice to not be emotionally affected by something and not displaying an emotion is an identity of choice because you're choosing to display an identity of this stoic nature, quite repressed.

Phil: Okay I just want to pause a little bit for a second and what I mean by that is earlier on you talked about the role of peers and peer support particularly working through things like ptsd and one of my phrases that I work really hard to catch myself on is where I say things like, "Research suggests, or research says". So you mentioned that earlier on, would you, not necessarily now, right this very second but to let me know so I can put this in the podcast notes some links to if people wanted to go to read to find out more about who did that research then they could go and find it? Would that be okay?

SJ: Yeah. No that is fine. In fact I could probably do it in a couple of seconds but I will do.

Phil: Well I don't mind if we capture it as we speak people can just write it down themselves, they can go away and find it. I just want to make sure that we give listeners the opportunity to find some stuff which is why I particularly talking about Helen Spencer Oatey's research so that people that are listening can go and find some of the stuff, if they want to do some more reading then they can. So sticking with emotional inauthenticity just for a minute because one of the things that it sparks for me and I guess I might even be being a little bit playful here, in an institution where often the police are trying to find the truth, I find it interesting that there is a bucket load of deception that is going on. Granted it could be self-deception, it poses an interesting contrast.

SJ: It's a very good point isn't it. Gosh the games that we play. Yeah I think it's self-deception, I have to be honest with you.

Phil: But is the organisation compliant in it do you think? Does it make life easier for the institution or for the particular police force to allow, or to ignore, or to be oblivious to that?

SJ: It is very difficult because the rules are more enshrined than they are explicit so without wanting to delve too much into culture because that is a massive area, it is cultural issue. I think a lot of the problem is I have been looking at disassociation recently as a psychological output of emotional suppression and dealing with trauma and how trauma is dealt with, it's clear that, look at research Fern S Buchman have done quite a lot of work on this, not the only ones in the area, again I can give you so many references but not processing trauma pretty soon after a traumatic event as in supressing emotion can lead to higher levels of disassociation. I have just done a piece of research on this. What I think part of the problem is you talk about the organisation being complicit in it is that all police officers go through the ranks. They are all indoctrinated into this culture and taught this as a coping mechanism. So all police officers will learn to cope with what they see through the norms of their colleagues. See you go onto a team and nobody talks about the emotion, they suppress it, so you may see something that is distressing and you can see that your colleagues aren't even flickering as an emotional recognition and you learn to do this too and once you start supressing emotion and you start getting into levels of disassociation which are, it would appear from a research pretty prevalent, you are not recognising emotions, you are excepting it is a social norm. So I don't know how well recognised it is within the organisation about what is actually happening within. Mainly because it is so accepted but also because the people that are may consider should be in charge and should identify and deal with it are probably suffering themselves from disassociation and therefore can't, so it is tricky. It's really tricky.

Phil: I can imagine it is really tricky actually because the need to…

SJ: There is a need to protect yourself and because with what they are dealing with is constant there is a constant need to protect and disassociation is a way of protecting. It is a coping mechanism itself. It's the continuation of it but if there's no let up or if there is no built in system or time for people to step aside and say, okay let's process this trauma and move on and be a healthy individual. They will stay in a state of disassociation and depersonalisation and derealisation and particularly people that are in senior ranks who will successfully employ this as a coping mechanism. So they are not necessarily going to want to change or be known to change which is why I want to do the research and open up options. My first point about my research is identifying this and bringing it to the forefront and explaining it and showing it in different ways so I am very keen on emotional narrative and authenticity, authentic narrative and getting the spoken word and then relating that to the psychological outcomes so that I can say this is a thing that is here. It is not just a culture, it is not just something in the midst that we can't touch and it is having an impact and then looking at, okay so how we then deal with this and getting people to acknowledge its existence. It is quite tough.

Phil: I can imagine it is tough and also it could potentially be a tough argument because it is challenging, because it is potentially going to challenging the cultural organisational norms then, it might be something that is difficult for people to accept as well in that way.

SJ: I could imagine people being quite scared of…well okay suddenly we would want, they want empathetic feeling police officers because we know that officers that can empathise would do such a fantastic job on the streets because they will deal with people better. They provide a service that the public really deserves but I can see that the fear side of that is, it's very painful for people when they are emphasising, when they are emotionally open and aware and experiencing. We think about all the things they go to. It is going to need a lot of psychological support and a lot of coping mechanisms put in place. I can see that the organisation will be quite scared on mass doing that because you would end up with quite a lot of traumatised people that need help but I do think there is a way through it. I am not saying there isn't. I think as I say social support is exceptionally important and there's small things that can be done but it needs a massive step.

Phil: Yeah because you potentially got a threat. So fear is in response to a threat of harm which often in a police setting is a physical one. So a very real threat to physical harm both to yourself or your colleagues or to the public or whoever that might be or equally is valid is when you perceive a threat to your psychological self. When you perceive a threat to your sense of identity or your sense of wellbeing or how you're perceived by others or peers around you whether that be friends or family or colleagues or whoever that is, that fear will come in in the same way and as soon as you perceive that threat of harm then fear will happen. I think it was this week, I think it was last week, I was chatting with an individual who was recalling an occasion where they were sat in a team meeting and the leader of the team made a comment about a particular project and you know it just sent fear running through them. Even though the individual hadn't been named because the project had been named and they had been part of the project they had picked up on a threat to their credibility or their performance and their ability or their competence in doing their job and it was a very real sense of, "Are they talking about me?" And then they were unable to pay attention for 40 seconds, a minute, two minutes afterwards because they were caught in the grip of, "Are they talking about me, what have I done, what have I missed, what ball have I dropped, why are we talking about this now", it just creates that emotional…

SJ: Yeah and fear is fear no matter the stimulant. Police officers would be afraid from a…the whole thing is…the emotional suppression is a reputational fear. A fear as being seen as bad at their job because they are emotional and that is just as strong, if not stronger than a fear of being stabbed or physically harmed. In fact possibly more because they have probably got mishandled, if I get physically injured then my reputation, well you're not good at your job because that threat to identity is quite not the same because it is intrinsic to us. So fear is fear no matter the stimulants.

Phil: I also think for a lot of the things that you have been talking about there in terms of the display rules, the feeling rules and the surface and the deep acting and the cultural norms, whilst we have been grounding it in the police it also translates across to organisational life. If I think of the work of Brene Brown, so the popularity in corporate leadership world of Brene Brown's work around vulnerability and then she went to shame and the popularity of that has grown massively in the corporate sector but from my practical experience I don't see it permeating out and actually really changing the narrative. There was a piece on the news earlier this week where the CEO of Uber was captured on a camera, so an Uber cabby had a camera to record passengers, in case anything happens, there was disagreements on fair and so on and it captured the CEO of Uber being verbally aggressive to the driver in the car and it took a couple of days, or 36 hours I think it was until he

went publicly online and issued an unreserved apology of, "I screwed up and I need to go get some help because what I did was inappropriate" and that's really rare, really, really rare for somebody senior within an organisation to fess up I suppose in that way because the desire or the perceived need to maintain your credibility is just a fascinating one and if affects so many different things.

SJ: Well I think if you take it out beyond the context of policing which is an extreme context I would say, but looking at into what is a patriarchal society but being strong, being top of your game, being competitive, the capitalist fight to be the top and constantly grow. To supress emotion in an environment that is masculineated, it's everyone where you can't be seen to say I made a mistake because that's a weakness and we don't do weakness which is why emotions aren't acceptable because we think emotions are weaknesses too and it is such a shame because they can be such a strength. Again empathy comes into this. There is such strength as identifying yourself and being human being and not being perfect and that, more seniors need to acknowledge that because for your employees to be happy and comfortable and creative they need to be able to make mistakes and be human and they're the ones that need permission to this but it's not just organisations, it is society. It's prevalent with any area in society this desire to be the top, impenetrable.

Phil: I also think there's a load of politeness rules that come in with it as well. I remember, I was walking through Chiswick a year ago, maybe more and there was a lady walking down the street and she was just really upset. She was prototypical face expression of sadness, inner corners of the eyebrows raised, lip corners pulled down, bottom lip quivering and she walked past and I was walking towards her and I saw, it must have been at least 15 or 20 people look up, recognise it and then walk off because there's, I think there's some politeness rules around going up and approaching somebody and saying are you okay. So me being me broke all those rules and stopped and I kind of got up to her and rather than stopping her I turned around and walked alongside her and said, "It looks like you are a bit upset, are you okay? Is everything alright?" and she said, "Yeah, yeah I am fine, I'm fine" and I said "Are you sure, I just want to make sure that you are okay" and she said, "Yeah I'm fine, I just need to be on my own for a bit" and I thought I will leave you alone as it's none of my business.

SJ: Yeah but you have done such a good thing there.

Phil: Thank you but I think it's the politeness rules that are present within the UK as an example. I think also reinforce that norm around actually I feel quite uncomfortable with someone walking down the street displaying their emotion in the way that they are. I feel uncomfortable with that and my way of working with it is I'm going to ignore it as opposed of doing something with or about it.

SJ: I think this is a really important point. I think as you quite rightly identified we are quite emotion supressed, quite stoicy, it is not natural for us and we do get embarrassed. We don't know how to deal with it, we are not brought up deal, we are brought up, certainly I was to supress emotion and this is why for me I am really interested in… I don't believe at times that my research that I am going to do in the UK will be generalisable to other countries because every different country has different rules about emotional displays. So that in itself will impact society, natural order of things will impact the police and how they deal with it because we work with what society expects of us and

will impact organisations and it brings me back to your point where you were talking about Asia about what emotions were displayed. For me I look at words and how we express ourselves verbally I would suggest, mainly and I am interested in how different cultures have different numbers of words for different emotions. There are some emotions that we don't even have words for in English and that in itself just shows how societies are taking politeness or how comfortable we are with emotion translates literally from culture to culture. I do think you are right, there is a politeness about, or an uncomfortableness, and embarrassment on what it's like about being able to express emotions which as you say is societies pressure for everything to be okay.

Phil: And we have been talking a lot of fear and anger I suppose have been the dominant two but I even see that with things like pride and appreciation and praise. There's a company called O.C. Tanner, I know a couple of folk there, Rob or Dave as one and Dawn Smedley as another and they're whole business model is around appreciation and recognition and all through a non-financial means and the level of discomfort that I see in individuals when they initially start to do this stuff is really big. So I did a piece of work with a group of 60 senior leaders within a UK retail organisation and I gave part of the classic leadership development thing but one of the things that I did was I allocated an hour and 15 minutes in the agenda for appreciation. So I started off by, I probably took about 15 minutes of that, setting some context around why I think appreciation is important, how you can do it and I framed it very specifically and set some rules around it and then I said you got an hour now to show appreciation to others. Now there could be other people in this room, so they could be your peers they could be your managers but they could also be people that aren't in this room. So they could be members of your team or other people within your wider parts of the organisation but you've got an hour now to go and share some appreciation with others of what it is. I was really clear, I said this isn't soft soaping stuff. So if you don't feel you have any appreciation to give then that is fine but likewise we are giving you an hour. Take some time to think about it and do it and then after an hour I was looking at the agenda and I wrapped the session up and one bit of feedback at the end of the day or one complaint at the end of the day was why did you stop us.

SJ: (Laughs) wow.

Phil: "We've never done that before, it was amazing and you stopped us. Why did you stop us?" And I found it, it was a really fascinating thing, I only gave them an hour because I thought they would find it really uncomfortable and I stopped it. They were like, "No you shouldn't have done that". The individual said, "I would have preferred it if you had let it run" and I said well that is great, so my challenge to you is how do you do it outside of this room? So I have now given you a framework that allows you to do it. How do you do it outside of this room? And also then in more general life, part of my research was about analysing performance reviews that happened in a corporate organisation and the way that people gave praise was really weird. Occasionally there was a very direct one which was, "This happened, you did it really well, well done and thank you" but there were other times where the appreciation would be given by putting someone else down, "This person isn't very good at these things and thankfully I don't have to talk to you about them". What an indirect way of saying you are good about something.

SJ: But that is so power play. That is fear creating, "I know how to tell you that you're not bad but if you are".

Phil: But I also think the individual in question was trying to make themselves look better as a manager. So they were trying to say your peer isn't good at these things and I am telling you that I know they are not good at these things so I want you to know that I am on top of that because I have got a note to talk to them.

SJ: I am interested in so much so that obviously the person that is delivering the performance review, bearing in mind this is meant to be about someone else, not the manager, is bringing their own ego and demonstrates a level of vulnerability and needs to be seen by the good employee as a good manager.

Phil: Absolutely and it's fascinating stuff and I was about to say the worst thing is, but that is inappropriate choice of language, the bit that I missed in my research or my regret from my research is that I didn't go back and speak to the managers and the individuals that took part in my research to find out how aware they were of it and/or if they ascribed the same meaning that I as the researcher ascribed because in this kind of research paradigm there is two approaches. There is what's called a first order approach which is where you use what is happening in the interaction to decide how people evaluated it. So in that particular example the individual that was in the performance review was made to say you're good at these things because this person is bad, they didn't respond in it. They didn't give any audible response other than a small laugh. So it is difficult to know how the evaluated it. They didn't say thanks, so I don't know if they accepted it or not. They left it ambiguous about whether they accepted it or not.

SJ: So the feedback loop, they are not getting much feedback from it?

Phil: They didn't voice an inappropriate or a descent or they also didn't voice a recognition or an ascent either so it is really difficult to know. The first order approach is where you look at what's happened, the second order approach is when you as the researcher who understands the context or the community of practise you ascribe meaning to it or potential meaning to it, which is what I have done but the bit that I think I have missed was the opportunity to go back to the individuals that took part in the research and say when this happened, how did you interpret that? Or as you listen back to it now, how do you interpret? Part of me wonders actually am I making it a deal when actually it isn't a deal?

SJ: Well that is so interesting. I am just doing a bit at the moment on the role of research and reflectivity and particularly in qualitative research and looking at case studies and stuff and transference, particularly in psychological and social psychological research is such a problem isn't it. Yeah I can see that is important to check back and see is this a thing or is it just a thing because I think it should be a thing. I understand that, totally. It would be interesting to know wouldn't it.

Phil: Yeah it would and the challenge is that I captured the data two years ago now so memory will be fallible enough for people to go, "I don't know, I can't remember how I felt then" so when it comes to doing more research that's a key learning for me in terms of how do I get that perspective and even then I won't necessarily know for sure that that was how they felt. All I will know is what they are telling me about how they felt.

SJ: I think it is interesting also is what do they accept? What are their feeling rules about what is acceptable and are they like, "No that is fine, that is what happens". If they have not looked at it can they identify it themselves that stepping back, it is not really that acceptable. It is complicated.

Phil: It is and this is where, I can feel the soapbox being presented and me standing up on it but this is where I get really frustrated by a lot of the work in and around emotion and/or emotional intelligence where people talk about self-awareness and it is used as a throw away term. Oh they are just not very self-aware is something I hear regularly or they just need to work on their self-awareness, but that is like a monumentally big thing, self-awareness. It is something that takes reflection, it takes reflectivity, it takes effort and energy and I get frustrated that it is almost used like a throw away comment.

SJ: Yeah something that sounds to me like… and if you are talking in an organisational culture, how resilience is used as a term. Certainly in the police I see it as a bar to be measured against, unrealistically. You are either resilient or you are not, you are either self-aware or not and if you are not you are not good enough. Well as you say to be truly self-aware and who is, you have to understand your upbringing, your contributions into psychology what traumas you may have experienced and not processed. You create this amazingly complex mind-map and then introduce yourself into a culture that you may not necessarily understand but only you have a perception of through your senses which are painted by your own personal experience. Oh God, I don't know, I don't know if you could ever be truly self-aware to the point where we extrapolate all those problems and understand them. I mean Freud and Young spent years trying to do that and whether they eventually ever attained true total self-awareness, I don't know if you can.

Phil: No I don't know either.

SJ: But it's not an overnight thing either (laughs). I think I am consciously incompetent at that level. I know I don't know myself well enough (laughs).

Phil: I had a thought earlier on which I didn't share at the time but feels contextually okay to share now, so when I asked you around how complicit is the organisation or the institution of the police in what's happening and it made me wonder, actually is there a degree of organisational self-awareness or institutional self-awareness that happens there. If the institution is made up of people that have learnt this implied cultural norm, or these implied rules around what you can show around how you can feel it can be that there is a complete lack of awareness that this is actually a thing and it is only because of your experience and I know you are not alone and there are other people within the institution of police doing it as well but through your own personal experience you are then going, hang on a minute this is a thing.

SJ: Yeah I think so and I think I suffer particularly being brought up by police officers, I can talk about mental health and I cared very deeply about it and I cared very deeply about my colleagues, my DCs, people and my teams around and underneath me. People I was there to protect as such within the organisation and look after, I don't think unless you do have that wakeup moment where you are really poorly and you go, oh my God what has been going on here, I think it has been very difficult to

have that level of awareness. I toyed for the a while about bystander syndrome whether that was what was going on in the organisation because I just couldn't get why people weren't going hang on a minute, this is a bit weird isn't it. Why are we all stood here not feeling anything when this tragically difficult things are happening. So I do think that organisationally, I think it's growing as you quite rightly said, other people are working in the area. There's more wellbeing stuff that is going on but I don't know how really that is an understanding but at least it is a step in the right direction. I think it is difficult on an individual and an organisational level to have this awareness when you are completely submersed within a culture. It is difficult to see it and see your part within it. It is all pervasive particularly when police officers, I have said before, don't step outside of it. It continues into their home, it continues into society so you never step outside of this culture. It is expected from every angle and impressed upon so, I am not about to say the organisation is bad in any incidents because I just don't think that they can be found capable. They are more a victim of their own circumstance.

Phil: And I think that translates across to different aspects of life. Whether that be work or home. When you are in something it's really hard to see, to use an old adage, it is hard to see the wood from the trees when you are in it. I'm aware of a number of people that I interact with who when they look back on their time in a particular place they were like, wow, how did I do that there. How did I cope in that kind of context or that environment? How did I work with this or that or the other but because you are in it, it is just the norm. It is what it is and working with it is hard. So I think in terms of where I would like to take the conversation next, we have talked about your context with the police in particular and I also recognise that there is an awful lot of reports both in the media and wider coverage and in research around the state of mental health within the corporate world or within the world of work. So where I want to get us thinking now, what either hints or tips or advice or suggestions could we give, either individuals for themselves in terms of if they feel like they're suffering. They might be on their way to burnout or on the journey to that or for practitioners that can help others, so they might be coaches, they might be HR professionals. What advice or hints and tips do you think we can give to people that are listening to help them work with some of these things or some of the stuff that we have talked about over the course of our discussions so far?

SJ: Right this is where my research eventually will end is. What interventions can you do and I mean all organisations. So tips for HR practitioners, organisations, so there's a couple of things. I think the way we are with productivity and the hours that we work in the UK, we seem to think being sat at a desk is an indication of productivity. We know that it is not true but we are so low on productivity but high on hours, is we need to give people space, time. We need to allow them to walk away from their desks and do whatever it is that that individual needs to do to make them okay. I think that's really important and I think organisations need to take a deep breath and go, do you know what, I know this will make me more productive, even if I am terrified of giving my staff this time, because it is going to be organisational time to give this over to their mental health to make sure they are well because it is a win situation for organisations. They are well, they are engaged, we all know the story. They are productive and we will do better as a country, economically as a society. So being brave, not questioning them, trusting them to do what they need to do because coping with trauma and traumatic situations, whether that be a fear of a loss of a job or pressure and stress of a deadline. Everybody has an individual coping mechanism. If you are dealing with trauma specifically, talking is so important. I'm just looking at some of my references here about

psychological trauma, if you don't deal with it, that's when you need to, posttraumatic stress disorder and this can be anything in anybody's life. I know that a lot of organisations won't interact with the nasty side of life, but these happen to normal everyday people and they will go through traumatic life experiences whether it be divorce, the death of a loved one, a serious illness, whatever it is and organisations need to support. So HR needs to be able to support people and in that, it's that time and it is getting people to talk and that has to be acceptable within the organisation. So whether it is about providing peer support networks so people you can go to and talk in confidence. If you don't feel like you can openly ask for psychological support, providing areas like that. Providing space and time and in fact enforcing it because a lot of people won't bother and truly engage with wellbeing and psychological support and mental health programmes through fear of stigma. So you can't set something up and expect people to go to it when you are dealt with tragic incidents within GMP that is quite significant. We set up and I don't want to go into too much detail about that, we set up counselling services. We put counsellors in police stations, we had an open door policy. You can go and engage, nobody went in because of the fear of walking through that door and the stigma so you have to tell people you go an initially, we sit down and have a cup of tea and talk. Talk about the football if you want or you can talk about something more, something eventful but there is going to be an element if you want culture change, is forcing people down a tunnel. If you use it how they want, but give them the space, give them, it's a bit Swedish, you have the time where, eleven o' clock every day, everybody stops, everybody has a cup of tea and a slice of cake if they want and everybody talks. There is a lot of talk around the old tea trolley, stuff like that. People used to have an enforced way, walk away from the screen, very good health and safety but also it gave people an opportunity to do, without being pressured to have a conversation if they want to talk about a tricky situation because it is going to be their peers that deal with that best. So I would say that organisations need to look at, stop putting fruit on the table and doing something quite fundamental and radical and taking a deep breath and not feeling afraid. Giving time back to their employees to wow them and support themselves. Oh god, soapbox moment. I can go forever can't I. I was going to say for the individuals you want to, I think, so I have been doing some research on behalf of my supervisors. I mentioned earlier about stress experts and how they deal with stress, so academics, they have researched the areas of stress and resilience and mental health and how they personally cope with it and we are going back to self-awareness but knowing your triggers, knowing what is important to you. Knowing when you are not quite so well. Knowing where your cut-off point is and knowing how to A identify, B communicate it to the people that need to know in a way that you are comfortable with, then finding your own personal coping mechanisms. Meditation is a massively good, yoga, fitness, exercise or just reading a book, or going into nature, finding something beautiful. Removing yourself from circumstances, there are so many different things and it is such an individual thing and also triggers are individual. One person's stressor is nothing to the other person but they will be stressed by something else. Me and my husband are completely different. He will get stressed about shopping, those sorts of things and I get stressed about deadlines. We are completely different but we both suffer in the same way when we do get stressed and there is no denying how that feels no matter what the trigger. I'm done (laughs).

Phil: Wonderful, thank you. So there is a couple of questions to finish off then and they are about your thoughts on where people can go next and where I should go next and what I mean by that is, I will ask you in a minute for any recommendations of books, or articles or places for people to go to

find out more. If they want to find out more around the topics we have been discussing, where should they go, what can they go look for but also I am interested in who else should we look to get on the podcast? Are there any other…and they can be business leaders, they could be researchers or they could be practitioners or a combination of those three but who should we go hunt out and find and say SJ sent me because she said you would be awesome for this (laughs).

SJ: Right okay I will have a think. My first one I am going to say, I don't know whether you have made contact yet, my ex-boss Anna Sutton, I think her research is really interesting into authenticity and identity. I am trying to think of somebody cool. What were the other questions that you had for me?

Phil: Books, any books or videos or recommended reading. If people wanted to find out more, they can go read this or go read that.

SJ: I would say read The Managed Heart by Arlie Hochschild. Okay so that's emotional labour. It is a dead good read, [inaudible 01.01.16] dead, dead good read. It is really worth reading, she researches airhostess and bill collectors. So it is nothing to do with police, it is proper corporate environment. It is in 1983, she does this study and she links that to burnout and how supressing your emotions is really so bad for you but they're positive emotions so it is completely contrasting to anything that I do but I use her concepts but I think that for certainly HR managers and anybody in corporate organisations it helps you to understand how forcing your employees to be smiley and happy all the time can be so detrimental to their wellbeing and then their ability to work for you, so I think that's an important read. Very important.

Phil: So remind me, what was the book called again?

SJ: The Managed Heart by Arlie Hochschild.

Phil: Thank you.

SJ: A bit of a bible for me.

Phil: I like it when someone is really clear on a book that would be really good.

SJ: You know she is brilliant. So I have got a background in art, so I was a musician in the army before I ventured into the police. It is a long story. So my A-levels were music and I used to do the theatre as well, so a bit of acting hence my interest in surface and deep acting. So she talked a lot about Hamlet, she talked about [inaudible 01.02.48] and acting techniques as well throughout and she draws and I do this in my research. I find it quite fascinating, she draws on the arts which plays into Jung and I would read Jung.

Phil: It probably plays into Goffman as well then because Goffman plays a lot into dramaturgy and stage and self-presentation and those sort of things.

SJ: And backstage and stuff, absolutely. That's another good reason. Jung, there is a book called The Introduction to Jung and I think it is by a chap called Stevens and it makes it easy to engage with and I think that's a really social psychological way of looking at things. How we are all linked and our terms of emotion and how we deal with things. That can get quite deep.

Phil: What we'll do is we will put links to both of those on the podcast notes so people can go find them and I will try and do that from more than just Amazon, other web based book...

SJ: Well I've got a number of academic journal articles that I have got the names of sat in front of me here.

Phil: Yeah that would be good.

SJ: But I'd just end up reeling off a list of names and then you would be really depressed.

Phil: No that is okay I will put that in the podcast so that is good. So definitely go and hunt out Anna. Is there anyone else that we should go and find do you think?

SJ: You see a lot of people I know are police based. Can I get back to you on that?

Phil: Yeah absolutely. Okay my final questions then in a very good Nancy Klein time to think style way then, is there anything else that you are thinking, feeling, anything else that you would like to say before we bring it together and close.

SJ: I probably have not spoken enough about the importance of actions speaking emotions. And I will find you references, in fact I might update them as they are sat next to me at the moment, so actually being able to talk about your emotions is a significant moderator for dealing with those emotions and not being able to name the emotions you are experiencing is a sign of mental stress. Practitioners, this is important because they're simple things but they are really telling and really important. I will send you some links to that but if you can't do anything else, if we don't have lots of money to bring in psychological support, we don't have lots of money for training, we don't have lots of time to give, if nothing else talking is possibly one of the most important and impacted tools for looking after our own mental health, looking after each other, praising that social community that's healthy and supportive and that's what I'm trying to do and what I found in my own personal experience is actually opening up to my colleagues and having them in return open up to me because I gave them, not necessarily gave them the power, but they weren't afraid once I'd opened up about how I felt to speak. So storytelling for me is so important. Tell your own story and other people will tell you theirs and that's such a beginning in any organisation to get in a better culture to a healthy emotional work.

Phil: Wonderful. I agree with you whole heartedly, so one of my real frustrations with Daniel Goleman's work as an example is the first person I ever read on emotional intelligence, part of me feels almost guilty about the fact that I then go on to say one of the biggest issues that he caused is that he lumped every emotion together into one and called it emotional intelligence and for me it is not about that. It is about emotion intelligence. It is being able to say this is how I feel and

sometimes that is about how I feel physically. I feel hot, I feel cold, I feel knotty, I feel gnarly, I feel aggravated, I feel a mare, so I am not overly concerned with people necessarily using an accurate emotional label but being able to just be emotion.

SJ: Articulate.

Phil: Be emotion intelligent or emotion aware rather than emotionally intelligent or emotionally aware because it is all very well to go I am feeling emotional at the moment and even then if you have used the word emotional that has such strong implicature with crying and sadness.

SJ: Mental connotations.

Phil: And also some colocations as well. If you look at linguistically if you look at what sits around the word emotional sadness features more often than any other emotion, it collocates around it regularly but I agree with you, or taking the time to name how you are feeling and be able to articulate that in some way, not necessarily in an articulate or logical way but just the physical articulation of it.

SJ: What it is for you.

Phil: Yeah, absolutely. And yes, I might look at your face and go, do you know what, you say you are angry but actually you look really sad, but that doesn't matter. That's not the point, my job isn't to go, are you sure you are angry or are you actually mad or to quote the kids kind of animation movie, Home, are you mad sad. Are you both mad and sad at the same time.

SJ: Which is so right, the other thing is we go, oh we are going to put everything into one emotion. We are not experiencing one emotion at a time. We have so many emotions which makes research really complex particularly, what is your surface acting, what is your deep acting, what is it you are displaying, there's a multitude which adds to the confusion within us and just sit down and go, "I feel this about this and feel this about that," sometimes helps to separate and understand things and focus a bit more and stuff. I smile a lot, and go yeah, she said grinning (laughs). People go really…

Phil: SJ thank you so much for your time today.

SJ: No worries, brilliant.

Phil: Thoroughly enjoyed our chat. I cannot wait to hear more about how your PhD research continues and then to see what you pull together at the end. It has been so much fun today.

SJ: Thank you very much and good luck to you. I am looking forward to you joining us very soon at Man Mat I hope.

Phil: I hope so too, fingers crossed. So let's bring it together. Thank you very much to SJ, thanks for taking part in the emotion at work podcast for this episode. We will put all the links to everything we have talked about, all the different studies, the different researchers and all that stuff, the

different books, we will pull that together. So if listeners want to go out and find more then they can but all that leads me to do is say SJ thank you so, so much for your time today.

SJ: Thank you very much for inviting me on, brilliant. Thank you very much.

Phil: Thanks SJ. Take care.

SJ: Take care, cheers, bye-bye.