



## Episode 77

### Emotion at Work in Embracing Introversion and Finding Your Voice Through Career Change

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Hi, guys. Welcome to The Emotion at Work podcast, where we place emotions at the heart of the people, the processes and the places of work. And today we're focusing on the people element of things, and in particular, coaching. Our guest today has over 14 year's experience in HR and LND, and she is also a fully qualified coach. She's on a mission to help clients find their voice by creating a space where they can really discover what their goals are in both their professional and personal lives. Today, she's going to be sharing with you her insight on how to build a career that you really love. And she's going to dive a little bit into her own journey from a nine to five HR professional to a fully qualified coach. So very excited to get on the air, Fay Nichols. Hi, Fay.

Fay Nicholls:

Hi.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

How are you doing today?

Fay Nicholls:

I'm good, thank you. I obviously shared before that I'm a little bit nervous, but super excited.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Yeah, that makes two of us. So we've got plenty of nerves between us. But it's all good energy. Definitely. So, as with all our podcast episodes, we're going to start with an innocuous question. And today's innocuous question is, what is your go to comfort? Like, tv show or tv series?

Fay Nicholls:

The one that immediately comes to mind, which is so original, but is Friends, it's just the tv show that I, you know, as soon as I sort of get in from somewhere, I'll stick it on the tv, so much so that my parents always take the mick out of me for it, but yeah, I just think just relaxing, just because I know it. It's comforting, it's an easy watch, it's funny, so yeah, I think that's the only standout one, really. And probably still in 40 years to come I'll still be watching it.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Yeah. No, I think Friends. I think the characters do kind of, like, sound so cheesy. And I'm sure this is. This is the whole point of the show, but they feel like friends. Like, it feels very easy to just watch. Do you have, like, a favourite character?



Fay Nicholls:  
I do, Ross. I love Ross.

Lizzi Philokyprou:  
See, I've not met many people that like Ross. So you're original in that sense.

Fay Nicholls:  
I am a Ross fan.

Lizzi Philokyprou:  
Ross forever.

Fay Nicholls:  
I can even tell you my favourite episode. It's the one with the leather pants when he goes on the date with leather pants on, and then he's in the bathroom and he's got talc on there and he's mixing it with water and he's getting the worst advice from Jo, which I thought was just so funny.

Lizzi Philokyprou:  
He pioneered leather pants. He went through that. So, like, now we can all wear them.

Fay Nicholls:  
He did. He did.

Lizzi Philokyprou:  
I love that. No, I do like Friends. I think my go to comfort show, it's probably gonna have to be Gavin and Stacy. I don't know if you've seen it before.

Fay Nicholls:  
I haven't. I've always heard about it.

Fay Nicholls:  
But you know what? After this, I'll have to give it a go.

Lizzi Philokyprou:  
I would really recommend the characters just feel really comforting, and I just. Yeah, I feel like I knew them. So, obviously, as we've mentioned before today, we're going to kind of be chatting a little bit about coaching and also your journey into coaching. Those people who don't know Fay is on



our affiliate program now. So she's an affiliate coach with Emotion at Work. So anyone out there listening, you could have Fay coaching you. She's amazing. So, yes. That's really exciting. I wanted to dial it back in time a little bit and go back and ask you what was your very first job?

Fay Nicholls:

Very first job? Are you talking proper job?

Lizzi Philokyprou:

No. Let's go. Like, you're, like, you're 16. You're working in, like, a chaotic cafe kind of job. First taste of, like, employment, I guess.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah. You're not too far off. So I worked in a pub and I was a waitress. I wasn't a very good waitress, I'm not gonna lie. I was, yeah, 15 or 16 when I started there. And, yeah, it was definitely, like, loads of learning, first time, sort of interacting with the public, having a manager. Yeah, but what? Yeah, what that means in terms, I wasn't a very good waitress. I'll have to tell you the story.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

We'd love to hear the story.

Fay Nicholls:

I was, it was a really busy Sunday. I remember I was serving the tables, so I didn't work behind the bar of course, because I wasn't old enough, so I was waitressing away, and there was this one very, you know, not very happy customer who wanted her dishes rather quickly and wasn't happy that I served a table before her. Not that I have control about what food comes out the kitchen first, as a 16 year old waitress, but anyway, back then, not very good social skills, obviously, learning self-awareness, which I will definitely speak about shortly and I ended up telling the customer that I only had one pair of hands, which is fact.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

You do not have multiple hands.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, exactly. But, yeah, it wasn't the best response. But apart from that. So I've gone straight to the negative. Apart from that it was a great atmosphere, you know, worked with some fun people. But yeah, that was my first job.

Lizzi Philokyprou:



Brill and so, yeah, I guess thinking about you sort of maybe early on in your career, were there any roles or jobs that you feel really shaped you or sort of like pointed you in a certain direction?

Fay Nicholls:

Definitely. It's definitely the role which I was most recently in at Card Factory. So in a HR Business Partner role and that sort of true generalist Business Partnering role, I'll start there and then I'll sort of go back in time a little bit. It was the role which got me into coaching, so I'll be forever grateful to Card Factory for that and the sort of exposure of the role. So, it being truly strategic, partnering with some great people, having a real focus on all the stuff which I now absolutely love around leadership capability, coaching, looking at our talent. So that role just gave me such exposure which has put me in great stead for either a career in coaching or to pursue in another business, that sort of HR business partnering sort of side, but if I now go back in time, so I think working at Card Factory generally, because I worked there for I think around 14 years, so a long time. And obviously over that time, I saw that company change so much. And obviously being in the people team, having that sort of key focus on people, it was really interesting to see how the company really changed from being very much profit focused, which, you know, it is what it is. It did what it did and it was very successful, but then needing to really start to look at their people. So, I always say that as much as I worked for one company for such a long time, I actually feel like I've worked for at least two companies within that time because seeing that change in sort of leadership and seeing that focus move on to people, and actually, if you do look after your people and if you do engage with them and if you do care about them, look at what can happen. That was really nice to see, and it wasn't just nice to see, it was amazing to be part of that and actually see the change in the leadership of those people which I was partnering with so I think, yeah, that's an answer to your question of what's really shaped me. It's been that absolute exposure to what a change in leadership and what a change in culture can really do and absolutely, coaching was fundamental to that journey.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Wow, that's amazing. I thought, I had no idea that Card Factory had sort of gone through that transformation. Yeah, thinking about that, because it sounds like very much you being within the people department, you helped bring that change about. Is that accurate?

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, absolutely, yeah. So being, you know, sort of moving from very much sort of transactional HR. And obviously this doesn't happen overnight, this happened over sort of years, but yeah, I would just sort of then having that focus and being enabled to look at that more proactive HR stuff and then being given permission and being given the skills to then have the right conversations with the leaders to then just see that transformation happen day by day, bit by bit, conversation by conversation. Then suddenly it's like, wow, this is where we are. And then you really saw that sort of impact of that approach and that difference in leadership through things like the engagement scores which came through. So that's when we could sort of really sort of reflect and think what we're doing is actually really making a difference and actually let's have a look at the impact on the profit as well. So it was all very positive.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

So would you say that like their tuned in mindset and the kind of it shifting to a more like employee focused and it sounds like a more of a wellbeing focus, has that resulted in improved business outcomes in terms of profit?

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, definitely. Obviously there were still challenges which, you know, some were in our control, some weren't in our control, but if I think about the sort of difference in conversations which were then happening, which you know, as a people team, we were absolutely front and centre on driving and that's where I can really see I had the biggest impact. But, yeah, just such a success story.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Yeah, it sounds brill. And obviously you mentioned that sort of it was your time at Card Factory that kind of inspired you to go into coaching. Can you tell us a little bit more about was there a specific moment or a specific event that made you think, wow, I want to be a coach, or was it more of a gradual thing?

Fay Nicholls:

I didn't realise until I started on the coaching course, which Card Factory funded. So there was a couple of cohorts and this was all part of that culture change journey. So there was a cohort with the Senior Leadership Team and then a cohort with the HR Business Partners. It was something which we all sort of identified was a gap and which we absolutely wanted to be upskilled in and they absolutely backed that. So I don't think it was until I was starting that course and then I actually really learned what coaching was and it was through that process then when I really realised, I love this, like, just having this level of conversation. Having this level of attention in terms of what I'm saying and the quality of the questions and thinking for myself, it was something that I'd not experienced before and on a sort of side note as well, as well as going through that sort of coaching course, I was then having one-to-one coaching with who is now my coaching supervisor, Hilary. It was through those coaching sessions where I really felt the benefits and genuinely felt the benefits and I just learned so much about myself that I never knew about myself. I just think about something around self-awareness and that's the first core competency of the coaching framework which Matthew Radlist follows. And it was eye opening to learn these things about myself, not just to be a better coach, but just generally in day-to-day life, in my HR Business Partnering role in my personal life. So, yeah, I don't think it was a sort of a one moment thing. I can recall having amazing coaching conversations and always coming away feeling like, wow, I've genuinely taken something from that, learned something about myself, progressed with a goal, but yeah, I think it was sort of a progression of going through that coaching course and learning all those core competencies and then coming out the other side and realising this is a super strength of mine and I actually need to do something with it.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Yeah, definitely. When you were going through that coaching and you were looking at the core competencies, were there some things that you were like, oh, wait a second, like, I do that, like now. Like, that's me. I'm, I'm confident in that was it. I feel like a lot of the key skills for being a coach are they pervasive through life. So I think, like, good and deep listening, for instance, I feel like it's quite a core competency of coaching from what I know. And obviously that can help you in sort of all situations in life. And I wondered if there were any, like key skills that you just really sort of already have.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, you've actually mentioned it. So something which, you know, I regularly received feedback on was Fay's a great listener, she's really attentive, she really gives you sort of that space, patience, calm. All great qualities which make a great coach. So that is definitely a super strength I'd say, in terms of listening, always been so great at that. And I do think from going through that self-awareness journey, learning that I am absolutely an introvert at heart, which is something I've struggled with over the years until I discovered coaching. Where then? Yeah, where then actually having that sort of self-acceptance and seeing it as a super strength. But as much as that is a super strength, what I sort of learned through the course was there's actually different levels of listening and there's, you know, deep listening. And I've actually, as much as I thought that was a strength already, I've learned to listen even more attentively and deeply because, you know, it sounds so simple, but it just isn't. You know, even for somebody who thought that I actually did that really well, I've learned I've learned on another level how to be present in the moment, not let my mind wander. Be fully focused on that person who's in front of me, needing that sort of attention.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Wow, that's. Yeah, that's amazing. And it's. It's so wonderful to hear that, you know, through your journey of becoming a qualified coach, you also, like, really embraced parts of you that maybe in the past were slightly more difficult to embrace. And I think, yeah, introversion, I guess we live in a world where, like, person that speaks up the person that commands the room, that's always seen as a positive thing. And I think, you know, if you're naturally more introverted, it's great when you can finally start to see, like, just the amount of benefits that brings. I was wondering, obviously, training and sort of switching careers as you've done here, it's a lot of change to cope and to deal with and I wondered, how did you cope with that?

Fay Nicholls:

I think it was a few things, I feel like I do keep coming back to this, but just because I fundamentally agree that it's the base of allowing change to happen in a positive way is knowing yourself. So, in terms of how I've navigated changes, it really allowed me to understand and hold a mirror up to myself, to understand who I am as a person, what's my identity, what are my values, how do I react to certain situations and why? Because then when I found myself up against things, I could really, you know, self-reflect. So that's another thing, self-reflection. So I've absolutely learned how to do that. I do it in the moment every single day. And so, yes, having that ability to really pause and think about what my reaction has been, but then more so understanding why I've had that reaction and

then doing something about it or maybe just appreciating it. So, I think it's been self-awareness and self-reflection, for sure. And then I think something that I do every day, and again, it comes back to being in the moment, being very aware of what I can control, what I can't control is meditation. So just really having that mindfulness approach, being really kind to myself and something else I think sort of really helps and this hasn't happened overnight, this has been a sort of over the last few years kind of thing, is really changing my mindset from being really quite negative about myself to learning about myself, learning about what my strengths are and therefore allowing myself to have more of a growth mindset, if you like, rather than quite a fixed negative, don't know what to do about it kind of thing. And that's absolutely what coaching has enabled, is just that mind to open up. It feels literally like open up and just allow a different kind of thought and then in the process be capturing those like, you know, less positive things which I might have, you know, thought. And that has absolutely, so I'll do a full circle that's absolutely come down to that journey of self-awareness, just really understanding who I am as a person. So, yeah, I can't recommend enough around going on that journey because what you'll learn from it is, you know, invaluable. And the great thing is it's a never-ending journey as well. So constantly sort of learning as well.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely. Well, that's. Yeah, that's great to hear. I think it can be really tough. I think if you're feeling negative about yourself, it can be really hard to like, then look at your life and see places there where you might want to grow or change or, you know, progress. For anyone listening, do you have any sort of tips or any practices for what they can do to have a better relationship with themselves or just be able to sort of see more of the positives in themselves?

Fay Nicholls:

I think having that ability to sort of self-reflect and identify when those negative thoughts are coming up. But I think what allows you to do that even better, to be even more productive and to hold somebody, to have somebody hold you sort of accountable and hold that space for you, that's, you know, that's absolutely where a coach can do that equally on a more personal level, you know, a friend can do that. But just, I think in answer to your question, having the space to really identify what those thoughts are and then going a level deeper to understand what are the triggers around those? Is it certain circumstances, is it certain life events which you've had, is it certain environments around certain people? And then having been able to externalise those thoughts, you can then start to look at, are there any patterns here, actually? So, yeah, I think it's about having the ability to have that space held for you. And if you can do that yourself that's amazing. But at the start of your journey, you might want somebody to sort of do that for you because once you've experienced that opportunity to be sat with someone and have them hold that space for you and just be their present complete attentiveness. You don't know the power of that until you've experienced it and it's really transformational.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely. I think that a bit about like attentiveness and having someone hold space for you, I think is so important. I often think, I think this happens particularly in workplaces, is that everyone is so busy, so many things to do that sort of even, I think with the best of intentions, it can be very

difficult to feel like anyone has time for anyone else to have like a slightly deeper conversation. I wondered, obviously, I think coaching is becoming more and more commonplace and popular amongst the L and D industry. Why do you think L and D is sort of focusing more on coaching and investing more in it?

Fay Nicholls:

I think because the benefits of having that coaching culture are just becoming so well known. So thinking about Richard Branson, he was one of the first to really sort of pioneer that kind of leadership style of coaching and openness and, you know complete trust in their colleagues. I think he, for me anyway, pioneered it. You know, when I think about businesses which have gone down that journey, he stands out to me and then I said, I can imagine that other businesses and CEO's and people professionals have sort of looked at that and thought, wow, look at those results. Look at how people feel about working there. Look at the impact it's had on people wanting to work for us, our retention, people want to come to us to actually work for us. And it goes back to that saying around, people don't leave bad jobs, they leave bad managers. And of course there's loads of reasons why people leave jobs, but I think having a great boss, having a great leader can, you know really help fix a lot of the problems. And what that good boss, what that good leader can look like is somebody who is, you know, completely open and has that sort of coaching approach. So, you know, doesn't go in with fix, doesn't go in with direction, you, know, flexes, but more so it has that sort of approach is somebody who's vulnerable. So, yeah, I imagine that lots of you know, senior leaders and senior people have looked at and heard of the sort of culture which has allowed for, you know, colleagues to feel included and, yeah, that is, I firmly believe that that's sort of fundamentally down to having the right leadership behaviours, right leadership skills in place and across a part of that is the coaching side, definitely.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

I think the beauty of coaching as well is I think it helps employees to kind of grow their roles as they like, sort of grow. I think often, sometimes people leave companies because they feel like they've changed and so they're ready for something new. And I think coaching can sometimes help you to find those opportunities. Maybe, but in the same place that you're already in, obviously there'll be sometimes when it just is right, like time for a change but I think, yeah, it seems like coaching can sort of, yeah, get you to do that introspection and reflection so that you can kind of work out where you want to go next in your career and I just wondered if you had any insight or any advice, really to anyone out there that's kind of thinking that maybe they want to change their career, they want to maybe go into something completely different. I wondered if you had any advice on that, having sort of been through that yourself.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, I think where my brain goes, to is that person thinking about, so again, whether this is self-reflection or supported through a coach is thinking about what is it about their current place or their current career, which isn't marrying up, isn't quite sitting as they want it to be, and then that will give that person some real focuses to then sort of deep dive into, so, yeah, I think it's really

identifying what is it that they enjoy currently, what is it that they don't necessarily enjoy and then thinking about what their super strengths are and they might not know that, so they may have to go on a journey of figuring that out. And that might be through gaining feedback, it might be doing some psychometric testing, but then once they've got a good understanding of what their super strengths are, they can then really reflect on how do they marry up to my current role. And actually is there a massive disconnect there? So luckily for me, obviously in my role as a HRBP coaching is a fundamental role of being a HRBP. And so for me, it just perfectly sort of married up. Somebody doing this exercise might have the exact opposite, but going through that process they'll learn so much about themselves. So once they've sort of got their self-awareness sort of in a good place, they can then move on to challenge stage. So then challenging themselves on, so this is where I'm at, this is where I want to be. How does this marry up? And then from that stage you can then go on to sort of action of what do I want to do about it? Do I actually want to do something about it right now? If not, why? And then that can lead into sort of another conversation. So once somebody sort of learnt about themselves and, you know, gathered all of that self-awareness, there might be something underlying which is actually preventing them from taking action. You know, that could be confidence, self-belief. It could be because they just not haven't got the motivation to do it right now. So then there's so many avenues to then go down around how is that person motivated? But yeah, I think with anything, I think I'd always advise to go to that first stage of complete building self-awareness around where you're currently at and why because then from that initial conversation, that will open so many doors in terms of your mind and then you can explore a bit further from there.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Brilliant. Yeah, that's perfect. Amazing. Thank you. Really useful advice because I think, yeah, taking that jump and making that decision can be so tough. You know, weighing up pros and cons and I guess kind of maybe accepting that you've changed and maybe letting go of something that you used to really want and now you've got it, you realise it's not right for you. I think that can be challenging, but it sounds like, again, self-awareness, reflection, key components of coaching really help with that journey.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, absolutely. I was just going to say as well, there might be things in there which that person hasn't even thought about. So there might be, there might be some expectations on them which they didn't know were there and that might be from a upbringing point of view, their sort of educational background. It might be that they've gone down a certain path because of expectations of parents or things like that but that's all of that self-awareness and self-reflection will hopefully open those doors to the realisation of something to then further explore.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely. So obviously what you're known for in coaching is helping clients find their voice and I wanted to sort of explore that a little bit and understand, like where does that sort of come from and why is the emphasis on. Yeah, helping people find their voices?

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, it's something I'm hugely passionate about, so I sort of briefly mentioned it at the beginning around introversion and the journey that I went on was becoming very comfortable with the fact that I am, but what that coaching journey has done is allowed me to get to that place. So the sort of reason why I especially want to purposefully support and coach people to enable them to find their voice is because of my sort of personal journey through that. So if I just explain a little bit around that sort of introversion side, growing up and into my career, I always struggled with having a voice. And what I will say is that Card Factory absolutely supported me in that completely but what that sort of looked like was having low self-confidence, little self-belief, which links to the sort of comments I made around negative views of myself. And then how that transpired for me, or how it does transpire for me is I can experience a stammer and that is when I lack confidence. So what that journey has done for me and why I'm so massively passionate about coaching and helping people find their voice is because learning about myself and learning about the super strengths of an introvert and learning that my voice does matter, it's led me to the place that I am now. Coaching was absolutely fundamental to that and you know, absolutely Card Factory as well in terms of giving me that exposure and allowing me to go through this journey, but that's especially for me, why I really wanted to pull out in terms of helping clients find their voice. And it might be that I don't coach people that necessarily have a stammer and want to sort of take that further. It might be that clients want to be coached around finding their voice in a different way. It might be that they have a leader who doesn't necessarily listen and therefore wants to be coached around how to sort of navigate that. It could be somebody who needs to face into a presentation in front of loads of people or a small group, and that's not something which they're necessarily comfortable with. So I feel like that sort of openness around to helping somebody find their voice can be a sort of a multitude of things but, I think for people to believe in me as a coach, I need to be vulnerable and share my journey as well as it being really cathartic for me. So, I never thought that I'd be doing a podcast and saying that I suffer with a stammer, but I absolutely do and I can't say enough how much coaching and that self-awareness journey has led to the place that I am now so, yeah, hopefully that sort of explains why I specifically pulled out, helping clients find their voice.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely. It's just so wonderful to hear the, yeah, the positive impact it's had on your life, not in both a professional and a personal sense. And I think that's a common thing we often try and see, you know, we have our work personas and then who we are at home, but I think actually if you start growing in one, it's bound to sort of bleed over into the other. And, yeah, I wondered if you sort of found that if you found through having that coaching at work, you felt better not just in your working life, but also in other areas of your life.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, absolutely. It's completely transformed how I am day-to-day, it sounds so extreme, but it actually is. And so if I think about now, so if I specifically use that point around introversion. So when I would go to a social gathering and there was a large group of people there, I would have previously entered into that social situation, doubting myself, feeling shy, I'm not saying enough, I'm not contributing enough, and having a crap experience if I'm completely honest and not being able to

fully enjoy the moment compared to now, when I go into social situations, whether that's in work or out of work, I go into it with the confidence of this is who I am, I'm an introvert, I've got an introversion tendency and that's fine, that's me. So it's going in with a completely different mindset. So as a coach, I've sort of really thought about what my coaching style is and what sort of coach I want to be and it completely feeds into my mission to help people find their voice is by holding the space for people. And I do that by listening and it sounds so simple, but it's just around, it's around the sort of thinking environment of Nancy Klein, which is something that I learned through not just coaching, but also through Card Factory. So it's a model which was introduced to us and it just really opened my eyes to the ability to create a space for somebody or a group of people to feel completely comfortable, or hopefully feel completely comfortable to share their point of view, to share what they're thinking, to be vulnerable. So that's the approach which I now take into my own coaching sessions because I absolutely feel the benefits of it, especially with somebody who needs encouragement to have their voice heard. Once you've sort of felt the power of that space being held for you'll be looking for it all the time and then when somebody isn't in line with that, it's really quite frustrating, to be honest, but then that's something else to work on.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely. I wondered if sort of thinking about, like, the coaching sessions that you have done with clients so far, what have their reactions been and what have they shared? Having been given space and just like, yeah, deep listening time.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah. Do you know what came into my mind was a couple of bits of feedback I got whilst I was partnering some regional managers at Card Factory and it was around, you know, oh, you'll love Fay's, like, silences. Like, Fay's really good at holding the silence and she loves those silences. And that's because I would purposefully do that, you know, I would just hold that space and just allow them to speak, but I definitely understood that it wasn't entirely comfortable to start with. So just having somebody sort of look at you and just allowing you to speak, we're not used to that. We're used to people jumping in, finishing our sentences, or people wanting to say what's on their mind, rather than someone listening, just being completely present and completely concentrating on that person. So I definitely had feedback around, you know, it, not feeling entirely comfortable. And I remember that first time I experienced it, I felt dead uncomfortable I was like, this is weird, but then you just, the more you did it, the more you just were able to think freely, think bigger, think for longer, and then your thinking just went to a different level where it absolutely wouldn't have gone if somebody was to interrupt.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Wow, I'm trying to hold myself back from interrupting you there. Guilty. Yeah, I think you're so right. Do you feel like workplaces in general attending in the sense that there is becoming more space for listening? Or do you think it's still something that collectively, people and companies need to try and work on?

Fay Nicholls:

It's hard to say just because my own experience has very much been at one company, certainly my most recent experience would say it's not something which is sort of present, it's something which would be hugely beneficial. And I think if I was to make an assumption, I think my assumption would be that we have a long way to go and actually, if companies did adopt the same approach in terms of that sort of thinking environment, just at least tried it, whether they incorporated it into their one-to-ones or group sessions or bigger training days, I think that they wouldn't go back because I don't see how you can. It's almost having the knowledge of what it is first because I didn't know what it was but when you do know when you're then in a situation where it's not present, that it really stands out. You see all the opportunities where you could see somebody was thinking and somebody interrupted and you just think, stop it, but I think it's around knowledge building, experiencing it, feeling uncomfortable, trying again. And then I think by that time I would be surprised if people then didn't continue with it.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Yeah, that must be, I think, like you said, it sounds like for you now you've experienced it, you can't not sort of see where it should be happening and where it isn't happening. How can we all better at listening and better at creating those silences and those spaces for people to do thinking?

Fay Nicholls:

I'm going to go back to it again, self-awareness. So it's going to be really giving yourself a task of in the next conversation I have, whether it's with a friend or with a colleague, I'm going to task myself with not jumping in and I'm going to every single time my brain goes to a place of wanting to answer or jump in, to interrupt, note it down and just see how many times that instinct is there. And it will be, I imagine, quite a lot to start with and then as you become more and more aware of those occasions and you give attention to actually truly listening and being present, that will become less and less, or it should, but yeah, I think the first thing is to sort of start with the benchmark of where am I at in terms of my listening. That's simply just having the awareness going into a conversation of this is my mission, this is what I want to experience and just see how many times I do interrupt and you might actually really surprise yourself. You might do it more than you think and actually maybe task yourself with that and think, how many times would I normally interrupt versus actually, how many times do I actually do it? Because we're not told not to interrupt. So, yeah, I think once you have that awareness of what interrupting can actually do and the impact it can have, then you'll hopefully do it less.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Definitely, yeah, I think you're so right in that we're not taught that interruption is a bad thing. I think maybe as, like a kid or as a child, we're sometimes told, like, don't interrupt adults when they're speaking or whatever. But I think in sort of like a professional sphere, it can be very common, can't it, for people to cut across each other in meetings or, you know, you're really fighting to get your idea in first. Do you have any advice for people who are aware that they're naturally

introverted but, you know, and maybe they're working in quite a traditional workplace where interruptions and things like that are just commonplace? Do you have any advice for how they can navigate that and, you know, get their voice heard in a way that feels comfortable and doesn't feel like they're just having to shout over other people.

Fay Nicholls:

Yeah, I think a big enabler of that is going to be a couple of things. It's going to be the culture of the company, firstly and then secondly if it is to do with sort of having that conversation with the leader, is going to be that leader's awareness. So I think I would suggest being able to have that conversation, to sort of voice what they need to enable their voice to be heard. And it might be that person doesn't know how to go about having that conversation, so something which we can do in coaching is sort of around perceptions, so we can do an exercise to understand the different perspectives and it's something I've done a couple of times now and it's actually really helpful. So you can put yourself in the seat firstly as you and what your point of view is, and then you physically move your seat, and then you can have the perspective of what that person you're speaking to has and then you can have a third seat, which is that overall view. And it's that safe space, again, for that person to really practice that conversation and I but not just practice the conversation in terms of what they want to say, but it also allows that person to understand the point of view of the person that they're seeking to because that might be useful, I think the biggest thing is the person being able to share that the current environment doesn't suit them as a person and therefore there needs to be some flexibility or there needs to be a change and I think that's something which is so powerful about the thinking environment is it appeals to both extroverts and introverts. Everyone gets their turn to speak. It's a very fair platform, but yeah, I think that's what I'd suggest, but there's loads of things around coaching which can help support that person in having the confidence or being able to have that conversation with the right person in the right way.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

Brilliant. Everyone that's listening, we're going to put the links to sort of all the resources that Fay mentioned along with the link to Fay's bio, if you want to book a coaching session with her and they're all going to be in the bio of this podcast and Fay, you've been an amazing guest, so thank you so much.

Fay Nicholls:

Thank you.

Lizzi Philokyprou:

I feel like I've learned tons from this episode.

Fay Nicholls:

Thank you so much, it's been great.