



Sue Mitchell

AUTHOR

Clarity through Chaos: Transform stressful challenges to purposeful positive possibilities.

VISIT SUE'S WEBSITE

About:

- **Gender:** Female
- **Nationality:** United Kingdom
- **Languages:** English
- **Travels from:** United Kingdom

Engagement Types:

- Executive Training
- Speaking

Topics:

- Burnout Prevention
- Employee Wellbeing

Websites:

- [Dr Sue Mitchell's speaker website](#)

Biography Highlights

- Trained in Compassionate Systems Leadership with Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline. PhD in evolutionary ecology; post-doctoral research at the University of Edinburgh and a Max Planck Institute, Germany.
- Author of “The Authority Guide to Engaging your People”, Executive and leadership coach, Equine shiatsu practitioner and former Evolutionary ecologist and Expedition leader.
- Founder and Director, Aeona Ltd; clients include EY, Lloyds Banking Group, Bayer, Gilead Sciences, Scottish Enterprise, and Police Scotland. Co-founder of the IDG Edinburgh Resilience Hub.

Biography

Why organisations work with Dr Sue Mitchell

- Her PEP framework gives leaders a portable and memorable model for navigating uncertainty – field-tested across sectors from global pharma to policing, and consistently recalled by participants months after delivery.
- Her background in evolutionary ecology – studying adaptive strategies across complex, dynamic systems – informs an analytical approach to leadership that goes beyond behavioural coaching, connecting individual mindset to systemic structures.

- She completed training with Peter Senge in Compassionate Systems Leadership, giving her work a rigorous intellectual foundation that distinguishes her from practitioners working from applied psychology or HR frameworks alone.
- Her concept of “inner sustainability” reframes resilience as a proactive leadership capacity rather than a reactive stress-management tool – a distinction that senior leaders in high-change environments find practically useful.
- Sue gives participants tools to transform their complex recurring challenges into effective positive outcomes, which they can start to apply during one talk or in more depth with a team day or multi-day program. As well as her proprietary PEP framework, Sue works with transformative Systems Awareness tools, the Inner Development Guide (IDGs), and quantifiable measures for Mental Toughness (MTQ Plus), Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i2), Positive Intelligence (PQ), and Leadership Styles (ILM72).

When engagement falls and burnout rises, the root cause is rarely individual. It is usually systemic, with a leadership culture that was built for stability and has not been redesigned for permanent disruption. Dr Sue Mitchell has spent two decades helping organisations close that gap.

About Dr Sue Mitchell

Dr Sue Mitchell is a former evolutionary ecologist and scuba-diving expedition leader who speaks on inner sustainability, systems awareness and adaptable leadership for high resilience and high performance with high wellbeing. She is author of *“The Authority Guide to Engaging your People”*, an executive and leadership coach, and a practitioner of equine shiatsu. She is a Fellow and former Regional President (Scotland, 2019–2020) of the Professional Speaking Association UK & Ireland.

Sue’s work with individuals, teams, organisations and horses has an aligned purpose to promote wellbeing, engagement and optimal performance, founded in trust, connection, emotional intelligence, intention and mindset.

Diverse audiences engage with Sue’s story-based keynote message: Recognising your human reactions to complex challenges gives you the power to take control of your mindset, make wiser choices and set yourself up for success both now and in future.

“As a scientist, I was trained to take the person out of everything, to focus on the science and the task to get properly objective results. However, over the years, I’ve come to realise that no matter what discipline or sector you work in, you can only be your best and inspire high performance (for yourself and others) when you put the person into everything. I help you do this through a mindset approach to inner sustainability, self-leadership and leading others that gives you tools to raise wellbeing, engagement AND performance.”

Systems Perspective for transformational experiences

Sue brings a unique blend of science, leadership and coaching to her virtual and in-the-room engagements with a focus on insightful keynotes

and interactive deep-dive sessions and masterclasses. Her unique perspective combines a spirit of adventure with the rigor of scientific thought and the value of emotional and sensory perception. Her research in evolutionary ecology, studying how organisms sustain effective strategies across dynamic, interconnected systems, gave her a framework for understanding organisations that is structurally different from standard behavioural models. She later trained with Peter Senge in Compassionate Systems Leadership, deepening that foundation.

That systems perspective runs through her proprietary PEP framework: a practical model for helping leaders maintain clarity, commitment and adaptability under pressure. It has been delivered across a client base that includes EY, Lloyds Banking Group, Gilead Sciences, Bayer, Scottish Enterprise, and Police Scotland. The durability of the model in practice – participants returning to its language and tools months after an event – is a reliable signal that it lands as something actionable rather than merely interesting.

Key speaking topics

- Adaptable leadership
- Navigating change and uncertainty
- Transform complex challenges into effective positive outcomes
- Employee engagement and sustainable performance
- Systems thinking in organisations
- Organisational resilience
- Inner sustainability and mindset
- Diversity, decision-making and team dynamics

Who is it Ideal for?

- Senior leadership teams navigating restructure, sustained organisational change, or rapid growth
- HR directors and heads of OD commissioning leadership development programmes or all-staff development events
- Organisations in professional services, financial services, life sciences, or public sector with CPD requirements
- Mid-to-senior management cohorts where engagement, performance, and wellbeing are competing tensions
- New and established teams wanting high performance with positive collaboration

When is it relevant?

When your people are facing one or more of these complex challenges/problems:

- Change and/or uncertainty (external or internal, including growth, mergers and team changes)
- Frequent firefighting that prevents focus on important activities for progress
- Need to “Do more with less” (people, resources, time)
- Need to manage levels of stress, burnout or poor wellbeing and the

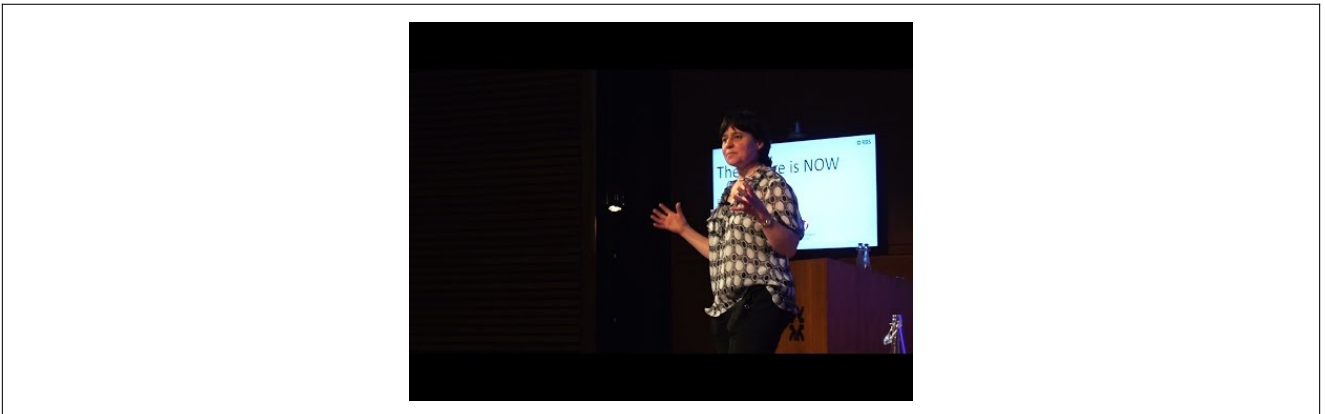
resulting low performance

- Need to improve collaboration and stop silos, disengagement, conflicts and/or staff turnover
- Need to 'get off the treadmill' or shift out of feeling stuck, overwhelmed, blocked or frustrated.

Audience outcomes

- A portable framework (PEP) for managing their own mindset and their team's behaviour through uncertainty and change
- Clearer understanding of how unconscious mental models shape decision-making under pressure – and how to intervene
- A common language for discussing change, resilience and engagement across a leadership group or a team.
- Practical tools for sustaining performance without trading off wellbeing
- Greater awareness of how organisational systems and structures – not just individual behaviour – drive or undermine engagement.

Videos



Sue's Topics

Navigating Change and Uncertainty: Adaptable leadership for complex challenges.

Recognising your human reactions to change and uncertainty gives you the power to take control of your mindset, choose the way you are showing up and set yourself up for success to navigate change and uncertainty. This highly interactive keynote introduces Sue's PEP framework to sail through change and

uncertainty and bring people together with the courage and optimism to persevere towards your core purpose and goals. Mindset tools to remain purposeful while being flexible and adaptable to situations for are illustrated through the lens of a small yacht sailing across the South Pacific Ocean to New Zealand.

The accompanying masterclass and think tank options explore your challenges with powerful systems awareness tools to strategically navigate complex, dynamic and rapidly changing situations.

Key attributes for individuals and organisations to thrive successfully and be resilient in the face of accelerating change and uncertainty are clarity of purpose, focus and adaptability, combined with high engagement. In addition, the ability to maintain optimism, courage and perseverance in the face of challenges helps to avoid overwhelm and stress and instead take effective action. When situations change rapidly, you need to be able to rapidly make decisions and switch plans to adapt to prevailing conditions. Critically, you need to bring everyone with you through the turbulence and stormy waters, when it seems you take one step forwards and several backwards as you 'tack into the headwinds of challenge, change and uncertainty' and they can't see that you are still making consistent progress towards your goals without being blown off course.

Available: In person, Virtually

Dolphins, sharks, & jellyfish: why don't we always make wise decisions in the face of risk and challenge?

The choices we make determine our present and future outcomes. In an ideal world, we would always recognise all the available options and make the wisest choice for a positive outcome both now and in future. Yet very often, we don't do that. Our choices, our actions, might 'put out this fire' as we deal with the immediate challenge, but sow the seeds for the next fire and we end up in a cycle of continual firefighting. What if our foresight was as clear as our hindsight?

In this keynote (and related masterclasses and think tank sessions) explore how our unconscious mental models influence our interpretation of situations and drive our decision making in ways that we often don't notice in the moment.

Join Sue on a 36foot yacht sailing 900 miles from Australia to New Caledonia in the South Pacific and the calamities that befall them on their journey. Take part in choosing what to do - will you make wiser decisions than the team on the boat? See how your mindset and mental models shape your decision making in powerful ways that you often don't notice in the moment. Gain insights to how you can make wiser decisions and see the options that not only get you through the immediate situation but also set you up for success further along.

Changing your mental model and becoming aware of the wider system is an extremely powerful way you can recognise more options in the face of a challenge, make wiser choices, become an influential and compassionate leader, achieve aspirations for yourself, your team and your organisation and shape your future.

Mental models are the strongest levers for change in any system that involves people. This is a powerful resource for organisations that are facing a wide range of challenges - such as 'do more with less', navigating change and uncertainty, implementing organisational growth or restructuring, raising team performance, enhancing collaboration, reducing silos, reducing workforce burnout and stress, enhancing resilience and so on.

Draw on systems awareness tools to understand how we can leverage mental models and systems structures to enhance our ability to recognise the choices, find the opportunities in complex challenges and take actions that deliver desired outcomes and set you up for success both now and in future.

Available: In person, Virtually

Harness the paradoxical power of diversity for high performance, high engagement, and high wellbeing.

How do you benefit from the positive effects of diversity on teams such as better decision making and higher performance and avoid the negative impacts of diversity? While much evidence exists demonstrating that organisations with more diverse leadership teams perform better on a wide range of KPIs, the lived experience of many boards and teams is the opposite - more conflict, friction, lack of decision making or lack of action on decisions passed and a regret for making the changes to who you include in the team. The paradoxical power of diversity lies in the diversity of thought, past experience, knowledge, values and more that contribute each individual person's mental models that shape differing opinions and perspectives on a situation. This paradoxical power is also the source of conflict when the team lacks the structures, knowledge and culture to truly listen to and value differing perspectives, leading to conflict, silos, 'them and us', distrust, stress and poor team performance.

This interactive event explores the challenges experienced by the majority as well as minority groups within a diverse team, including the discomfort of change and unintended threats to core motivators. Gain systems awareness and mindset tools to harness the power in diverse perspectives without creating conflict.

Outcomes

Improve working relationships. Strengthen team performance. Reduce misunderstanding, conflict and stress. Improve decision making and strategy. Embrace diversity.

Available: In person, Virtually

The Power of Positive

This fun, highly interactive masterclass gives your managers the essential ingredients to create the positive environment and 'can-do' culture for working successfully together and to create high performing teams themselves. It is ideal when your people could do with a burst of positive energy to revitalise a project or manage changes.

Working in pairs, small groups and as a whole team, we look at ways to build positive thinking and emotions into everyday life at work, making it easier to work more effectively together and raising wellbeing and engagement.

Evidence from neuroscience shows that feeling positive, and especially safe, unstressed and unthreatened, opens up access to the higher reasoning cognitive part of brain which leads to more creative thinking, inspiration, new ideas, solution finding, problem solving, focus and improved social interaction, all of which support higher performance at work. When you feel negative or stressed, your brain literally shuts down access to the cognitive areas of the brain, resulting in poor focus, feelings of overwhelm, interpersonal conflicts, inability to listen to different perspectives and poor decision making, all of which have a negative impact on performance and productivity.

Available: In person, Virtually

Testimonials

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Once again, thank you so much for your talk this morning. The team really liked it, you might have seen some of the feedback in the chat before you left. And after the break, we had a great discussion on which of your messages have resonated most with everybody and how we can apply it.

The sailing analogy really stuck with everybody and we kept using it when speaking about our own examples. PEP, as well as, wearing other people's glasses, using the right words to control the narrative were just a few that were mentioned multiple times. Also to pause and take the time to reflect before we take actions, resonated a lot.

People also mentioned your passion and charisma that you expressed whilst giving the speech. It was easy to follow and very rich in content. Thanks also for the results of the interactive polls - indeed very helpful.

In summary, the talk has been a success and you delivered completely on the briefing.

It has been a pleasure in partnering with you.

Dagmar Smith

Gilead

“

Sue has an engaging style of communication, with such natural ease of delivery that the audience feels included and interested in the topics being discussed. Her content always balances theory with practical applications of what is being proposed, providing many examples from her own experience which add authenticity to her presentations.

Athena McEwan

BNP Paribas

“

I have been fortunate enough to attend Sue's workshops numerous time now and I always find her mix of theory and personal application to be completely relatable and relevant to the challenges I face. Her inclusive approach makes sessions very interactive and easy to consider key points in light of your own individual circumstances. I was struggling to formulate my 12 month career plan without getting a knot of fear in my stomach but after just one session with Sue I was able to change my perception and I now have a very solid plan. I thoroughly recommend connecting with Sue for help with any mindset, personal or career barriers, the results you get are great.

Vicky Zuiderent

Director and Co-Founder

Vilo Sky

Speaker Bureaus And Talent Agencies

Sue Mitchell is available to book via these agencies



Recommended

EXCLUSIVE



Speaking Agency

Agent: Esther Nelson