



Conscious Life presents

Generating Coherence To Heal Trauma

Guest: Dr Christine Schaffner

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[00:00:09] Alex Howard

Welcome, everyone to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with my friend, Dr Christine Schaffner. We're talking about the impact of trauma on coherence in our system, particularly beyond our mind and our emotions, but also our physical and our energetic body.

To give a little bit of Christine's background, Dr Christine Schaffner is a board-certified naturopathic doctor who has helped thousands of people recover from chronic or complex illnesses. Through online summits, her [Spectrum of Health](#) podcast, a network of [Immanence Health](#) clinics and renowned online programs, Dr Schaffner goes beyond biological medicine, pulling from all systems of medicine and healing modalities, helping patients reclaim their wellness and reveal their brightest light.

Dr Schaffner completed her undergraduate studies in pre-medicine and psychology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and went on to earn her doctorate at Bastyr University. With her diverse skill set, Dr Schaffner seeks to improve access, outcomes and speed of recovery of patients struggling with chronic, complex and mystery illnesses. Patients travel from all around the world to reclaim their wellness using her eco methodology.

Firstly, Christine, welcome. Thank you for joining me again.

Dr Christine Schaffner

Thank you so much for having me, Alex.

Alex Howard

This is going to be a really interesting interview, and I think before we come into the real heart of where we're going, it would be helpful to just contextualize a few pieces. We're going to be talking about coherence, and we're going to be talking about how trauma impacts coherence and some of the ways that we can reclaim balance.

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Before we do that, let's just give some definitions of what we're talking about. When we're talking about coherence, firstly, what do you mean by that?

Dr Christine Schaffner

This is an area that I've become very passionate about, Alex, and my study, to give people some context of the Body Electric, the electromagnetic nature of our body, the nature that we communicate with light and sound. This principle emerges, of this topic of coherence. It got me really intrigued. There's this whole other piece of coherence with heart-brain coherence, which we can talk about.

I made something up last year that I'm still sitting with, but I'm calling it Heart Brain Fascial Coherence. Coherence really is this idea of alignment. When there is an uninterrupted flow of information, and we can think about, and we'll break it down, where is this uninterrupted flow of information? It's really when the body's aligned, information is organized, it's efficient, it's in sync. We're complicated. We're complex, dynamic beings, but there's some elegance and simplicity in how we're wired to really heal, how we're wired to go inward with ourselves, how we're wired to connect with each other.

There is even, a greater viewpoint of coherence that how we're wired to actually connect and receive information and also share information with Mother Earth.

There's a lot of ways we can go into this conversation, but when we've been traumatized, that can definitely create decoherence in the body. A big part, that I want you to walk away from today is understanding how we're wired to heal and also maybe some empowering tools you can bring into your life on a regular basis.

Alex Howard

Would you say that, in a way, coherence is our natural state to come home to? As you were talking, one of my great loves is music, and particularly live music. I was thinking about those sort of moments where sometimes there's a sort of build up and everything sort of very, fighting against each other. Then the moment where everything connects and comes together, there's a familiarity in that, a place that feels, "Oh, this feels like home". I'm interested in, is that the point of balance we're returning to?

Dr Christine Schaffner

Exactly, Alex. You've hit the nail right on the head. When I've learned about coherence, my love of, what we call, bioregulatory medicine, I think about coherence as regulation. I think coherence is really what the natural, healthy state is. When we look at even the music that we generate in the body and also the music that is naturally going to be harmonious, the music that's going to make us feel the best, it's usually these coherent harmonics that are generated that we feel a connection, we feel aligned with, we feel a synchronization with. So, absolutely.

[00:05:19] Alex Howard

Do you want to speak a bit more to... Well, firstly, how you would conceptualize trauma, because trauma means different things to different people, and then maybe how that can impact coherence?

Dr Christine Schaffner

One of the things I said about coherence, that it's the uninterrupted flow of information in the body. I just want to maybe set the stage and share that landscape, and then we can see all the ways that trauma can impact that. When I look at the body, I look at, obviously, we have all these systems in the body, but one of the passions I have is really studying what we call the fascia.

The fascia is this beautiful fabric that touches every cell, and is this highly interconnected web from our skin to our DNA. This is the work of Jean-Claude Guimberteau, a physician in France, also Dr James Oschman, who calls it the living matrix. Both of these brilliant thought-leaders, through observation and just their understanding, found that there's a continuum, a through line of connection within the human body. Really the fascia describes this, and I can talk about that more.

There's this interconnection between the inside of the cell and the outside of the cell, the outer environment through the fascial network. There are these integrins that jump over cell membranes and connect the cytoskeleton with the extracellular environment. So that touches the skin and is this through line of connection and communication.

I don't stop at the skin. I think about the teachings and the brilliant people who came before us, and it's really ancient philosophy as well. Ancient philosophy always kind of talked about an energy around the body. There's many schools of thought to name this in modern science. If you want to really study it and Google it, in PubMed, we call it the Biofield, but it's this electromagnetic field, and it's also biophotonic, meaning it's full of light.

Some people also think it's made of the fourth state of matter called plasma. It's this energy around the body. And this energy around the body is not only an emanation from us, but also there's a thought that we come into life with this field, and this field holds information. I feel very much a student of this, but it makes sense to me that this field also can contain information from the things that we come into life to sort out. Or if we have gone through trauma again, I'll go through this, there could be actually dissonance in this field that affects our body.

I just want to say one more thing about this network, and then we can go back to trauma. A big part of my area of interest right now, again, this might be a little too heady for people, but it's a lot of where science and medicine is going, that we all sit in this larger field. Some people call it the ether, that was Tesla's name for it.

There are brilliant people, like modern physicists, like Nassim Hamein, calling it the Quantum Vacuum or the Zero-Point Field. It's this idea that life is not empty space, but this highly interconnected fabric that we are all interconnected with. From one lens, it's also this field of unlimited potential. When we're in a state of distress, or when we're in a state of trauma, or our bodies are diseased, some of us might think that we can turn to this field for a healing effect and what that could look like.

When I talk about this uninterrupted flow, what happens? Why are we not in this natural state? Life is full of insults, full of things that I could talk about from the physical, but from the trauma, trauma can get lodged in the fascial water or the structured water withinside the cells, around the cells. It can also get stuck in the scars, which are in the fascial fabric. That can be another area. We can also have trauma trapped in our fascia, the heart, and the brain, which we'll talk about too.

[00:10:02]

The big area of study is the limbic brain, this seat in the brain that really controls our response to our environment, whether we're in a safe environment. We might not feel that because of what we've gone through. Trauma can also get trapped in the biofield that I just shared about.

If our natural state is coherence, and the more that we have this through-line of communication... When I say communication, the body definitely communicates with hormones, and cytokines, and peptides, and neurotransmitters, and all of these things. But there's a whole order of looking at the body through communicating through electromagnetic fields, coherent light emissions. Even our cells produce sounds. The fascia produces sounds.

There's this idea, when we have impedances or blocks in these areas that can be a traffic jam, where the communication isn't getting where it needs to be. Over time, nothing happens overnight, it's over time that can create areas of decoherence in the body that actually are more isolated. When we know when the body is isolated, that's when there can be like a group of cells that can be what we call senescent, which can throw out all these harmful things to the body, or even cancer in the most extreme circumstance.

Our job is to get the body, the whole system, the many layers of the body, in coherent communication for us to be in a state of health and really a state of our full potential.

Alex Howard

What I think you're describing is, we talk about everything from "The body keeps a score" to "We store trauma in the body", that there are sort of psycho-emotional mechanisms to that, but there are also energetic and physiological mechanisms to that as well. I guess one of the challenges that we have is that we normalize to the way that things are. We touched on that there's a natural state of coherence and the ease of flow of information within the system. And then when we become dysregulated, often that becomes our new normal. So I think what happens is people don't recognize that dysregulation is happening because that's what they've become used to.

Dr Christine Schaffner

I think that's such a great point. We know that there are... Several papers I've read over the years that describe just that, that we can actually... Our early childhood traumas or things that happened to us in childhood can make us very comfortable with decoherence, or chaos, or inefficiency. And then we resonate or we regulate with that, and we don't even have the moment to... It's very uncomfortable at first, to be calm and to feel good and to even reach these states. It's a very foreign experience.

[00:13:23] Alex Howard

So once someone starts to recognize the lack of coherence, or the dysregulation, or the interruption of that flow, what are some of the different categories of ways that we can work with that? And then we can come into some more details around those. But what are some of the principles or things that we can do to start to work with it?

Dr Christine Schaffner

There's many. I may have talked about this at the last conference that we did together, but real quick, there is this technique that I always love sharing because it's so powerful, that I do in my office. It's called a Scar Injection Technique. It's a form of, what we call, neurotherapies. One of those areas of decoherence that can have an area of stored toxicants, pathogens, and trauma is scar tissue. Scar tissue, when we look at pictures, it's not the original fabric that our body is made with. It's just a plug in the area of injury. The body is wise enough to figure out how to plug it up, but it's not as mobile. It's more dense, it adheres, and it doesn't get as much blood flow or lymphatic drainage and often we get a scar from an area like a traumatic event. Whether it's an injury or a surgery.

So one of the techniques that I was trained to do, which is one of the most rewarding techniques to do in my office, I feel, is that if someone has a scar... An obvious example I often share is a C-section scar, which, God willing, we have that surgery when it's needed, but it's often encountered, especially if it's not planned, with a lot of trauma. When we think about where that C-section scar is, it's right in the middle of the belly. It almost interferes with the lower-body and the upper-body.

If you look at the meridian system, which is an acupuncture system, that biophysicists like the late Mae-Wan Ho, even likened the fascial network to the acupuncture meridian network, that it basically blocks that area energetically. I'll use something called Procaine, it's a local anesthetic. It's been used since the 1920s, when this was invented. I get it compounded. It's preservative free. We thread the scar. We go in the superficial layer of the scar at first to basically break down the scar tissue, restore lymphatic drainage and circulation. People like the cosmetic effect. Often the scar changes and softens over time.

It's a very interesting experience because some people will be like, "Okay, what is this about? I'm open to this. Okay, whatever you say." And then they don't have any expectations, and then all of a sudden, they have an emotional release. That emotional release is not coming from their brain, it's coming from their body. There's actually a release of information, of decoherent information that's getting stored in that tissue. That release is almost just as important as breaking down the scar tissue to restore energetic flow and information exchange, because it's releasing that information that you've been carrying for 20-30 years and had no idea.

Most people describe feeling lighter, feeling more relaxed. They often have a more relaxed nervous system after they go through something like that. So that's on the fascial layer. I also think about giving people information through sound and light, through coherent sound and light, because that's reminding the body... When the body's in a state of decoherence, we'll use that word, because of the traumatic events they've gone through, that can be in the body.

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We're talking about the body. There's the scars and the neurotherapy. There's also light and sound. We'll think about it in two ways.

There's a biophysicist from UCLA, 20 years ago. He found that the cells basically produce this music, and it's very intuitive. If people have cells that are happy and healthy and doing what they need to do, they give out a harmonic, coherent sound. If we see a cancer cell, it can have a screeching, very disharmonic sound. That has been interpreted, if you've seen somatics or a CymaScope, they've taken those frequencies and applied it to a CymaScope so that you can see the actual visual interpretation.

You can see that these cells, the happy cell looks like this beautiful pattern. And then this unhappy cell, to keep it really simple, is this really discordant, disharmonic decoherent pattern. It's very apparent. One of the things, when we think about when people are in those states, one thing that we can do is we can add coherent sound to the body, because that can relax the nervous system and get the body into a healing effect and sometimes maybe mitigate that sound that's being produced in the body, or with your other therapies that you're doing to treat the underlying cause, really restore coherence in the sound of the cells.

I think about sound, and then I think about light. Light is really important. When trauma gets stuck in the cell, that can affect the light emissions. This is the work of Fritz-Albert Popp, who studied that when a cell is in a healthy state, it's this Goldilocks amount of light that's being produced by the cell. When it's too much or too little, those are usually related to disease or traumatic states.

One of the things that we do in the office is intravenous coherent light, laser light. A laser, by definition, is coherent light. We'll do different wavelengths or different colors of light to add that to the body. If you don't have a laser, color can also be a very beautiful way to engage at different wavelengths of visible light and can have a healing effect on the body. Those are some of my techniques and tools that I use within the body.

I'll take a moment to pause, but I'm happy to talk about generating your own coherence through the heart-brain connection as well.

Alex Howard

Let's come to that in a second. I'm also curious as to what was in my mind, as you were talking, was that, by bringing sound and bringing light, it sounds like part of what you're doing is you're providing that resonance to help bring back the coherence to what's happening on a cellular level. Is that a good way of describing it?

Dr Christine Schaffner

That's a beautiful way to describe it. Resonance is when you can often see those tuning forks. If they're in the same vicinity of frequency, one can start the other one vibrating. When you keep putting this information that the body should be in resonance with, there can be an information exchange, essentially, that brings healing energy to the body. So, exactly.

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We use a lot of bioresonance technologies in my office because that also allows us to get that feedback of where there's stuck energy in the body and what frequencies, what light information, what sound information. On top of, of course, all my naturopathic functional bioregulatory medicine modalities.

Alex Howard

That's great. Let's come back to the point you just started to introduce around the brain and the heart and the coherence within that dynamic.

Dr Christine Schaffner

This might be old news to some people, but every time I hear this, my mind gets blown. The heart actually gives more information to the brain than the brain does to the heart. That is in neurological connections, electromagnetic field connections. There is one really strong afferent pathway in the heart right into the limbic brain, meaning that the heart is synced into the limbic brain. The more that I study this, the more that I come to the conclusion that the heart is really the great conductor of our body, our brain, our biofield and our emotions. All of it.

Life is really amazing, and that we have a tool that we can tune into anytime and we can modulate our emotional state and that can actually modulate this connection that I'll explain between the heart and the brain. This is a lot of the work of Dr Roland McCraty, a dear friend, who is the director of research at HeartMath. It sounds really simple, but he had to do a lot of complex research to get this information to come to light. They study people in this state of gratitude, love, appreciation, which, depending on the day, it can be harder than others to get into and access those states. But we all know what they feel like.

If we can make it a practice, once or twice a day, to actually just for 5-15 minutes, to just sit in a chair, sit in a place where you feel comfortable and just bring into your heart space somebody you love, somebody you're grateful for, some things, some event, something that's easy. You actually generate a very strong electromagnetic field from your heart that isn't in a coherent rhythm. Meaning that heart rate pattern is a sine wave. That is what you would... An organized, coherent. Every wave is the same pattern.

What that does is it actually entrains our brainwaves. Our heart has a stronger electrical and magnetic field than our brain. What's happening in our heart, and the emotions that we feel in our heart space, actually have a greater impact on our brain. What I think about is, when you're getting into these states of love, appreciation, and gratitude, you're not only generating this big coherent field that's entraining the brain, entraining the nervous system, entraining, in my opinion, the fascia.

That also is, in that moment of coherence, you're actually removing those patterns of decoherence. In that moment, you're feeling what it's like to feel a coherent state. That has a huge ripple effect in the body.

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I mentioned in my exploration of heart-brain fascial coherence, I mentioned that the fascia touches the cells. It touches inside the nucleus where the DNA is. There's a hypothesis that when you're in a state of heart-brain coherence and you're giving this coherent information that's getting communicated through the fascial network, touching the nucleus of the cell, that potentially can impact you epigenetically, meaning that can actually have a genetic effect on your body, which then moves you to greater health.

Gratitude is not just like, "Oh, that sounds like a good idea". We're actually wired to heal. In states of gratitude, love, and appreciation. We feel better, I mean, if you're a human, you know that you feel better when you're in those states.

On the contrary, Dr McCraty measured when we're in states of frustration, anxiety, worry, fear. We all have to feel those, of course. However, we're in a very erratic pattern. Think about if your body is in an erratic pattern all day long, that's just generating more confusion, more decoherence, more chaos in the body. Think, if you're spending five minutes of gratitude in the other 23 hours and 55 minutes a day of erratic pattern, how could your body potentially heal? It's a lot of regulating our emotional state, even in the backdrop of being traumatized.

Alex Howard

It's interesting, there's something when we're in a state of gratitude, or a state of joy, or a state of connection with other people. I always think it feels good to us, so it makes sense. It feels good to ourselves, and feels good to our body, and feels good to our system.

I think it's also interesting as well, this point of, when we lose that resonance we're also losing that natural capacity to come back to that kind of home in ourselves. It sounds like a big part of what you're talking about here is how we change the homeostasis, the place that we come to, that it's not just then five minutes a day of actively working on that stuff and being dysregulated the rest of the time. We're actually changing the overall functioning of our system.

Dr Christine Schaffner

Yes, I think that's such a beautiful point. This isn't just in our bodies alone. It's between people. Our heart generates a magnetic field, an electrical field of course, too. But magnetic fields can basically travel really through anything, but through water, especially. And we're made of mostly water. So our heart, we have all of this information exchange between people. Roland actually calls it cardioelectromagnetic communication between two people. You can tell, right? You can tell when you're around people who lift you up or people who feel like they have a more coherent rhythm than others.

I think it's really important when you're in a therapeutic space. When you're seeking healing for your trauma, between a practitioner, I think a big part of the practitioner's work, the people who are very skilled, is they know how to create a coherent rhythm in their heart, even in states of chaos. They can hold a container for another individual, and even across Zoom, that can happen, or in front of somebody. It's just knowing that.

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Please, always seek a practitioner that you feel better being around, rather than more closed, or that you don't have the safe space to do what you need to do. I think that's a lot of what's happening, Alex, with the practitioner, physician, patient, client, therapeutic relationship is how good of a container you can hold for your patient in a state of coherence. It's very unconscious. I don't think people do it... I mean, you can be conscious about them, trust me. But it's an unconscious part about being a practitioner, I believe.

Alex Howard

I think we all know it when we feel that sense of safety, or connection, or support when we're around certain people.

Dr Christine Schaffner

Yes.

Alex Howard

We can't necessarily describe what it is that we feel or why we feel it, but we know the feeling when it's there.

Dr Christine Schaffner

Absolutely.

Alex Howard

For someone that's watching this, that is recognizing that loss of coherence. We've talked about the use of light, of using sound, of using emotional states that we may be in, of using certain interventions, what are some of the practical pieces someone can start with? Someone on the back of this interview, what would be some places to start that journey of bringing more coherence?

Dr Christine Schaffner

I think there's all these different bells and whistles, but ultimately, all of us have our own brain, our own heart, our own thoughts that we can be mindful of. We're, I think, the strongest generators of coherence when we're aware of this.

I love the work of HeartMath, I have no affiliation, I just love the work and they have an app called the Global Coherence Initiative App. It's free, it could be, for the people who like to gamify this stuff, it could even help in that way to get you going. They have a little technique called The Inner Balance that you clip on your ear to measure your heart rate variability. However, they hacked it, so you can use your finger on your camera of your phone, and it measures the infrared basically coming out of your finger that looks at your heart rate variability, which is really cool. So you could actually measure your state of coherence.

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When you're first generating a practice, or cultivating a practice and wanting to know, "Am I doing this right? Am I even getting a biological effect? Does this even make sense? Does this work?". That app could be very helpful. A big part of their app is also your coherence generates global coherence, meaning you being in coherence is part of a collective field of coherence, which actually can shift these fields of the earth. That's a whole other conversation. That's a big part of their work, too, that you can participate in that if you want to see that. I would say that app is kind of cool. Again, it's free. As long as you have a phone, you can do that. It can get you comfortable that this actually works.

I call it heart hygiene. I meditate every day. Maybe some people are not ready to meditate, but this is a form of meditation, or the benefit of meditation. If you can start 5-15 minutes of getting into these states of gratitude, and love, appreciation that I think is accessible to everyone.

When we think about light and sound, not as accessible to everybody, maybe lasers or CymaScopes or all these things. But we have the sun. And the sun gives us all spectrums of coherent light. From UV to infrared, we are bathed in different wavelengths of light in the sun. Obviously, we don't want you to get burned, but to have some natural sunlight exposure every day is very helpful for the human body on many, many levels.

I also think for light, there are a lot of different technologies you can interact with that are getting more and more affordable that you can check out. That's going to be like the red and infrared light tools. I work with a company called Weber and they have a laser watch that you can put on your wrist, and it actually has different laser colors that your blood absorbs. Your blood basically absorbs these biophotons of coherent light.

And then sound, you can generate sound through your own... That's the whole idea of toning, mantras... We all have access to our own voice. I think also with trauma, just allowing your body to release sound that needs to be released. Maybe it isn't coherent, but releasing it will allow you to experience more coherence, because that's getting in the way. There's a lot of, if you have access to the Internet, you can even go on YouTube and listen to sound baths or different coherent frequencies, bathe in those. I really love those.

We use, in the office, a tool called the AO scan, we also use NES. Both of them have imprinted sound that you can listen to. The AO scan is cool because it uses your voice, you speak to it, and it finds where there's high and low tones in your voice and then gives you songs to listen to, to rebalance what's out of balance. They've studied this for a long time. When you have high or low tones or missing tones in your voice, it actually translates to different unconscious emotional states, like anger, so forth.

That's really eye opening for people when they do that in the office. There's so many ways to experience that. It sounds a little out there, but I'll just say, the network that is really communicating coherence is the fascia in the body movement, stretching, yoga is really important. Also, drinking structured water, or when you get in the sun, your body also creates structured water even more. That could be another way to just allow these networks of communication to flow even more.

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I could go on and on, but those are the big ones. If you have a scar, if you don't have access to a neurotherapist, acupuncture has a technique called Surrounding the Dragon that threads scars. You can also put light, especially infrared light, on your scars. Even manual myofascial work can actually break down scar tissue, so there's many other ways to do that as well.

Alex Howard

That's fascinating, Christine. If people want to find out more about you and your work, where's the best place to go and what's some of what they can find?

Dr Christine Schaffner

Thank you. I have a website, www.DrChristineSchaffner.com. I have a podcast called [The Spectrum of Health](#), you've been on it. You can find out more about what I'm up to there. I also have a clinic called [Immanence Health](#), which means 'The Divine Within'. We do all of this work, I have a team that's wonderful. We do telemedicine as well as in-person work. That is where you can find me.

Alex Howard

Amazing. Christine, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it.

Dr Christine Schaffner

Thank you so much for having me.