



THE RESPECT PODCAST with host Mike Domitrz

And Guest Sean Stephenson

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Mike: Welcome to the Respect podcast. I am your host Mike Domitrz from mikespeaks.com where we help organizations of all sizes, educational institutions and the US military, create a culture of respect. And respect is exactly what we discuss on this show. So let's get started.

Mike: Alright I am super excited today because I get to have a friend of mine, a brother of mine, not by blood but certainly by all other methods. We've known each other for so long, we built the early years of our speaking businesses together. Up on the phone until 4 a.m. trying to make a difference in this world together, decades ago now. And so happy to have you on. So this is Dr. Sean Stevenson, a dear friend, brilliant. You may know him because you may have seen him on TV. That's correct. For instance, the biography channel produced an hour long feature on his life called the Three Foot Giant.

Mike: But he's also worked with companies like Nike, Whole Foods, Zappos, Walmart, Sharp Healthcare. He's shared the stage with presidents, billionaires, business moguls, celebrities, and the Dalai Lama. It's just amazing, Sean's story. Now Sean, obviously I know your story inside and out but I'm going to let you tell the brief version of it, so it comes from your authentic voice. Give me a little background on how you got to where you are today, helping organizations and individuals really develop to where they want to be.

Sean: Yeah, yeah. So, I'd say the most fascinating part that people get really zoned in on when they're learning about Sean Stevenson and what I have to offer is they're intrigued by the container I'm in. That's where it starts. Being born with a rare bone disorder called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, also known as brittle bones disorder. Doctors told my parents I'd be dead within the first 24 hours of my life and my joke on stage is 39 years later, all those doctors are dead and I'm still here. The only doctor remaining. And that I have a very clear message to rid this world of insecurity. I've had to face a lot of my own insecurities. Still do to this day and my mentors over the years have really groomed me. And I'm so grateful that they have pushed on me to look at what can I do with the time that I have to make the biggest splash on this planet while I'm still here? And hopefully create a body of work that will outlive beyond.

Sean: And I met you, as you said, through that process of evolving. And Mike, I consider you my frientor. You're as much a friend as a mentor. And my goal here today is to share with the listener, the viewer to ... how I have built up an internal world that is a very peaceful space and one that I think then creates a space externally that can help that permeate into society. And by no means am I perfect. I've made a bunch of mistakes. I'm continuing to make them, but as I've learned, if you're willing to observe your own ego and really work on yourself, forgive what you've done and move forward, you can really create some cool things with the time you've got here.



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- Mike: And you have. You already have, in addition to what you will do going forward. How do you think respect played a role both in your early years, maybe where it was a struggle to figure out what I'm going to do here, what my path is going to be, and then on each juncture along the way?
- Sean: If I could define respect for me, so that we're on similar footing on what I think is respect, I think respect is acknowledging value. And the moment somebody doesn't feel valued, their body doesn't feel valued, their intellect doesn't feel valued, their emotions, their spirit. When we feel devalued, we don't feel respected. And it works the same from within. So if you aren't acknowledging your own value, you aren't seeing what are you doing right and what are you proud of and what are you grateful for. When you're not willing to go inside and acknowledge your value and what you created, you won't be able to respect yourself. And therefore ... it's very hard to give something to somebody else that you won't give to yourself.
- Sean: You can do it. There's a lot of people that are nice to others that aren't nice to themselves, but it's a lot easier to have peace externally if you have peace internally. And I also kind of merge something else in with this respect conversation, which is trust. And I believe that those are two pillars of gaining somebody's rapport, gaining rapport with them. And if respect in my definition is acknowledging value, then trust is acknowledging agenda. That if you are clear on what your agenda is and you are actually truthful about your agenda and you're not saying one thing and doing another, if you are clear on your agendas, people can begin to trust you.
- Sean: And then if you make sure that their value is acknowledged, the second you know someone's agenda and it's accurate, and you know they respect you, you will allow them in to coach you, to lead you, to guide you. And the moment pain arises, the moment you pull back go "Ow, why'd you do that" is the moment that somebody feels that your agenda wasn't authentic or that you actually didn't really believe that they were valuable and you were just going through the motions to try to win them over.
- Sean: And what I've found is as long as we have that bond of this person sees my value and I know what their true agenda is, we can create such magic together. And you don't even need to ... this is what blows my mind. You don't even need to like somebody to trust them because you could see them and they could be clear about something that you're like "Nah, I don't want anything to do with them." But at least when you know what their agenda is, you know what you're dealing with. I always have a problem is when people express an agenda that's false. They tell a girl "Oh, I love you" when they really don't love them. "I care about your children's well-being" when they really just care about your money.
- Sean: And when we get those mixed agendas and then on top of it they don't really, truly see our value, they just came up with some pat response, it's really hard to build a bond.



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- Mike: Yeah, let's dive into this because I can remember back in my early days and even a decade ago, when I would send out an email and you'd learn from people who say "Well, take the email strategy this way so they don't really know what you're seeking is this over here." And you think okay they know what they're doing, I'll take that formula and you suddenly notice "Wait, nobody's wanting to respond to my emails a year later." Because you created a ... you thought you were doing the right thing because you were mission based, you were topic based, you believed in what you were doing, but it wasn't a clear agenda.
- Mike: You're better off to say if you're a salesperson "Yeah, this is what I'm selling. Yeah, because I believe in it, that's why."
- Sean: So, we sell a lot through our company and we hold live events. You're actually going to be speaking at one soon. By the way, I've been looking forward to that for four years. So, when we start that event, we come right out and say "Look, we're going to pack this weekend together with great people, great material, and then we're going to, at some point we're going to make an offer to you that may or may not be for you and it's only for those that want to continue the party with me. That want to continue to learn and be guided and have the kind of fun that we're going to have. If that's not of interest to you, just listen and see what you can learn about sales in general and do what you want. You are free to follow your intuition."
- Sean: And by setting that standard, being very clear, "I'm going to ask for fun tickets." Money, right? "I'm going to ask you for your fun tickets. In exchange I'm going to give you more fun and learning and is it okay if I do it in a way that you get a ton of value for what you already paid for and I'm just sharing with you an opportunity if you want to continue the party. Do I have your permission to make that offer to you?" Everybody said yes.
- Mike: Right. Exactly. Because you're being upfront. But it's amazing how when we're raised in this society we're taught "Don't do that. Don't show your cards."
- Sean: Because they think it's not going to work.
- Mike: Right. It's fear.
- Sean: Because they think it's not going to work. It's fear. It's also because let's be clear Mike, and I know you know this, but the listener needs to know this, and that is human beings can make a lot of impact financially and movement by screwing people over. And so if you are interpreting that "Oh, I need to screw people over to make movement in income." That's an incorrect statement. Because that's one way. It's not the way I like to roll. It's not the way you like to roll. It's not the way I think your listener would want to roll. But when you're naïve and you're just getting your start and you see somebody and you see that they're getting financial success or they're getting more exposure, you think "Oh, I guess I need to be a jerk."



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Sean: And it's not true that's ... there are many ways to get inside a house. You can either put dynamite on the side of the wall or you can use a key. They'll both get you in. They'll both gain you entrance. One's going to have a far less devastating impact.

Mike: Yeah, that's a great analogy. I love that. And so, we were talking there about the fact of how we go about being upfront and being honest. What do you think is the number one fear people have in that moment? Because agenda is everything. We have agendas with our family. We have agendas with our work.

Sean: The word scares people.

Mike: Yes. Right, they didn't want to say "I have an agenda." They don't want ... "I don't have an agenda." That's the number one defense you'll hear. "I don't have an agenda." We all have agendas.

Sean: What I think they mean is "I don't have a negative agenda." And so that-

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Sean: ... mean is, I don't have a negative agenda. So that's why you need to be very clear about the difference between empowering and limiting, draining and recharging agendas. I think it's very healing, it's very healing to be clear on your agenda. I could take it into the realm of romance, for a second.

Sean: On my first date with my wife, I said, "I would like to sleep with you someday." She was like, "What?" Like, what kind of guy says ... I didn't say it in a slick, gross, pushy way. I just said, someday I'd like to sleep with you. She said she trusted me in that minute. That was the moment she was like, "Oh, my God. This guy just made it very clear what his agenda was."

Sean: It didn't mean that I wouldn't be her friend if we weren't gonna do ... There was no manipulation. She's like, "But that was the moment I knew that I could trust you because you told me an actual, authentic agenda. I'd never heard a man confidentially say that." I say that same thing when I get into a sales call.

Sean: I say to somebody, "Listen, the opportunity I'm going to offer you is going to be 10 times what you're going to pay me, so I do not feel bad whatsoever in the exchange of receiving the energy that you worked hard to gather because I'm gonna 10X what you're paying for. So I want you to know, I'm going to get really excited by taking your money, because I'm exchanging something way greater for you."

Sean: They're like, "Heck yeah. Let's do this." Now, not everybody says, yes I'll pay. But everybody says, let's have a dialogue.

Mike: Right.



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- Sean: I just want people to be excited to have the dialogue. Whether it's about romance, whether it's about income, whether it's about progress, movement, making an impact. Let's not be afraid to ask for what we want. If they say no, they say no. It's okay.
- Mike: How do think that plays ... What would be an example you could think of where that plays in family dynamics and putting the agenda out there?
- Sean: Making it very clear, the standards that you set for your children, as a parenting role. Like, I have a very clear vision of you graduating with a great GPA. I have a vision of you working really hard on your mind, your body, and your spirit. I'm not asking anything from you that I am not doing myself.
- Sean: You're going to see dad will be in the gym. You're going to see that dad works hard at Office. You see that dad works on his relationships with your mother. So, I'm not asking anything from you that I'm not willing to go first on, son / daughter / whomever. So being very clear on a vision that you hold. I think that is okay. Having a family, like, mission statement is setting an agenda. I think it's really good to also pull the agenda out of the kid.
- Sean: Like, so what do you want out of this life? What are some of your goals, sweetie? Or even in a marriage. Like, how can I best support you? So Mindy and I, you were at our wedding. You know that I married my wife because I couldn't afford her coaching rates and I wanted her to coach me. Because she is the wisest, most beautiful person I know.
- Sean: Mindy's goals are printed out next to my goals because I want to be able to see what's important to her every day. I want her to see what's important to me every day. I came to her multiple times and said, "Let me know what matters to you in this life. I need to know what matters." So I push on people to see, what do they want. So I think when it comes to a family dynamic, making no apologies for having awesome standards.
- Sean: But here's the difference, nobody is going to be perfect. There are going to be so many days you're not going to want to get back up.
- Mike: Yes. Kids can feel, if they don't understand this correctly, they can feel that that standard is an expectation of perfecting that.
- Sean: So that is an imperfection of the communication from the parent, then. Not an imperfection, but just a lack of clarity. So that's why it has to be ... It's the same thing as like ... I heard this great mom talking about raising child and he said, "When a child's learning to walk, funny coming from somebody who doesn't walk. But when a child is learning to walk, you have to encourage them a thousand or a million times if necessary."
- Sean: "So when they fall and they hit their head, they bump their butt. When they fall back, you pick them back up again. You're just encouraging them. You got it, you got it, good



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job, good job. You keep going." So you are both holding a standard of, you're going to walk, we're going to make this work. But also, everything that you do in the process of learning to walk, I'm going to support you, and love you, and be proud of you because you're in this process.

Sean: So when the kid is like, "But you have this vision for me." Say, "Yeah, but not a day goes by when I'm not gonna celebrate you for just being who you are." I love the quote by Byron Katie, "There is nothing that you can say or do that can stop me from loving you."

Mike: Absolutely truthful. Any parent-

Sean: It's so-

Mike: Any loving parent should get that message a hundred percent. I love that you say to them that, when you tried to walk, I lifted you back up. I supported you, I helped you do that. I'm going to do that with whatever battles, or mistakes, or failures that you have. I'm going to celebrate your success, but I'm also going to be there. You're going to fall. I fall, in some way or form, every week, every day. In some way or form, there's something that doesn't go right.

Sean: Yeah and there's something that I also like to have as a caveat when I'm working with people is to say, and at some point when I'm coaching, or I'm there therapist, or their friend. "At some point in the process, sweetie, you're going to blame me for not being where you should be. I want you to know I'm going to love you even when you blame me. I'm just going to patiently wait until you realize that I'm not the reason why you don't have what you want."

Mike: That's powerful.

Sean: Yeah. I'm not the reason why you don't have what you want, even how you feel. I love my wife. I know you love Karen, right. Yet, we're not responsible for their feelings.

Mike: Yeah. That one is huge, because a lot of people feel, "Wait a second. I'm married, it is part of my responsibility to be responsible for their joy and happiness." But more and more research has shown, that actually creates an unhealthy relationship. You should be able to be happy even on their worst day.

Sean: Yep.

Mike: They should be able to be happy on your worst day. You should obviously be able to be ... you should be able to be unhappy on their best day.

Sean: Yeah.

Mike: Right?



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- Sean: Yeah. In our marriage, Mindy and I call it, you need to be a self-cleaning oven.
- Mike: Yeah, right. I love it. But it's hard to do, it's hard to do. Because when you're on a cloud nine-
- Sean: It's hard not to do.
- Mike: Yeah.
- Sean: It's hard.
- Mike: Yeah. I mean, you and I just had a conversation before we started this. We're both on cloud right now because of things going on in our work and in our organizations. The day that cloud nine pops, right, this is going amazing. The last thing you want that moment is your partner to go, "Well, it's not going amazing for me, blah, blah, blah." We're like, not today. You shouldn't be saying that today. This is my day to be cloud nine.
- Sean: That's the way I used to be.
- Mike: Yeah, I've made the mistake, absolutely made the mistake and it's not fair. They are experiencing their life in their moment.
- Sean: The moment you ... Talking about respect, the moment you are disrespectful, which is acknowledging, the moment you are not acknowledging a human being ... It's not even valuing now, if you think about it. It's acknowledgement in general. It's the moment you don't acknowledge their feelings, acknowledge their ideas, acknowledge their statements, acknowledge their mannerisms. The moment you stop acknowledging them, you deal with problems.
- Mike: Yes.
- Sean: You deal with problems, because look, I could be on cloud nine and if Mindy's not, the most loving thing I could do is to listen to where she is, because this is what partners do. Sometimes, and we don't mean to do it, but sometimes it happens where we try to see if we can rock that person out of their good day because they're pissing us off. The most loving things I can say to her, and she said to me before, is, "Babe, I love you and I'm not gonna come down in my frequency because that's not gonna pull you up."
- Mike: Yeah, that's brilliant. Love it. It's so hard to do, right. You know, what's interesting is, when we're on cloud nine, it should be the easiest time to be compassionate because we have all this energy. But yet, we get caught up in let me be in my place. Right, let me be in my place. Don't you dare dent that.



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Sean: Yeah. That right there, though, is from the psychology of the outside world can control my feelings.

Mike: Right.

Sean: Because if you don't ... Like, I don't buy that anymore. I used to, but I don't buy it whatsoever. So the moment I think that somebody can take me out of my bubble, I'm delusional.

Mike: So can you go a little deeper there so everybody can understand, because this is key of respecting yourself.

Sean: Yeah, yeah. The moment I think that you can shift my frequency, is the moment that I become a slave to you. The moment I go on a roller coaster that is where you can energetically manipulate me. It's the moment that I'm delusional. You are not responsible for how I feel. You can neither make me have a good day or make have a bad day.

Sean: You can influence me, but you can't change me. I have to do the lifting. Nobody can do Sean's pushups, energetically, or metaphorically, or physically. I have to do them. So if I'm on cloud nine and I come along and Mindy is angry, or overwhelmed, or upset and I'm like, "Damn it, why can't she be on the same plane as me." I am being delusional because she doesn't need to do anything to support my bubble. That's my responsibility.

Sean: Now, I might say to her, "Babe, if you would like me around this evening, I'm gonna need you to say some nicer things about me. If you do not want to say nicer things about me, I'm okay with going out and doing some things in the office or whatever. Just text me when you feel-"

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Sean: -some things in the office, or whatever, and I'll ... Just text me when you feel that the storm has rolled out. And-

Mike: Right, because this is really important for abusive situations. You don't want the listening right now thinking, "Oh, I have to tolerate. They're in their space; I'm in my space. So I have to tolerate that because I'm responsible for my happiness. They're responsible ..." So, how do you help people understand there's a difference here in what we're describing?

Sean: Light is both a wave and a particle, okay? Light, when you look at light, it's got waves and it's also got little particles? So, is light one or the other? No. It's both, right? So, you need to be able to respect your own boundaries and also maintain a level of a standard for how you want to be treated. So, no one is responsible for how you feel, but you are responsible for respecting your boundaries, and saying to somebody, "If you're gonna



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Speak to me that way, or if you're gonna ever put your hands on me, or if ever you're going to try to do that demeaning behavior, I'm out. I maybe be either out for the night, out for the month, or out for my life." But you gotta determine.

Sean: I look at it whether it's in a relationship that can become abusive, because I've been in abusive relationships where I was mentally, emotionally abused. I can tell you, it came because I only had half the equation. I thought I was only a wave, or only a particle. I thought, "Well, I need to be responsible for my own feelings. So, they can keep beating on me emotionally, energetically." Then, I woke up and went, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, that's only half the equation. The other half is I gotta draw a line in the sand and say, 'This is the level of respect that I request out of human beings that are in my presence.'" I tell people constantly, you don't have to worry about knowing where you stand with Sean. I'll let you know.

Mike: Right. So, let's say the person who is in an abusive situation, since we went there, is in an abusive situation and has serious, physical fear. There is actual danger to their life. So there is the separation of, "Geez, if I say those words, they could kill me in the next hour." And there is it, that at least I know those words to be true to me, that maybe I am not at a place that I can verbally say those words right now. But I know them to be true to me. Is that the key there.

Sean: Yeah, and it's deeper than that, which is, it starts within you first. Then, you have to-

Mike: Yeah, it's starting to know that I deserve to be treated a certain way. We're not saying any blame at all on the abuse. You're responding to, it starts with me knowing I deserve to be respected.

Sean: We're talking about your own worth and value.

Mike: Right. Correct.

Sean: That starts within you, and then, if you are in that toxic place, let's talk about that. I've been in toxic places. Sometimes it takes a while to plan your escape and you need to be loving toward yourself in the process. It's kind of like the movie *Shawshank Redemption*. It took him a long time to chip away at that wall, and let the little rocks out in the yard. Sometimes, that's what people need to do. Now, sometimes it's so dangerous that they've gotta figure out a way to get out there faster.

Sean: Neither you nor I are in any of these people's shoes. So, we're not saying we have 100% understanding of them. However, we have 100% appreciation and acknowledgement of the pain they're in. I personally believe that negativity ... All violence is, is negativity that's just not been dealt with over time, and then it just gets worse and worse and worse and worse and worse. Usually nobody starts out violent. It's built up over time.



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- Sean: Now, when you meet somebody who is verbally, physically, emotionally, sexually, intellectually, whatever it may be, manipulative and abusive, that was a stew that they've been cooking in for a long time. That doesn't make it right, but what I have learned in working with these people as a therapist is, some of the best things that you can do is know that you need to keep yourself away from toxic people, toxic energy, toxic places. Sometimes, it may take you time to plan your escape, but you better have a plan. You better know how you're going to get out of something that is dangerous, either physically, emotionally, any of those other levels. I will tell you, it takes courage to leave sometime that you fear.
- Mike: Absolutely.
- Sean: You fear for your life. It's not even just ... The fear for your life is something that's so clear for people to see, but what about people who are being abused spiritually, energetically, emotionally? They don't leave scars. Mean words don't leave physical scars on the body for the police to see, and so that's sometimes just as hard, if not harder, to be like, "Wow, I need to get away. This is killing my soul. This is draining me."
- Sean: What it really comes down to, for me and what I've experienced, speaking only for myself, is "What will you tolerate?" What are you ... And not tolerate, what do you want from life? What do you want from other people, in terms of, what standard are you willing to hold. Mindy would've never entered into a relationship with somebody that was physically abusive because the moment somebody was even slightly degraded to my wife, she would have been gone in a conversation. She would've never given them a second date, never respond to their calls, because she has such a high threshold bar of how she will be treated.
- Mike: Right. Now, I wanna be clear. If someone's listening, we're not implying because you don't, you weren't taught that far, that it's your fault, like Mindy did it right, and you did it wrong. It's a matter of, "No, can I shift now? Can I shift the paradigm to know I always deserve to be treated with that dignity? With that respect? I can choose it. This roller coaster doesn't have to exist forever. There's a point I can choose to get off, that's the planned escape. There's a point because I deserve to be treated." So, how do you help somebody, and we're getting towards the end here, I know it's tough to do quickly. In 30 seconds to one minute, what's a gift you can give someone to help them realize their value?
- Sean: Yeah, it's what Mindy had to do and anybody would have to do to get to that level. You have to have impeccable self-care. If you take care of your mind, your body, your spirit. You are exercising to pull out the toxins, you are journaling to acknowledge your own feelings, you're meditating and praying, you're surrounding yourself with empowering people, you're reading empowering messages, you're listening to programs like this, you are continuing to put yourself in empowering environments. It makes it easier and easier to head in the right direction because if you wanna respect yourself, then you have to take care of yourself. You wouldn't trust a nurse or a doctor that didn't take



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good care of you. You have to be the great person first, to take care of yourself first, to get the strength to know what you deserve.

Mike: Love it. Thank you, Sean. Now, for all of our listeners, your book is Get Off Your But. It's an awesome book. And people, it's not just talking about the physical butt, it's talking about the "But, I would, but..." and it's sensational-

Sean: B-U-T, yeah.

Mike: Yeah. It's sensational. In addition to your own book, what's a book that you think is a game changer for people's lives, that had a major impression, impact on your life?

Sean: I would say The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz.

Mike: Awesome book. Yeah, yeah. So, we'll have that link for everyone listening. Sean, you know how much I love you. Thank you so much for sharing with everybody on today's show.

Sean: Absolutely.

Mike: Thank you for joining us for this episode of The Respect Podcast, which was sponsored by the Date Safe Project at datasafeproject.org. And remember, you can always find me at mikespeaks.com.

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