



THE RESPECT PODCAST with host Mike Domitrz

And Guest Skip Weisman

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- Mike: Welcome to the Respect Podcast. I'm 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: And for this episode, we have Skip Weisman. [inaudible 00:00:20] give you a little background on Skip. Skip's a formal professional baseball executive who, since 2002, has been working with small businesses with 6 to 60 employees to create championship leadership teams and company culture. So, thank you very much Skip for joining us.
- Skip: Thank you for your interest in having me, Mike. Looking forward to the conversation.
- Mike: Absolutely. So, let's dive right into it. How does respect play ... So, you worked as an executive in baseball. Can you give people a little more background in what kind of an executive role you were in.
- Skip: Yes. It's interesting. Whenever people hear I spent time in professional baseball, they all think I was on the field as a ball player or managing or coaching, or whatever. And what I tell people, my main job was to put butts in seats, keep the beer cold, and the bathrooms clean.
- Mike: All right. So, you were on the facility ... Well, actually you're on attendance and facilities side, it sounds like.
- Skip: Yeah. I was basically the business manager for the team, to again, put butts in seats, sell tickets, sell sponsorships, sell advertising, and do all the crazy, wacky promotions that people might experience when they go to the ballpark to make it a fun family piece of entertainment.
- Mike: All right. So, let's dive in. We're all about respect. How did respect play a role in that role as an executive with major league baseball?
- Skip: When I was a young leader, I made an awful lot of communication mistakes that caused a lot of disrespect in our work environment. Caused negative workplace relationships that really caused me problems as an organizational leader for building a team of employees that I needed to help get things done. And so, what I realized was that I was creating my own problems with how I was communicating. Coming across what other people thought was disrespectfully to them. I didn't realize it, 'cause I was just doing my thing, communicating in my own way.
- Skip: And some of the feedback I got, some of the pushback I got took a while for me to realize what was happening or not happening. And I realized, in looking back, that a lot



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of the way I was communicating was really causing a work environment that was not as steeped in respect as it probably needed to be.

Mike: So, I think a lot of people can fall into that trap. So, to help people understand so they might realize, they might see the mirror in front of them, can you give some examples of where you look back and you go, hey, I was doing it this way? Like, a specific example. How you talked to someone. I don't know if that what it was. But, an example of that, where you could have been more respectful.

Skip: Yeah. Well, especially from a leadership perspective, when I was leading my staffs, and we had small staffs, pretty much the same size as I work with now. Anywhere from a half a dozen people on up to maybe, I think 12 or 15 was the size companies I work with. But, as the young organizational leader, I was sort of the boss. I liked being the boss, I liked being in charge, and I made a lot of unilateral decisions without really getting input and feedback from people as to whether how this affected them, or what they thought, whether if they thought it was a good idea or not.

Skip: And that really rubbed people the wrong way, because some of the key decisions I was making really impacted their jobs, their lives, or whatever. And so, it really created some real angst and animosity [inaudible 00:03:37] staff. So, to give you an example, we had a situation back in my early days where we were under the gun getting ready for our season. And, in minor league baseball, professional baseball where I was, what a lot of people don't understand is that we actually work during the off season. We don't just show up on opening day and everything happens. And so, a major part of our time is from October to March. Those six months in the off season are really key.

Skip: And, because there was some things that were going on in our community, we were not able to do a lot of our work in the fall. And so, we were under the gun. January 1st hit. We had two-and-a-half months to get ready for our season. And, we were under the gun. So, I just made a decision that I was gonna have the staff work basically from 8:00 to 6:00 instead of 9:00 to 5:00. Just expand the hours, made sure we were committed to getting things done. People didn't like that. I was expanding the required work hours 'cause everybody was on salary. Wasn't an hourly wage thing. So, we're making the same money from working extra hours.

Mike: So, they're gaining 10 hours a week at least.

Skip: Yeah. And I basically dictated that. Well, that created a mutiny on my staff. Any my number two guy went over my head, tried to go to my boss to have that overturned. And, although my boss supported me in the effort, it created some real issues with our relationship for the rest of the season.

Mike: Well, that's a great example. So, do you find that ... How do you bring all the voices in respectfully and yet not have things out of control? They always say, "Too many leaders in the room." So, how do you find ... Nowadays, you learn that lesson. Hey, I don't want



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to be the dictator that's just running in there and saying, "Here's how it is." How do you find the right balance?

- Skip: Well, I think what you have to do is you just have to be open to listening, and asking questions, and if you know something is going to impact somebody else in whatever way, at least get their input. Allow them to express their opinion and be heard. And at the end of the day, obviously somebody has to make the end decision. But, as long as somebody feels like they're heard, you've considered their opinion, you just haven't made a dictatorial unilateral decision without getting input from people, I think most people will be okay with it. They may not agree with it, they may not like it. At least they will accept it and be more on board with it, because at least they felt they were considered and their issues were considered.
- Skip: And so, I think [inaudible 00:06:08] have to do is get input from everybody, and take it under consideration, but then at the end of the day you have the decision, and I think if you do that and you're respectful of other people, show that you care about them, you're empathetic, and you do respect them as part of the team, and you respect their opinions, and you feed it back after that consideration, I think most people will be okay with it.
- Mike: And do you find that it's better to seek all those opinions in a group setting, like a team discussion? Like, [inaudible 00:06:35] have an open discussion on this? Or do you find one-on-one is more powerful?
- Skip: It depends on the dynamics and the relationships. I would primarily probably do it one-on-one initially. What you can do one-on-one is then, after you gain that data ... You bring people together, say, "Hey, this is what I've heard from everybody." And you list those things out, or you talk about them, say, "This is what everybody's been saying. I really take it, I see your points here and there." And so, everybody else can see what everybody else said. And then, this is how I came to the decision. This is why I've decided to go in this direction. So, I would probably do it individually at first, and present it to the team in that way, is probably the best way to go.
- Mike: You learn over the years, and you don't know in your early years. Same for me when I was a coach, is that, when you put it out to the team, you're forgetting that not everybody has the same strength of self-esteem to share. So, what happens is, you get the strong personalities really running the input, and there's people with brilliant ideas sitting behind them going, "I'm not speaking up." But they're brilliant, and we think we heard everyone's voices, so we think, I did my job. I said to everyone, "What are you thinking?" And only two spoke up, so I took that ... That's the trap there, isn't it?
- Skip: Yeah. And it's funny, when I facilitated team sessions like you're talking about, my client is usually amazed at the end of the session. "Boy, how did you get everybody participating?" And sharing goes, usually I get 10 percent of the people control the meeting and everything. I said, "Well, there's ways to do that." What I do is, I put people



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in groups. Put them in groups of two or three to discuss the issue. And people are a lot more forthcoming and comfortable in those small group discussions. And then, if you do have people who are ordinarily outspoken and like to hear themselves talk or whatever, you can mitigate that by putting people in groups, and writing the group share out so that it's not always the same people, and there's ways to do that if you do it the right way and facilitate it.

Mike: Well yeah, and a lot of people don't realize, when they see a situation like that, typically what they do is, they spread those people out. The outspoken, the strong. And let's say you have 10 groups. They put one in every group. And actually, the brilliant thing to do is stick them all together, because only one can represent the group.

Skip: Yes. Exactly.

Mike: So, if you put all five of ... Let's say there's five of them and there's 10 groups. You put all five in one group, the other nine groups have to come to the forward now with their own voices, with their own uniqueness, and that five is only represented by one. I assume that's what you're referring to, that technique.

Skip: Exactly. Right, yeah.

Mike: And so many people get that wrong. In organizations, companies, and schools, they think, "Oh, I'll spread them out." That's your nightmare, 'cause then they, once again, are trying ... [inaudible 00:09:31] percent is trying to run the show, steamroll people, they have the ability to now.

Skip: Yeah. Yup, absolutely. They'll dominate if given the chance.

Mike: Yeah. So, how do you draw the voice out in that situation of the person who is more timid about speaking out? 'Cause we want to respect them and we want to show that we do respect and value them and their contributions, and their genius. They might not yet. That might be part of the reason they're quiet. I don't have anything to contribute. But they do if we ask them the right questions. How do you go about drawing that person out?

Skip: Again, I think it's about setting expectations. And for a lot of those people, it's often preparation. So, I think you can sort of grease the skids or whatever by helping them prepare a little bit in advance. Maybe give them some homework or prep work to come to the meeting with, and set the expectation, I really want to hear from you. And so, on the front end, do a little bit of homework, and then, probably as you know, there's not enough of that. People just show up at a meeting and expect people to participate.

Skip: So, I think if you can go around to some of those people and really express the fact that you want to hear from them, and I know it may take you a little more time to get your thoughts together, so I just want to give you some prep. This is what we'll be talking



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about, and I'd like to hear your thoughts on these two or three items. And come prepared to contribute in your group, and contribute to the bigger thing. So, I think it may take a little more preparation for those people to feel comfortable with it.

Mike: If you're going one-to-one, and you say, "Hey, I'd like you to take a look at this," so they can contribute, is there a risk that someone finds out ... Do you need to do it with everyone? Do you need to give an assignment to everyone in that case, because if you don't, it becomes clear some people are getting pinpointed?

Skip: Yeah, I think you have to be careful with that. I think it's about knowing your people and all. Most people that are, if they're that shy and that timid, they're probably not gonna tell anybody that they've been tasked with that anyway. So, the fact that it gets out may not happen. But yeah, I think there's always that concern. You want to be careful and make sure you're treating everybody equitably and all. But yeah, I think it's just something to be careful of and be aware of.

Mike: Skip, you specifically work on helping communication in those leadership teams in companies. What do you think are the three to five biggest mistakes you see? 'Cause almost always, it can somehow relate to respect when we look at these topics of communication. So, what do you see as the three to five most common errors that leaders or managers make? By the way, you can include those who aren't leaders and managers. Those who would be on the line.

Skip: Yeah. I've written a book called "The Seven Deadliest Communication Sins." And it just came out in April. And so, I outline-

Mike: Congratulations.

Skip: Thank you. Yeah, it's been a long time coming, as most books are. And so, [inaudible 00:12:21] seven, but I've actually created a thing that identifies the three primary communication mistakes. And they really impact respect in a work environment. And the first one is a lack of specificity. And people really, in a lot of organizations, don't feel like they have enough information to do their job effectively. People are withholding information, there's a lack of transparency. Just a lack of information. Sometime, I'm sure we've all had this situation where we've been in the right place at the wrong time, or the wrong place at the right time. Those type of things, where we just have miscommunication.

Skip: And a lot of the miscommunications are due to a lack of specificity. I'm sure people listening to this have walked away from a conversation scratching their head saying, "God, Mike must think I'm a mind reader." And we allow that to happen. We don't push back. We don't ask for more information.



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- Mike: When you say that comment about Mike must think I'm a [inaudible 00:13:19], are you referring to where people think, I don't understand what just went on there, he must think I understand, but I don't?
- Skip: Exactly.
- Mike: Okay.
- Skip: Right. And sometimes it's malicious. I'm withholding information 'cause I want to throw you under the bus or make you look bad. Sometime it's malicious. Most of the times it's not, though. Most of the times it's just lazy communication habits. I assume you know this part of it that you need to know, but you don't. And because, again, you had mentioned people's levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. Depending on the dynamic of the relationship, I may not be comfortable pushing back or asking you for more information 'cause that's now gonna make me look stupid. Mike thinks I know and I don't, but I'll figure it out on my own. And so, we walk away without having the information we need to be successful. And so-
- Mike: That's one you see in relationships. You talk to most couples, and one or both of them can say, "Oh yeah, they just start talking in the middle of a conversation like we're in the middle of a conversation, and it's taking me two minutes to figure out what they're referencing."
- Skip: To get caught up.
- Mike: To get caught up, because they don't start with, "Here's what I'm referencing." They jump into where they are in the thought process. It can be very aggravating when you're trying to understand and be present for them.
- Skip: Exactly. And that happens in the work environment as well. And some of it's good, because we've worked together for so long, we think we have this great rapport, and we've done this together, so I just assume you know, and oftentimes we don't. We make those assumptions. And so, that lack of specificity is probably number one. It really gets us into trouble.
- Skip: The second one is a lack of immediacy, urgency, and promptness. And that's a lot of words, but really what it means is, we're just not following through in a timely manner. Sometimes it's procrastination. Sometimes it's a difficult conversation. And, since I may not feel comfortable with it, I will put it off. I'll wait for the right time. And the right time never really comes, it never gets to the top of the priority.
- Skip: And so, we're putting off these conversations that we need to have 'cause they're difficult, they're challenging. May not have the relationship I need to have to have that conversation. I'm afraid of the response. All of that stuff that goes into the mix. But, if you think about what that does when we have to have the conversation because



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something has brought it to a level of immediacy, or urgency, or whatever, and now I do have to address it, and now the person says, "Well, why didn't you tell me about this two weeks ago or three weeks ago?" And so, that undermines respect between people 'cause, again, I think you're setting me up for failure or whatever it is.

Skip: And so, I think we need to be more diligent in our response on this. When I go into organizations and I ask them, "Okay, what are your biggest communication problems?" One of the biggest things I hear all the time is responsiveness. People just don't respond anymore. And imagine what that does to a relationship, especially from a respect standpoint of, I don't respond to you. What message does that send? I don't care about you, I don't respect you, you're not important enough.

Mike: So, we are seeing this more and more, especially in the 20s, teenager generation, where there's just no response. And I don't think it's a sign of disrespect, but it could definitely be read that way. It could definitely be understood that way. I'm guessing, here, 'cause I've seen it within our own family. I think it's that that generation gets so much. Instagram, texts, so much, that there's no way they're responding to everything. So then, it becomes the norm to just, oh, there's another message.

Mike: Versus, we were raised in a time where, if you got a message, it's important. So, you're supposed to respond. Where they're like, "It's one of 1,000 I got today. Why are you so uptight that I didn't respond to your message? I got 1,000 messages today." Do you think that's what's happening there?

Skip: I think that's a lot of it. And again, that sort of goes back to the reason why we have to add specificity to our communication to set the expectation. And so, we may have to add a couple of words saying, "I need to know by five o'clock today," and push that response.

Mike: And letting them know that, hey, I'm not gonna text you unless I'm seeking a response.

Skip: Exactly.

Mike: That sets specificity. So, if you get a text from me, I'm awaiting response. That means I'm looking for an answer to that. Otherwise, I'll wait 'til I see you.

Skip: Exactly.

Mike: If you're a parent or somebody. Or I'll email. But, if I text you, I'm expecting a response.

Skip: And that's about specificity around expectations. We set the expectations for the relationship so I know what you expect from me in these certain situations. But again, we're not having those conversations often [inaudible 00:18:01] on the front end. We're just assuming, I send a text, they know what it means. And when they don't respond, that undermines the respect between the two people.



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- Mike: Yeah. The ones highly offended. How dare you? That's what happens, and you literally get a battle over disrespect.
- Skip: Exactly. So, then the third one is a lack of directness and candor. And we're not telling people what they need to hear. And we're not saying what I need to say because, again, of self-esteem and all that stuff we're afraid of, all the ramifications and the feedback or the pushback we're gonna get, or the response. And so, we hold back, and we're not as direct and candid as we need to be until it gets to such an egregious [inaudible 00:18:43] where I can't take that anymore and I'm just gonna unload. And that's where the disrespect comes from there.
- Skip: And so, when you put these three together, lack of specificity, lack of immediacy, urgency and promptness, and a lack of directness and candor, that really creates a problem. And so, we need to create relationships where we can be direct and candid with people. And, we are responding more immediately or more promptly with somebody. And we're specific about it.
- Skip: What happens is, what I've found in working with organizations, when you communicate that way, it creates a high-respect environment. I know what's expected of me, we're specific around these things, if somebody sends me something, I respond in that time period of expectation that we've agreed on because of the specificity. And so, over time, we build up clarity between people, what the expectations are. We respond quicker. And you know, if people are responding quickly to each other, what does that say about our relationship? We have respect between each other. I trust you, I respect you. And so, that's how you build higher levels of respect, by being more specific, gaining clarity, creating a higher trust relationship, and just responding to people creates greater levels of respect.
- Mike: And do you find that the fear here that holds these back from happening more often, that all three is taking place, is that fear the last one? That people's fear of being direct is what leads to two and one occurring? Because then, I don't want to hurt someone's feeling, or I don't want to ... So then, I'm not gonna say what I was supposed to say, so therefore I'm not direct. Now, we have a misunderstanding of expectations. So now we're getting back into two and one. That all can happen from that one fear.
- Skip: Absolutely. Yeah.
- Mike: So, you need a leader that can show, hey, you can say things to me that are critical. And I will not flip out. Because, if you see that from the leadership, then you can start to feel more trusting. But if you say something to the leader and they flip, you're like, "I ain't saying that again." Every kid learns that as a child, right? I said that, and my parent had this reaction. I'm not saying those things anymore. I don't care how ... They tell me to be honest. That didn't pay off.



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- Skip: Exactly. And we learn that from a very early age, and so we hold back. And if you take it to the next level, really, if you have a high-respect relationship with somebody, you can pretty much say anything to them as long as you do it in the right manner. Because, I know that you're communicating with me for my best interest, and I trust that, and I respect you for that.
- Skip: The challenge is, and I just had a conversation with a prospective client this morning ... [inaudible 00:21:30] What happens is, we try to dive into these conversations. Maybe we do have a direct and candid conversation with somebody. But, the relationship isn't there. We don't have the trust and the respect of them. And so, they take it the wrong way. I don't know that you have my best interest in mind, and the way you're phrasing this, and what you've done in the past to me or the others I've seen tells me you have your own agenda behind it. And so, I don't trust you. But I have to have that conversation, so I do, and it goes bad.
- Skip: What I tell people is, you really need to look at the relationship first before you try to dive into these conversations. Maybe you need to work on the relationship first, build trust and respect with them before you try to dive into these really difficult conversations.
- Mike: Yeah. So, there's a little patience needed there.
- Skip: Yeah. But because we let it go for so long, I don't have time to do that now. Now, it's an urgency [inaudible 00:22:25]
- Mike: Yeah. It's a fire.
- Skip: Yeah.
- Mike: Yeah. So Skip, you described early on in our interview that the errors you made and then you learned, what was the wake up call for you? What was that defining moment where you realized, whoa, I can't be doing this anymore this way?
- Skip: My wife said she wanted out of our marriage. And I realized I was making these mistakes in my personal life and my professional life. We weren't able to save the marriage, which at the end of the day, was probably good for both of us. We needed to be separate. But, the process of dissolving that relationship, between the couples counseling, the individual counseling, and some other executive coaching that I got, just opened my eyes to how I was communicating, and it was causing all of my problems.
- Mike: I appreciate your honesty and your vulnerability there, because a lot of people wouldn't go there. But, those are the moments where we go, where have I gotten to where I am today? And so, I can see where that would provoke, wow, how did this happen to here? What's neat is you're able to catch it.



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- Skip: Yeah. The said thing for me, or good thing for me, is, if she didn't step up and say it, I probably never would have and we would have been going through this dance for God knows how long after that. The interesting thing that brought that to a head is we actually worked together for the last team, baseball team I worked together, she was our business manager.
- Mike: Ah, so see saw it on both fronts.
- Skip: Yeah. We were working together for those couple of years, and that brought it to a head, I think, sooner than it would have otherwise. So, you can look at it as a blessing.
- Mike: Right. There's reasons things happen. We learn from those lessons. So, I think that's powerful that you're willing to share that. I absolutely appreciate that. We're getting towards the end here of the interview. What does respect mean to you? Because you've taken this journey now, of where you were, and then to have that very difficult moment in life, to have that awakening to where you are today. So, what does it mean to you when someone says respect?
- Skip: To me, it means seeing the other person as a human being and not as an object. I think so many of us look at the other person as some type of means to an end. Or an object. And if you were talking about dating, and dating safe, how do you view that partner that you're on a date with? Are they just an object to get something? Or, is your colleague in the cubicle next to you just an obstacle for you to jump over to get to that next promotion or whatever? I think just seeing each person as a human being that has the same stresses, the same frustrations, the same angst that you have. And just being empathetic towards that, and trying to find that common ground.
- Skip: Just to close it out, the story from the very beginning where that guy went over my head. I could have very easily just blown through him, and didn't care about him, didn't respect him anymore. I but realized, again, he was teaching me ... he taught me [inaudible 00:25:28]. He was a couple years younger than me. And, it was a difficult season. But after the season, we were able to work it out. And we worked through some things. And two years later, he referred me to his boss because he went to work for another ball club. The owner of the team. And he referred me, and he got me a higher-level job with his boss, with his owner. And so, we were able to maintain that relationship. We're still friends on Facebook 25 years later.
- Mike: That's awesome. Now, in addition to your book, which is "Seven Deadliest Communication Sins," and we'll have the link to that on our show site and in our show notes, what's another book that's had massive impact on your life?
- Skip: Interestingly, that individual I just told you about, when I was 28 years old, I guess, gave me a book called "The Road Less Traveled." And that was the first sort of self-help book that I ever read. And it was really impactful on my life. The first line, I'm not sure if you're familiar with it ... M. Scott Peck is the author. He wrote another book called



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"Further Along the Road Less Traveled." But that book, "The Road Less Traveled," is probably 50 years old. The first line in that book changed my life, which is, "Life is difficult." And once you understand that, and you accept that life is difficult, it no longer becomes difficult because you're not resisting that.

Mike: Right.

Skip: [inaudible 00:26:49]

Mike: You're not feeling guilty over feeling bad.

Skip: Yeah. Yeah, and you can accept and say, "Okay, if life is supposed to be difficult, let me figure out how to work through it." Because most of the challenges we find is we're resisting that type of stuff. I want it to be better or different, and so we fight it, and it shouldn't be this way. No, if you expect that it should be this way, you can work through it. And I'm all about positive mindset and everything, but I think, just by understanding that, no, life is supposed to be a challenge, let's figure out how to meet it, as opposed to just fight it and resist it. So, I've loved that book for 40 or 50 years. I've probably read it a half a dozen times. So, that would be the big one. "The Road Less Traveled."

Mike: Well, I want to thank you for joining us. That's awesome. You've been fantastic, Skip. So insightful, so much great information. For our listeners, I want them to know how to get ahold of you, that's yourchampionshipcompany.com is your website.

Skip: Yes.

Mike: And of course, you have the book "Seven Deadliest Communication Sins." So, thank you very much for joining us.

Skip: Thanks for having me, Mike. It's been a pleasure.

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