



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

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 U.S. military create a culture of respect. And respect is exactly what we discuss on this show, so let's get started.

Mike: Welcome to this episode, and today we have Dr. Liane Davey, who is a New York Times Best Selling Author, a regular contributor to the Harvard Business Review, and the organizational psychology expert for Quartz Magazine. As the co-founder of 3COze Inc., she advises on business strategy, executive team effectiveness, and has worked with executives at companies such as Amazon, Walmart, Aviva, TD Bank, and so much more. She has a PhD in Organizational Psychology, and has served as an evaluator for the American Psychological Association's Healthy Workplace Awards. Thank you, Liane, for joining me.

Liane: Oh, it's great to be here. Nice to meet you, Mike.

Mike: Well, it's nice to meet you, and have you on the show. Today, we're talking about the role of respect in conflict. To give everybody a little perspective, what expertise do you bring? What do you do when it comes to the topic of conflict?

Liane: Yeah, so I spend most of my working life helping people have better conflict. A lot of people think that when you work with teams as a team advisor, that you are helping people have less conflict, but I find it's the exact the opposite. That one of the reasons we're so stressed out, one of the reasons we feel disrespected is because we're not very good at having conflict. I actually help people learn how to not avoid conflict, but actually to lean into it. But how to do it in a way that makes people feel respected, that strengthens trust between us, and helps us manage some of the stress associated with the interpersonal relationships.

Mike: That sounds awesome. How do you describe conflict? How would you define it?

Liane: Yeah. I think we immediately when we think of conflict, we think of fights and war, and things that are aversive, and things that we want to avoid at all costs. When we think about it in a relationship, we think about it as bullying, or we think about passive aggressiveness, and all of those are very, very unhealthy, and not something I'd ever encourage.

Liane: But there is this whole side of conflict where people have incompatible, or opposing wishes, or demands, or desires, and they have to work through them. And the problem is if we paint all conflict with the same brush, then we avoid conversations that we need to have. In organizations, we need to have those conversations to be productive. In marriages, we need to have those conversations so that we can stay on the same page.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

There are a whole bunch of different places where the ability to have what I call productive conflict makes a huge difference.

Mike: Well, and I think even language is important. You gave a great example there. You said people think of opposing views, right?

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: Well, opposing means opposite. And often views are not opposite. They're differing.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: It doesn't mean because I believe that, and you believe this we're opposite. We just have a differing viewpoint on either the outcome or the means. Somewhere along the lines here that's where the conflict is.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: It's just something is different, right? It's not in alignment. It's not exactly the same. But that language can be important, can't it? To our understanding of conflict.

Liane: Yeah, absolutely. And how we frame things tends to be how we think about them. If we use the language of opposition, or if we ... It makes us feel more adversarial. If we use different language. I find most of the time our conflict is in a situation where those different needs, or demands are in tension with one another. And being in tension with one another, that's okay. That's normal. That's natural.

Liane: You have one spouse who likes to be very planned, and very orderly, and make sure everything is working well. And one who likes to be spontaneous. And you know what? Great relationships have some of each, right? And you wouldn't want no tension on the crazy spontaneous person, or the bills would never get paid. But you don't want no tension on the person who is always so carefully and orderly 'cause you'd have no fun.

Liane: Tension ... And we can talk about tension, and talk about it as a positive thing that helps stretch us, and grow us, as opposed to language of friction. 'Cause friction wears us down, we all know that. Yeah, how you use ... What words you use, and how you use the language frames how you think about conflict.

Mike: Let's dive right into it. What would be an example that everyone can relate to for the most part, we know not ... There is no one universal.

Liane: Yeah, yeah.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Mike: Of this, and then where you can apply the skills you teach to that so we all learn this?

Liane: Yeah. I often talk about situations where people are arguing about things as if they can't both be true. Maybe one of the famous examples would be ... Was it a Miller Light commercial where they were fighting over whether it was, taste's great, and less filling?

Mike: Yes.

Liane: And we get in those kinds of situations all the time, and we end up in this fight. "Taste's great." "No, less filling." Why are we fighting about this? I talk about what I call two truths. If we can in situations where we're just going head-to-head, and acting as though only one thing can be true, if we can instead say, "Okay, if it's true that it tastes great. You think it tastes great. Okay. I think I drink it 'cause it's less filling. Better for my waistline." Those two things can be true at the same time.

Liane: If you take ... A typical situation that I would run into at organizations would be when you're trying to use budget. Somebody says, "Look, I think every penny we've got needs to go into better advertising, and better marketing." And somebody else might say, "I think that money needs to go into training for our salespeople." And so when you can take the two truths, say, "Okay, for you this is really about more advertising. Increasing the number of calls we get, or the number of people who come into look at our product. Okay, for me this is actually about when the customer calls, I'm not sure we're saying the right things to get their business, so how could we solve for both of those things? How do we make sure we've got lots of calls coming in, and that when the calls come in, we're saying the right things to capture that business." All of a sudden what you've done is instead of framing it as, "Are you kidding me? Spend more on advertising, that's ridiculous!" Where it's gonna feel adversarial. Now you've just framed it as, "Oh, okay, so you think that's important, and I think this is important, how are we gonna solve this?"

Liane: And problem solving is innately curious. It's a process that you can engage in as allies instead of as adversaries. Little techniques like that, that work in all sorts of common scenarios, where you think that it has to be one or the other, try assuming that both are true. And if you say that right out loud, if the person is expecting you ... Say this guy has been going on about more advertising for ages, and finally this time you say, "Oh, so you think the ticket is advertising." He's probably gonna go, "Huh? Did you ... I've been saying that for years."

Mike: Yeah, and I love it. And I can see some people thinking even the word you think can be dangerous, right?

Liane: Yep. It can.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Mike: If I say to them, "Oh, for you the advertising is critical."

Liane: Right.

Mike: That's different then, "Oh, so you think the advertising is critical?"

Liane: Yep.

Mike: 'Cause that can imply to some people, right? That, "Oh, what do you mean I think it's critical? It is critical. It's not I think. It's critical."

Liane: Yep. Yeah, you're right. For you, advertising is critical is a much better way of saying it.

Mike: Okay.

Liane: Yeah, absolutely.

Mike: 'Cause I was just curious. Oh, I could see people picking that off, and really zoning in on that one word 'cause conflict can do that.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: It can get people focused in the wrong spot.

Liane: Just let me go back to that one. People ask me about this all the time. They're like, "Oh, I've got to get every word right." You don't have to. You can do what I just did. If you go ... If you say I think, or you think by accident. And the person goes, "I think? I don't just think." Right, if the freakout. Just go, "Oh, I'm so sorry. That totally came out wrong. For you this is really about advertising." Actually, what you do when you mess up does as much to say I'm working hard here to resolve this in a positive way, as if you get it all perfectly. I just don't want your viewers to think if I don't have the perfect words, I better say nothing. If you try it with good intent, and you mess up a bit, just go, "Uh. Sorry. My bad. [inaudible 00:09:17]."

Mike: Yeah, that's what we teach in any form of intervention. Bystander intervention, you hear somebody say something inappropriate. People are like, "Oh, if I don't say the right thing, then I'm not gonna say anything at all." I'm like, "Say the wrong thing then. You can apologize" ... I mean, don't intentionally say the wrong thing.

Liane: Right.

Mike: At least say what you think is right, and if it's wrong you can work with correcting that.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: And so that's what you're describing.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: It shows a genuine care, and sincere wanting to help you.

Liane: Yes.

Mike: And that's what we're seeking here. And so that was a great example in the workplace. What's a common one in home life? Let's say between a young couple.

Liane: Okay, so it's a different technique. A very common one is one person is already home from work, and the other one comes through the door, and goes, "Uh. I had the worst day." And what often happens is that person gets completely dismissed by the other person saying something like, "You think you had a bad day. Wait til you hear about my day." Or just ignoring it all together, "What do you want for dinner?" Right? The number one technique to not trigger conflict is to actually validate the other person. Validating doesn't mean you have to agree with them. "You're right. Your day was the worst day ever in history." You don't have to say that, but you do have to do something that says to them I heard you, and I get it. You don't have to agree with it.

Liane: But so when somebody comes to the door, and they go, "I had the worst day." "Oh, that sucks. What happened?" Just something that says ... Some eye contact that says I'm paying attention to you, that you matter. Something that says I heard you. Something that says I'm interested in you. And if at the end of that you've let the person tell you for ten minutes about how it was the worst possible day ever in history, then you can say, "Yeah, well, okay, thanks for sharing that. Yeah, my day was no picnic either." And you can add it, as opposed to kind of right off the bat invalidating the person. That's one of the most common things we get wrong in relationships.

Liane: I get it wrong with my kids sometimes. When my older daughter was younger, she was quite anxious about things, and she'd say, "Mom, the mall is scary." And I would say, "No, it's not." It's a horrible thing to invalidate someone else, and once I realized I was doing it, I could change to, "What makes the mall scary for you?" That's the number one tip is, just start by validating the other person with your eyes, with your body language, by reflecting what they've said. And it's amazing how the whole rest of the evening will go differently when you start that way.

Mike: Well, and this is at the heart of respect.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Liane: Yes.

Mike: When I work with corporations or organizations, and we talk about what respect means to them. Phrases like being seen, being heard is what makes people feel respected. Not things as much as my pay, or my title. But it's to be seen, to be heard, to be appreciated. To walk through the door, and to be validated is to be seen, is to be valued. And now I feel respected, especially coming from a place where I might not have felt respected.

Liane: Right.

Mike: This might have been that horrible day because I did not feel respected, and valued in where I came from.

Liane: Yeah. You want home to be the place where you always feel seen, where you feel valued, where you feel important. It's just such a huge opportunity we have for the people that we care about to just do something that maybe they haven't had for the whole rest of the day, and we blow it way more often than any of us like to admit.

Mike: Well, and we're human. And so how do we help the person who is bulldozing us be more aware so that they can validate us, they can see that we need validation. How do we start that conversation? 'Cause that's a different form of conflict, right?

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: That's the person of, hey, I'm doing my best to connect to them, and they're just running me over. They're bulldozing me here. Whether it's at home. And I don't mean physically, but it can be just controlling conversations, which can be a form of abuse absolutely, but in the workplace too. How do we approach that person?

Liane: Yeah, I think what I learned is that in dealing with strength, sometimes it's more compelling to actually respond with sadness. If somebody is sort of bulldozing over you, not listening to you, dominating the conversation, then your feedback ... Always be careful to make your feedback very, very objective. Not to use judgment. If you say, "Look, I had a really rough day, and when I walked in the door here, you didn't give a damn about me." That's fully subjective, and it's quite likely not true. The person probably cares very much about you, and doesn't realize that their behavior is saying something very different. Stick with something very objective, so "I got in the door tonight, and I was really tired, and I told you that, and then you told me about five things that happened during your day. I really just need ... I felt like you didn't want to hear about my day. I felt like you're uninterested, and I really need a place where I can vent for even just five minutes. Can we have a do-over?"



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Liane: It's really important that you give that kind feedback, but I think what we tend to do is, we tend to blame the other person for how we feel. We'll say, "You made me feel insignificant." Well, nobody else can make you feel insignificant. You can say, "You started talking about your day." And then you say, "I felt really insignificant." It's really important that when we give somebody feedback, that we make it very, very objective when we're talking about their behavior, so that there is no room for them to disagree as soon as you say that. If you say, "When I walked in the door, and I shared with you that I had a hard day, and then you started telling me about your day." The person is not gonna be like, "No, I did not." They're gonna be like, "Oh, yeah."

Mike: Yeah. I love the language that the Landmark Forum teaches about this. And that is to say to someone the story I'm telling myself, right?

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: When you came in and said that, the story I started telling myself was you don't care about me.

Liane: Right, right.

Mike: Right? Because that's about my interpretation.

Liane: Right.

Mike: It's not ... That doesn't mean that's what you were intending, but here is what occurred when that behavior took place, and it's my interpretation. It allows them to go maybe even like, "Oh, my gosh. That's the last thing I was thinking."

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: Or wanting, or well, then you're overreacting. Okay, well then how did you-

Liane: What did you intend?

Mike: It allows for beautiful conversation to potentially come out of that.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: Now what we've been describing so far is validating and being seen, which is a really big part of respect. What would be an example at home that is truly different viewpoints? Because that's not a differing viewpoint example. It's a different kind, which is what you ... Which is great about. What would be like, "I think Johnny should be able to do that in



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

high school. You don't think Johnny should be able to do that in high school." Now it's our children. It's something one of us might think could be dangerous. One of us thinks it's part of growing up, and exploration. Where, there do you apply the skills? What skills do you apply there?

Liane: Yeah, so you actually just did some of the work in your description. Because usually how it shows up when we're talking about parenting, is it simply shows up as "You're so reckless, there is no way you should be going to the party where the parents aren't home." And it doesn't show up as anything beneath that. The first step is actually just to say what's leading you there? "You think that we should allow Bobby to go to the party at his friend's house, when his parents aren't home. Why is that important to you? How is that important to you?"

Liane: And then he's gonna tell you that, "I got to do things like that when I was a kid. Those are the nights that I remember most fondly from being a teenager. I think if we don't let him start to have some freedom before we send him off to college, that's he gonna have a blowout in college, and he's not gonna know how to handle things." And then you can say, "Okay, so for you this is about trying to build some independence." And "Okay, here's just the tape that just keeps playing in my head. Is I keep thinking of so-and-so's son who got rushed to hospital, and had to have his stomach pumped. For me I'm worried about safety, and I'm worried about kids that I don't know. Let's talk a little bit about that. Let's talk a little bit about how we can build towards independence. Let's talk about a way how we can do it relatively safe, et cetera, et cetera."

Liane: And what's something we can do that would be the right answer? Maybe it is to go to that party, but there is an agreement that you're gonna pick him up at 11:00, or whatever. But the problem is we often just stay fighting at that superficial level about I want this, and I want that. And we never talk about our feelings and emotions that are under that, or at that really base level what we value, and what we believe. And if we can get to that level, it tends to be easier to come up with a solution. Because as you're saying these things ... Look, if you're saying that to your kid's father. He's not gonna say, "Oh, I was really hoping he'd end the evening in an ambulance." Right?

Mike: Right.

Liane: It's not just gonna be the case. And you're not thinking, "Oh, I really hope I have to move in with him at college because he's not gonna know how to-"

Mike: There are some people out there that would love to do that.

Liane: Ah.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Mike: Yes.

Liane: My daughter is only two years away from college. I'm like, "No, no. Bye-bye. Bye-bye"

Mike: I've had four either in or out of college, so completely relate to this conversation. Let's switch it back. Let's switch it back to the corporate organizational, the strength of conflict.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: We didn't really get into that, the strength. I can imagine it helps bring out creativity and new ideas, but why are you a proponent of hey conflict is good?

Liane: Yeah, so my forthcoming book focuses on an idea I call conflict debt. Organizations are in massive and crippling conflict debt. Because organizations require conflict on an almost daily basis, so choosing a strategy, prioritizing one activity over another, figuring out which group gets budget, who is gonna get a promotion. There is conflict inherent in pretty much everything we do in organizations. But as humans, we're very conflict avoidant, and so we let these hard conversations pile up. We don't solve them. And I always think of that old kids song, We're Going on a Bear Hunt, where they say, "Can't go over it. Can't go under it. Gotta go through it." And I think there are a lot of organizations that are piling up this conflict debt, and the problem is we all pay the interest.

Liane: The number one source of conflict debt in organizations is failure to prioritize. We just say this is important, and this important, and this is important. And it's every employee in the organization who pays interest on that debt because their workload is too high, they're overwhelmed, they're stressed out. Organizations require this sort of this ongoing ability to work through the hard decisions, and that's why getting good at conflict ... And when I talk about getting good at conflict, we want to be able to make conflict very high frequency, and very low impact. All the time we're just trying on a different perspective, and putting some tension in an idea, or adding something new so that it just becomes normal. It's a habit. And that's where we get to this spot where, then we never even think about conflict because we never have the big emotional, I don't feel hurt or respected kind of conflict, which tends to be ugly and dramatic. Instead, we just have the, oh, I hadn't thought about that. You're right, this is a terrible call, but which one is the optimal call?

Liane: And if we have this sort of high frequency, but low impact conflict then our organizations, our teams, and us as humans can work with much less stress, much greater trust, better productivity. There is a lot to be said for paying off those conflicts as we go, as opposed to letting them sort of accumulate into conflict debt.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Mike: Right. And I love the idea that both of these things can be true. It goes back to that. Both of these ideas can be true, which is gonna be the priority right now? We have to make a decision, so what's the priority? Now the problem is, are we never making that one over there the priority? Do they keep being told everything else is a priority? Then I need to address that conflict. Right?

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: That's a form of conflict that I need to address. Like ten times in a row now, our department has been told the other one is more important.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: That's what we're telling ourselves by the actions that are taking place. That's the story we're telling ourselves.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: This is creating conflict because we don't feel valued. And this goes back to what you talked about earlier, and when we feel like somebody is not seeing us, or hearing us, being respected.

Liane: Yes.

Mike: And it's the heart of everything we do in this show. Are all the rules the same for helping somebody respect you, that you feel you're not being respected?

Liane: Yeah. It's very interesting. I'm a psychologist by training, and what's so interesting is we think respect is just this one idea, and it's not. We have very, very, very different versions of respect. I've written a little bit about the psychological differences in respect, and one of the most common ones is that some people perceive respect ... Some people, some individuals, and also some cultures view respect as being very direct.

Liane: I once had a direct report who had grown up in East Germany, and for a long time I thought she didn't like me, or respect me because every time she came in my office, there was ... She wouldn't talk about anything personal. There was no smalltalk. I was like, "I don't think she likes me." And of course when I finally said, "It doesn't feel easy and natural between us." She told me that of course where she came from, it was disrespectful to waste a boss's time on small talk. She was very direct. That was how she showed me that my time was valuable. And of course I was interpreting it as disrespect. We have people for whom respect is being straight to the point, very direct. And if we



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

sugarcoat something, or obscure it too much, those people get suspicious. They wonder what are we hiding from them, so that's one form of respect.

Liane: At the same time, we have people for whom respect is about diplomacy, about giving a lot of context for an issue, about thinking about them as a person as we talk about the issue, not just the issue. And this sort of straight to the point to them is blunt, and crass, and disrespectful. And so I love doing work with teams to help them understand that on the very same team one person is defining respect as that straight to the point, and the other defining respect as this more diplomatic version. It's really important that we not think about respect as just one thing. And unfortunately the Golden Rule, and things like that point us in the wrong direction on these sorts of things. Because if we think of respect as one thing, we tend to project that onto others, and it's not legitimate.

Mike: Absolutely. And I teach organizations all the time, have you asked the people you're leading what respect means to them? And how they are most likely to feel respected? Because that allows you to understand this is that person's respect. This is that person ... 'Cause they could all be different.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: But if I then know it, I can deliver with that, right?

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: I can present with that. I can be present with that. Allows so much more to take place.

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: And Liane, what are books that have had a profound impact on you, along the process of learning conflict and respect?

Liane: Actually, Never Split the Difference is one of the best ones I've read recently. Chris Voss, so former FBI hostage negotiator. And it's fascinating to see how he can find respect for literally terrorists, and he tells you that if you can't, then you can't effectively negotiate with them. And so taking it to such an extreme case, where he's flown halfway across the world to negotiate with a terrorist who has innocent people in captivity, and he's still thinking about instead of me interpreting something as hate, I need to see that they love something else so profoundly that they're willing to do this. That book really ... First of all, it's got excellent, excellent techniques in it that are very practical for everyone, but it was pushing myself to the point of understanding that you can even stretch respect to a context like that, that seems so impossible.



THE RESPECT PODCAST with Mike Domitrz

And Guest

***IMPORTANT: This podcast episode was transcribed by a 3rd party service and so errors can occur throughout the following pages:*

Mike: That sounds really powerful. We'll definitely have that ...

Liane: Yeah.

Mike: We'll have that link in our show notes for everyone listening. This has been wonderful. And if people want to get a hold of you, you're at Facebook.com/DrLianeDavey. Now key here for anyone listening, Liane is spelled L-I-A-N-E. I have a weird last name, so I get having to spell names correctly.

Liane: Yeah, and Davey has got an E, so I can get both first and last names wrong.

Mike: Yeah, so Liane Davey is L-I-A-N-E. Davey is D-A-V-E-Y. Now why that's important because Facebook is /DrLianeDavey. Twitter is LianeDavey. These are all important. We'll have all these links on our website, so people can absolutely find you, and connect with you.

Mike: And for everyone listening, and watching right now, remember on Facebook we have a discussion group. We have the Respect Podcast discussion group. You can look it up. You can dive into the conversation about today's episode. Things that you really liked, or maybe you have more questions about, or if it was confusing, or your favorite parts. Dive in, share with us, we love that. Liane, thank you so much for joining us.

Liane: Oh, my pleasure. It's a great conversation.

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.