

Mike Domitrz: 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. Respect is exactly what we discuss in this show, so let's get started.

Mike Domitrz: Welcome to this episode. I want to introduce right away our special guest, Dr. Omekongo [Dapinga 00:00:25] is the founding director of Upstander International and professor of Cross-Cultural Communication at American University. He speaks nationally and internationally on issues of leadership and diversity. Thank you Omekongo for being with us today.

Omekongo: Thanks for having me. I really appreciate it.

Mike Domitrz: Absolutely. I want to dive right into this, because you talk about culture. How do you view the culture of respect today in America?

Omekongo: It's dwindling rapidly. I said yesterday just when I was doing random posts online, I feel like a couple of years ago I was saying, "I fear that we're losing the ability to discuss with each other and talk with each other and find common ground. I'm now at a point where I'm saying we've lost it. I feel like we have to get it back, this culture of respect, this "I'm not PC" type of culture that we're dealing with right now. We're living in a culture where we embrace ignorance and we celebrate not knowing about each other, and on top of that, acting what we don't know about each other. It's really scary times.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, I always find that a interesting conversation when people talk about, "It's too politically correct". Usually what they're referring to is offensive or degrading language.

Omekongo: That's right.

Mike Domitrz: So what you actually ... We go, "Wait a second. Are you actually saying being respectful is politically correct? That's what you're calling politically correct? Because I want you to treat somebody with respect? That's being too politically correct?" That's what I see happening. Is that what you're describing there?

Omekongo: That's exactly what I see happening. When you see people saying, "I don't care what gender you self-identify as, I'm going to say this. I don't care what you call yourself in terms of your religion, I'm going to say this. You are this." Those basic, basic fundamental issues that we were all taught, that many of us at least were taught, about common courtesy, calling somebody by their name. All of those things. Again, it's not they're just disappearing, they're being celebrated. People are celebrating being ignorant and not knowing.

Omekongo: Dr. King said the two most dangerous things on the planet are sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity. All of us are sincerely ignorant on some issue. But most of us, when we find out we're ignorant, we seek to learn better. But

conscientious stupidity is, "I don't know and I don't care to know." Or, "I know and I'm just going to ignore it." Both of those are incredibly dangerous.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and they're built in the self-righteous. Don't get me wrong. We can all be self-righteous. So I'm not saying that any of us haven't been or aren't daily, weekly, yearly, whatever. We can be self-righteous. But it's this idea that I love that you're bringing up is the important aspect of it, is that it's taking pride in, "I don't care. I don't care what makes you feel bad. That's your problem."

Omekongo: That's right. Once we realize it, again I'll quote Dr. King again. Learning to live together as brothers, and I'll add as sisters, or perish as fools. At some point we have to realize that we were all in this together. We have to realize what affects one person should affect you, because if you don't act when you see it, it's just a matter of time before it's in your door as well. I think it was a great quotation that talked about, and I'm paraphrasing, when they came for one group, I didn't say anything because I wasn't one. When they came for the socialists, I didn't care because I wasn't that group. When they came for the ... And I'm just making up different groups here now. When they came for the Jewish people, I didn't say anything because I wasn't part of that group. When they came for the Black people, I didn't say anything. Now, they come for me and nobody's here to support me.

Omekongo: So I know the first person's name. His name was [Neman 00:04:22], I know he had different groups in there. But the idea is the same. If you don't stand up when you're seeing other people suffering, it's just a matter of time before it comes to your door and nobody's going to be there to have your back either.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and this is a point that I brought up in the past too, which is, those of us who are fighting to create a culture of respect also, we have to treat the counter-voice individuals with dignity and respect, or we have no chance of transformation for them or us in creating that culture. Because I think what happens is, what you're saying the quote from Martin Luther King Jr. about conscientious stupidity is then what happens is some of us, not all but some of us, will go see how stupid they're being, and that's not what you mean by that. But that's my saying, "Hey, we can all fall into conscientious stupidity." But when we go to the individual and like look how stupid they're being, now we're playing back into exactly what we don't want to be treated.

Mike Domitrz: We don't want them treating people with a lack of dignity and respect, but we're treating them with a lack of dignity and respect. So I can say, "Wow, we need to discuss our core values here, and where we disagree, or our beliefs or our behaviors," without attack of the individual.

Omekongo: Absolutely. Look, I teach at American University and I speak at college campuses across the country. So at American University, I teach Cross-Cultural Communication, like you said. The first thing I tell them on the first day of class is, "Look, this is a free space. My classroom is not a classroom where you're

going to get graded on if you think like me. I'm out there on social media, you can easily see what I think about issues. I don't care what you think about anything. What I care is how you think. I care how you're informed. If you are somebody who just watches CNN all day or only watches FOX all day, or only watches MSNBC, you have a one-sided opinion on issues. This is a class where you have to explore. I welcome you to explore different ideas, and I welcome you to respect the ideas of others. I don't care if you're liberal or Republican, conservative, Democrat. We have to work on how we think."

Omekongo: To this day, I've been there four years, students will come to visit me, all backgrounds. I've got Muslim, Christian, conservative students, everybody. You take an issues like Black Lives Matter. Really divisive issue in this country right now. People write papers in my class on Black Lives Matter perspectives, supporting it. Some write some All Lives Matter supporting it. They both can get stellar grades in my class, because they show me that they're learning how to think, that they're taking other ideas into consideration, even if they disagree with them. It's called critical thinking and we've lost that in this country. We need to get back to it desperately or we're doomed.

Mike Domitrz: Well, and I love the fact that you bring up, "Do you just watch CNN or MSNBC or do you just watch FOX News?" Even those who go, "No, I watch both", we have to stop and ask ourselves if we are watching both, are we watching them truly, honestly open to both? Or do I love CNN, I go watch FOX News to hate it? Or do I love FOX News and I watch CNN to hate it?

Omekongo: Right, right.

Mike Domitrz: Or do I go there and go, "Hmm, where do they have something that looks objective? Where's the article here that looks objective that I'm not seeing at the other one?"

Omekongo: We grew up, you know, high school and everything. Check your sources, verify your facts. What did Ronald Reagan say back in the ... They trust but verify. Now it's just like in this society where you can curate your information where if we go both to your YouTube page and my YouTube page and look at the side videos, they're all ... My page is going to be completely different, even though it's the same website, because our news gets curated based on what we've been watching before.

Omekongo: So you can, nowadays, you can only listen to Rush Limbaugh, you can only listen to Wolf Blitzer, you can only listen to Rachel Maddow, you can only listen to Stephen Colbert, and get fed the same thing. Like you said, you can go to that network and go, "Yeah, yeah!" Then you can go to the other network and be like, "Boo, boo, boo!" Because you're looking for that. It's like waiting to speak, as opposed to listening to what someone else has to say. I believe that we can do better. That's why I teach. That's why I engage young people, because I believe they're going to save us.

Mike Domitrz: So how do we do it? What are steps each of us can take to try to transform this situation from where it currently is?

Omekongo: The first thing is we have to start genuinely listening. You know, someone once said we have two ears and one mouth. We're supposed to use them proportion. Stop waiting to speak and actually hear what somebody has to say, first of all. Take notes when they're talking. Ask them follow-up questions. What we do in this society is we're extremely dismissive. We're just quick to say, "Oh that's not true. That's not true. That's not true, because ...", whatever.

Omekongo: So for example, I was applying for a job once. I was told that I couldn't get this job. They told me to my face, because we needed to hire more women. I would never walk out of that room and walk up to a woman and say, "See, I know what it's like to be discriminated against because of my gender", and diminish their whole experience in this country. So the first thing we have to do is genuinely listen.

Omekongo: The second thing we have to do is we have to actually educate ourselves by diversifying our sources. This is hard work. If you're a Wall Street Journal Guy or a Washington Post guy or whatever, you actually have to go and pick up a different source, two or three different sources. See what people are saying about diverse perspectives, and then make your conclusion and engage in the discussion.

Omekongo: Those are the basic steps right now, and realize it's okay, you still may not agree, but inform yourself. Make your decision based on an informed idea, and we can start to find common ground. I've got a student right now, Republican student, staunch conservative guy, that came into my office today. We were talking, having great conversation, and he knows where I stand on certain issues. We disagree on a lot. He left my office hours asking me for a recommendation for a job that he's applying for. I'm like, "Absolutely." Because we find the areas we agree on, the areas we may have disagreement on, but he doesn't look at me and say I'm less American than he is, and I wouldn't dare do that to him.

Omekongo: So we have to do that. Can we sit down and hear? When we go back to Black Lives Matter, there are real issues that the African-American community is facing in this country. There are also real issues that people in law enforcement face as it relates to how they're being perceived. Now, if you come from a background where you've been on the receiving end of some police misconduct, you're instantly going to go pro Black Lives Matter. If you come from a side where you've got law enforcement in your family, you're thinking about your uncle's a cop and you've never seen him do wrong, your mother's been a sheriff forever, you're coming from a side where you're siding with the cops first. Okay, you start at point C, I start at point A, how do we get to B?

Omekongo: That's what we need to be working on in this country. The problem is we live in this soundbite snippet culture, where we're just hearing one thing and we're automatically going off the rails. We have to do better.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and I love the discussion of listening. Everybody can relate to this, because if you've ever been in a relationship ... Now realize it can be parent/child, which most of us have had one of those. Could be marriage, could be any friendship, where you actually start to get into a debate. What 95% of us do when we're in a debate is we are already counter-arguing the first three words of your sentence. You're about to talk for a minute, and I took the first five to 10 seconds, and I am now pre-debating in my mind those 10 seconds. The next 50 seconds, you say, "Yeah, I'm not hearing. I'm not hearing."

Mike Domitrz: Then I respond to your first 10 seconds, and you're even more infuriated because you said 50 seconds more past that, and we're so off-subject now. We don't know how to just hold in place, and not wait to talk but just be present in place. I was the worst at this for years, because I loved to debate. Then you have to recognize, debate's not about what I say next. It's about listening and trying to learn and maybe don't try to debate but instead engage and learn and discover.

Omekongo: This is where it's gotten worse, Mike, is that now as you know, we live in this microwave society. So everything has been sped up. If you go to a website and it doesn't load in six seconds, you go to the next thing. You don't have to print out pictures anymore. You see it instantly. All of these things, you know, social media. You put something out there, automatically you're getting liked. All of this stuff has affected our ability to process because we're so used now to having everything happen quickly. We're also making up our minds quickly. As I said before, as Donna Ford said ... Actually she said the less we know about each other, the more we make up. Someone else said we make up our minds quickly, and we change them slowly. That's part of the problem. Everything we do is hyper now. That affects the conversations we're able to have or not have.

Mike Domitrz: Absolutely. So what are ways that we can watch ourselves from triggering into that mistake of making our mind up instantly, but yet changing it slowly?

Omekongo: Asking ourselves, "Why do I think this about that person?" So if you're white and you see a black person and you automatically clutch your purse walking down the street, you have to start interrogating yourself, "Why?" If you see somebody who you assume to be Muslim and they're checking in with you at the airport and you automatically hope they get more security, you have to ask yourself why. Then once you ask yourself why, you have to ask yourself, "Is this right? How can I fix this?" That leads to you looking around and checking your information stream.

Omekongo: For example, is my social media ... Are my feeds, are they just echo chambers where I just hear these same stories repeated? You have to ask yourself, "Who

taught me this particular group is a criminal or is a terrorist?", and start interrogating that. Once you start interrogating that, and you will hopefully come to the conclusion that you have been programmed, you have been brainwashed to think that way about a certain group of people. So on your social media, if you follow particular people, start engaging in conversations with other people. Remember social media used to be a place where you engage? Now it's a place where we attack. So let's start bringing that back. Start going to a page and say, "Hey, I'm just asking questions here." You know, sometimes because everything is so heightened right now, you might get shut down by some people. But there are going to be some other people like me, like you, who are going to say, "No, it's actually this way. Maybe you should read this side. Maybe you should read this book."

Omekongo: But look, check this out. What did the [inaudible 00:15:26] Research Center say? Last year, about 25% of Americans admitted to not reading a book of any sort, audio book, ebook, physical book. So that's the work. You can't lead if you don't read.

Mike Domitrz: Omekongo, when you were talking about social media and being willing to find people saying different things, some people really feel the world on a very sensitive level. It can almost be toxic for them to go into those counter-culture environments. So how do you select which of those voices do you go onto and engage? Like you said, you could get attacked. You could get shut down, but there are some ... It's a careful fine line. Because if you go into some, it's 95% attack you down, shut you down, 5% healthy. To get to the healthy, it's just brutal.

Omekongo: Yeah, so what I would do, for example, is I would go ... Let's say, coming to Black Lives Matter, or let's say the #MeToo movement for example. I would go, like if I was on Twitter, which is the main one I use, I would scroll through the hashtags on #MeToo and see what different people are saying. I would look and see if there are certain people who are coming off as somewhat objective or at least not attacking, even though they're strong in their views and engage them. Because you can look at the thread, and you'll see some people just say, "All men are dogs, and you need to accept it", and that's just the end of the day. You'll see some other people who are saying, "We need to take every accusation seriously because yes, it is true that most of the accusations are real but there have been some instances where women have lied. We don't want that to destroy a positive movement." That's somebody you want to engage with.

Omekongo: But if you just go to the person who just has one strong opinion one way or the other, "All women are lying" or "All men are dogs", you're not going to have a productive conversation. But again, you have to do that work. So you can find Facebook groups and different people. Find those folks. That's how you start. But some of us are looking for a fight. Some of us know that if we go to certain people, they're automatically going to shut us down. Then we say, "See? I tried."

That's not genuine. That's not genuine. Those are some more ways you can do that is by start checking the feeds of people and seeing if it's somebody you can actually engage with. It doesn't have to be somebody with a million followers. Sometimes it's better that they have few followers, because as you know what happens is those people who respond to you with a bunch of followers, they're responding to you, but they're really just talking to their followers. "Look at this idiot Omekongo asking me about this #MeToo, like come on." That's person's not talking to me. They're talking to their followers.

Omekongo: So maybe the person who may have fewer followers but is interested in a genuine conver- I've had some incredible conversations like that on Twitter just yesterday by doing that. And don't engage in any name-calling. Don't engage in any name-calling. Somebody who is engaging in name-calling, they're waiting to call you names, too. I don't do that either.

Mike Domitrz: Right, well and I love that you gave the feed example of Twitter, because Twitter really does allow that quickly. Facebook is much harder to do that, because one, Facebook is showing you your own bubble. They're algorithms are making sure of that. I know there are people I used to see that have very different opinions than mine that I rarely see now. I would have to intentionally go back and be clicking their stuff for Facebook to send it back my way. So Facebook makes that harder. But Twitter, you're just scrolling. You can scroll through a million people's comments. So I love that. That's such a brilliant insight of just scroll and see who's having an intellectual conversation versus pure emotion/attack conversation.

Omekongo: Right, and let's not forget that what they talked about with the Russia investigation, that whole thing with the bots. I mean, there have been some situations where some of us have been literally arguing with people who were not real. They were created just to crop out information automatic responses to things. So when you scroll through the feed. You can tell very clearly if somebody's an actual person by the thoughtfulness of what they're actually saying, no matter what side of the debate they lie on.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and that's the danger, the unknown. That's where you've really got to, like we said before, you have to do your research. No doubt about it. Now you and I both work to create a culture of respect. That's what we're both out there doing. What do you think is next in line to creating that culture of respect, to igniting that in organizations, in communities ...

Omekongo: Honest conversations. When we look at what happened at the Jewish synagogue, as tragic as that story is and heartbreaking on so many levels, let's also talk about the fact that the Muslim community in that area, at yesterday morning's check when I last checked, raised over \$80,000 to support those families. When hateful attacks have happened against Muslims in that area, from what I'm reading, members of that synagogue and Christian groups came together to support them.

Omekongo: What I'm saying is that there's a lot more going on the ground, if we go beyond the media rhetoric that we see that's out there. Too many times, we're quick to just go to social media, but maybe we should spend some time looking at local news stories. I know there's been some issues as well in local news and some of the programming issues, but generally speaking, the local news stories are more likely to share stories of people working together. Things that are happening for Thanksgiving, or the hurricane season. You'll see a story of different men or women who put out their speed boat and went door to door to pull people up.

Omekongo: Going into ... I believe there's a Twitter feed or a company called Upworthy, where they just list good deeds that people are doing. Start doing things so you can start to feel good. I saw a story yesterday, it went viral on Facebook, of a gay student who asked a high school jock like football star who's not gay or anything like that ... Asked him to the dance or something. It was like on video. The guy who was not gay said yes. It was like this huge deal. Just those little stories, it can show you that there's still good in the world. It's not about whether you agree with different positions or sexual orientations. Where can you go to find humanity? People reaching out and supporting each other, not condemning each other. Even if that high school jock said no, he wouldn't have done it in the way where he pushed him and said, "You're an evil child in the face of God. You need to be this." You know what I'm saying? It's like [inaudible 00:22:17].

Omekongo: Find those examples, because unfortunately the big networks are not interested in showing that on a regular basis. They're also interested ... I mean, some of us haven't had to realize that. Many news networks that we're watching now are not news networks, and they're not journalists. A lot of these guys are personalities who read teleprompters really well. That's why we listen to one person that we like. But we don't have that face journalism on many of these major shows anymore. So you have to look for that.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, absolutely. How did you get here? What was your journey?

Omekongo: Well, for me, growing up in Boston with this name, I was tormented heavily. My whole family, we were beaten up and bullied because people hated people with names that sounded different. Growing up in Boston in the 70s and 80s and the 90s, Tarzan all over the television, and people calling us African Bush Boogie and beating us up just for wearing African things when we went to school. I grew up in a culture where I was condemned just for trying to be who I was. As you can hear, I don't have a stereotypical African accent, but again, people just heard the name and the less they knew about me, the more they made up. They made up their minds quickly and changed it slowly.

Omekongo: So growing up feeling suicidal and depressed for that and a lot of other reasons, as I started to learn more about my culture, a little bit more about my history and started to develop pride for myself, I start to realize that my job is to help

create cultures where no other child feels like I felt. That led me to speaking to kids in schools and that led to the work as an adult, working with companies and corporate groups and government groups, anywhere where people want to create climates where their employees feel celebrated and not tolerated. It led to that work as well.

Omekongo: So that's how I got here. I didn't want people to deal with what I had to deal with. It's not fair, it's not right. Everybody should go into a place feeling like they belong. I wanted to do my part to help create cultures of acceptance.

Mike Domitrz: What was the point that created that either triggering moment that said, "No, I'm going to do something differently here", or "Something needs to be done"? What was the catalyst for you? Because this did come from hurt and from pain and from negative experiences. So what was that pivotal point?

Omekongo: So my parents are activists. They fought for democracy in African countries across the globe. When I was in the seventh grade, my father went to Zambia and they tried to assassinate him. So for my entire seventh grade year, he was in a coma after having had his head bashed in. So that was the year I acted up the most in school. That was the year I felt the most dejected. That was the year where I just wanted to give up, suicidal and everything. He came back and having that presence back in my life, I wanted to leave that school. It was a very great school, Boston High School, oldest high school in the country, but I didn't feel like I belonged there.

Omekongo: He came back, developed a little bit of amnesia. So he forgot that he and my mom forced me to go to that school. So when the school form came out, he said, "You can go anywhere we wanted now." I was like, "Wow, I can go to a different school, to a [inaudible 00:25:33] school now with some of my other friends." I said, "No, I'm going to go back to that school and I'm going to bust my behind and do my best." What I did was, I also realized that same year, because of the bullying I was experiencing, Mike, I was running away from my culture.

Omekongo: So my full name is Omekongo [inaudible 00:25:51]. Because I wanted to fit in, I would say, "Just call me O" I would hide my culture. When he came back, I said, "He's worked so hard for me. My mom's worked so hard for me. We have such a strong history. I'm going to start embracing my history." As soon as I started embracing it and celebrating my culture like I saw other cultures doing the way they should be, rightfully so, my grades started to change. My head started to prop up a little bit more. So that was a defining moment when I realized that I wasn't supposed to hide from who I was, I was supposed to embrace it. And that made me realize, I need to inspire other people to embrace and celebrate who they are as well, because that's where the true self-esteem lies. So that was my turning point.

Mike Domitrz: Well, thank you for sharing. It's incredibly powerful. You're a big reader. You talked about it earlier. You can't lead without reading. There's three books that

you recommend. A couple of them I know better than one. So Think and Grow Rich was one of the first really self-development books of any kind I ever read by Napoleon Hill. That's one of your three. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. Obviously, the world knows of that book. That doesn't mean everybody knows about it, though. Then Stamped From the Beginning, by Dr. Ibram Kendi, I believe is the correct name.

Omekongo: Ibram, Ibram Kendi.

Mike Domitrz: Thank you, thank you for that correction. Ibram Kendi. Can you tell us why these three?

Omekongo: Well, Think and Grow Rich, I think it's important that we develop a wealth mentality which isn't just associated with money. But just an idea of an no excuse mentality. The book celebrates a commitment to ... And of course, it's about making money. But it's about so many other things. A commitment to being your best, a commitment to getting out there and building your network, because your network determines your net worth. Showing you how to create a blueprint to get whatever you want out of life. We need that today. We've always needed that. We're not getting that in school, we're not getting that anywhere. That's why we're seeing levels of depression amongst Americans that rivals the levels of depression we saw during The Great Depression. In some cases, it's even more. Because now you get to see everybody else doing well on television but you. You didn't have that during The Great Depression like we do now with shows like Cribs and back in the day, Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. So that's why I recommend that book.

Omekongo: The other book ...

Mike Domitrz: Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

Omekongo: Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, again, you need to develop the habit. Stephen Covey said you can't talk your way out of a problem that you behaved your way into. So you can't sit there and say, "Oh, I want to be rich and wealthy one day", and all you're doing is buying lottery tickets every week. Or you can't say, "I want to teach people", but you haven't taken an opportunity to learn, get educated yourself. So if you want to be great, you have to study what great people do. Look at their habits.

Omekongo: Les Brown says if you want to keep getting what you're getting, keep doing what you're doing. So if you want to do something different and become something different, you have to do that work. So I would ask people who are the seven people, if you had to pick who you are following right now, and what are their habits? If they're not doing the stuff that's helping you get successful, you need to find new people to follow. So that's why I think that book is great.

Omekongo: Now, Stamped From the Beginning by Dr. Ibram Kendi, completely on the opposite side. That book is about the history of racist ideas in America. The book talks about how ideas of racist propaganda has developed throughout the centuries in America. The reason why I want people to read that is because I want them to see that many of the views that they have been racially formed in this country may be a product of a propaganda system that has been in this country through centuries, through our education, through our media, through our government on many levels. My goal is once you people realize, as Maya Angelou said, "Once you know better, you do better." If you realize that the product of your thinking ... You might have been programmed to think that way because we're all programmed to think a certain way, this could be the first step in changing your viewpoints. Because he said it's not enough to say that you're not racist. You have to say, "I'm anti-racist. I'm against it, and I'm doing the work to change it and I'm fighting it every single day." It's a great book.

Omekongo: I mean, people don't even know about the racist origins of things like Tarzan or King Kong or the minstrel shows or the cartoons that they've been watching. That book talks about those on a deep level. I think people will be shocked if they read that book. It was a National Book Award winner in 2016. He's a colleague of mine at American University. I think we've got to start diversifying our sources. It's a great source.

Mike Domitrz: Thank you so much for the books, for the insights, the brilliance, your expertise you've brought to the table here. Omekongo, this has been a great conversation.

Omekongo: Oh, thank you so much. Hope to do it again.

Mike Domitrz: Absolutely. We'd love to have you back.

Mike Domitrz: This episode's question of the week is: Mike, how do I support others when I'm struggling myself? This is a great question and one that we need to be really, really aware of when it's happening in our lives. That is when we don't personally have the capacity, the bandwidth to help others, we need to pause and be compassionate to ourselves. Take care of ourselves first. Do something that helps fill back up our capacity, our bandwidth. People often use the example of like a glass of water. If your glass of water of life and energy is down to in the last 10% of that glass, at least get that thing back up to 50% full so you have water to pour into somebody else's glass and help them.

Mike Domitrz: Take care of you. Do not put blame, shame or guilt on yourself for taking care of you. The more you take care of you, the more you can give to others. The less you take care of you, the less you have to give to others. So give yourself a break and let others know at the time, let them know that you love them. Let them know that you're here for them. It doesn't mean that you have to dive into everything they're going through. There's big difference in saying, "I love you", and "Hey, I want to dive in and help you at this moment." There's a huge

difference. It's okay to say I love you without diving in all the time. Recognize when you have the capacity to dive in, so you can fully be there.

Mike Domitrz: Second of all, if you do dive in and don't have the capacity, it could actually cause more pain for the other person you're trying to help, too. Because now you could become unreliable, and now they feel they're in some ways not being thought of, you don't care about them. More harm is being done by diving in when you don't have full capacity, or at least enough capacity. The thing for this week's question, this episode's question is have compassion to give yourself the capacity first so you can then serve others. So important. Thanks for such a great question.

Mike Domitrz: Thank you for joining us for this episode of The Respect podcast, which was sponsored by The Date Safe Project at DateSafeProject.org. Remember, you can always find me at MikeSpeaks.com.