

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 on this show, so let's get started. This week's guest is my friend, Scott Lesnick of Professional Speaker, and author of two books. Scott believes that respect given can often brighten someone's day, make them smile, and it's easy to do. Scott, thank you so much for being on this week.

Scott Lesnick: Mike, thanks so much. It's wonderful to be on the show. I'm a fan of it and now I get to speak live. That's exciting.

Mike Domitrz: Well, we're thrilled you're on here. For everyone listening, Scott is most known for your memoir, Kid Jack, To Father Story, and it's all about what actually happened to you, what you experienced of having your own children hijacked to another country. It's an amazing experience of really, what do you want to say? Determination, and discipline, and never giving up. Just an incredible story. But, you then, teach people how to do that when they're feeling like their lives are being hijacked, with your book Life jacked, correct?

Scott Lesnick: That is correct. There's just all sorts of lessons that I learned along the way, the hard way, either business wise or in my personal life, as you mentioned. I was able to take some of those lessons, and create presentations that really help professionals, and either personally, or professionally, take a look at what's going on and come up with ways to de-stress, work better, grow communications, and I'll do it, and usually, in hopefully a respectful manner.

Mike Domitrz: Scott, how does respect play into the whole experience you went through?

Scott Lesnick: That's a great question. The first thing it did is, I was so down when my kids were kidnapped, kid jacked. I didn't know exactly what to do. One thing I did know is that if I treated anyone and everyone that I came across with respect because I figured to myself, I never know who's going to have a nugget of information that's going to be able to help me move forward. Instead of curling up into a ball, and giving up, I decided to do the opposite. I wanted to focus on myself staying strong, so I could be strong for my kids, and figure out how to get them home, which I was able to do.

Scott Lesnick: I came up with a crazy plan that worked. It all had to do with taking care of myself, respecting myself, and respecting others because I knew that those people, whoever they are, they were going to have nuggets that would help move me forward or show me a path definitely not to go down.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, because I mean, you have a very difficult challenge in what you were dealing with. I mentioned it briefly for everyone listening. You had your ex, so they are the parent of the children, taking them to another country, which makes getting them back home out of another country, a whole other nightmare of level of difficulty. You had to team with other people to make this

happen. I mean, you had to go through, I would guess ... I mean know you well, so a million channels just to make this happen, correct?

Scott Lesnick: I did and because there were no signed international laws at the time, it's called the HAG Convention on international aspects of child abduction because that treaty hadn't been signed, there was no obligation for my wife, at the time, to return our kids. We were in major doo-doo and I was dealing with people in this country and in other countries. It wasn't so much just respect, but it was listening to what they had to say, without interrupting, and really just giving them the time. Sometimes, people would be repeating themselves, not themselves, but repeating information that I had already heard. I thought, do you know what? Maybe they're going to have something else to say at the end, so just be quiet, respect their time, and listen. That was a real test for me because I didn't have as much patience as I wanted to, at that time.

Mike Domitrz: You're walking right into the question that I love to ask, which you've mentioned, you know, I really want to respect them. I wanted to hear them out. What does respect mean to you, Scott?

Scott Lesnick: To me, respect has to do with admiration and that there's somebody who has a quality, or who's achieved something that makes me respect them. On a level beneath that, you know, if we go more of the verb, you know, admiring somebody deeply, or whatever, I just look at it as respect does go around. I look at respect, and kindness, at least as close cousins. The ability to be friendly, and generous, and considerate to somebody. It gets us a long way in life. I've learned that. As easy as a smile, or letting somebody in when they want to get in front of you when you're driving. All these things, it takes the heat off of us, and off of me, and often times, makes somebody's else's life just a little bit better.

Scott Lesnick: To me, respect is all about just, you know, treating people nicely, but also, if there's folks ... I mean, let's be honest. One of the people who mentored me and helped me in this business was you. I have a great deal, not only of respect for what you did for me when I was coming up in the ranks but what you've done for others, for tens of thousands of others. I look at people that I want to emulate, and respect for my business, and my life. I've been doing that my entire life. I've been looking at others and going, what does she have, or what does he have that I can use to make the person I am better.

Mike Domitrz: Well, thank you for that, Scott. I do appreciate that. I remember when you were first talking with me and you would ask me, "Hey, Mike, who are the people that you think are great speakers?" And then, I shared with you and soon you were at their events watching them. Not only do you ask questions, and want to learn, but you implement. You put into action that learning, which is wonderful. A lot of people ask those questions, and not act on them. You take the action. You respect your journey, and your goal enough to say, "I'll take the actions needed to get to the accomplishment I want to get to."

Scott Lesnick: You're right. Like any journey, or anything that somebody starts new, which I did. I started at the bottom. I respected those around me. I respected the process. I was mentored by wonderful people that did not have to help me and they chose to. And that reminded me of how important we are to one another, and that's allowed me, with ease, give back, whether it's as a speaker, an advisor, or just as a friend, or confident. So many people have helped me along my journey, from being a kid to adulthood, and a couple hiccups along the way.

Mike Domitrz: You mentioned admiration. When a lot of people hear the word admiration, they think that is a reference to somebody having to earn respect. Now, knowing that I know you the way I do, I don't think you mean that. I think you'll give all human being's dignity and respect. They don't have to earn it. Is that true?

Scott Lesnick: It is true. It's something that I have been practicing for decades and I need several more lifetimes to really master, even if I can do it then. As a human being, I still struggle at being respectful every time, admiring the fact that we're all just making it every day, and getting out of bed, and leaving the house, and doing what it takes to be a human being. I do agree, absolutely. I look at every individual as a human being, a good person. If you show me otherwise, I have the ability to walk away too.

Mike Domitrz: I love that you say that, that this is an ongoing journey. I think sometimes when someone listens to a show and an interview, they think, oh, this person has it all down. No, it's an ongoing challenge and journey. How do you ... do you think there's a difference between respect at school, the office, or home, or is it all the same?

Scott Lesnick: It's different and it's the same. Respect should be given to anyone at any age. If you're six months old, or 106, or anywhere in between, respect should be given to you. However, it shows itself differently. Respect at school is different than respect at the office. Respect at the office is sometimes different than respect at home. It doesn't mean that we put on different masks when we leave our house. When you're at the office, you might have on your office mask, that's a respectful person, but this is who you are, and you're fitting into the office lifestyle, and so forth.

Scott Lesnick: When you're a kid at school, and you leave home, you have to put on a mask to survive in that environment too. You're very popular, you're not as popular. We're always looking for ways to gain respect. I believe that at home, it's the same deal, but those masks then come off and we are allowed to be fulling ourselves to show respect, which I think it's the easiest is at home. I kind of know what to expect at home with my family, but once you walk out the door, you never know what's going to come up.

Mike Domitrz: Wouldn't the essence of respect be that what you're describing, that I feel at home, and some people don't feel that at home at all. It can be the worst at home, depending on the environment that they have at home. Let's say that

home is where you can be yourself, is it the essence of respecting ourselves, where that no matter when I am, I am that person. The essence. I'm not saying we're there, or that it's easy to get to. I always find it amazing when I meet someone that no matter where they are, I know they're going to be who they are. Like, they don't care about adapting because they know who they are. To me, that's really powerful.

Scott Lesnick: It's extremely powerful. I hear what you're saying and I love that because it's true. I do know people like that. No matter where you see them, they are, and to me, that is such a freeing natural beautiful thing to see. I have to be honest, [inaudible 00:10:37]. I struggle with that sometimes. If I'm surrounded by a room full of speakers, sometimes, thing go up a notch or two because that room full of speakers is going at a pretty high level, and people want to talk, and share, and so forth. Sometimes, to get up to that buzz, to that level,

Scott Lesnick: I need to pick up who I am almost as if I'm going to be on the stage, or on the platform presenting, but if I'm at home, I'm still the same Scott, but I don't have to elevate myself to another position and I think it's the same at work too. Sometimes people want to be themselves, but because of either politics or cliques or the culture at work, you can't be even though you want to and I think that's really difficult.

Mike Domitrz: There I think you've convinced yourself you can't be.

Scott Lesnick: That's true and we do know and I have seen people who decide, this is me, I'm going to be me all the time. My wife, Meg, is excellent at that. She's one of the people I look up to and highly respect because she is able to be the person she is under any circumstance no matter where she is and that enlightenment, that height that she has accomplished, I haven't accomplished yet. I look at it as I'm above novice obviously, but I'm not at her level, but I'm in training and so I do agree that, yes, you can be and I see that every day here at home with my wife.

Mike Domitrz: And you mentioned earlier the idea that maybe when you leave home you're trying to gain the respect of the workplace or gain the respect at school and I love that you brought that up because I think that's one of the biggest mistakes we make and I have made it throughout my life, I've made this mistake and that is this idea that I'm going to leave and do something to gain respect. I don't need to gain respect is a lesson we're always maybe having to tell ourselves. It's like looking back at yourself as a child, but doing it as an adult and saying, stop doing that, Mike, because you don't need to gain someone's respect, just be who you are. They should either value you or not value you for who you are.

Mike Domitrz: I think the problem is when I think I have to leave and gain something, now I have to do something to gain that and now I'm worried about taking actions or putting of a persona that will give me that respect versus just being myself and being respected for exactly who I am and the exact gifts I have for this world for who I am.

Scott Lesnick: Very well put. One of the things I love about what you're doing and speaking about respect in this podcast and all the speaking you do all over, well North America and the world, is that it is retraining because when you're growing up, there are those moments where you say to yourself, I don't even know who I am, I don't know how I'm going to do this and this is so tough, I just want to survive every day before I get back home from school, but you're right. We do need to retool and retrain ourselves as adults to look at things differently and be comfortable with who we are and realize that what we are is a gift, it's a wonderful thing and we don't have to change. Being oneself is fine. And if there are some folks that don't like that person, there's plenty others that do.

Mike Domitrz: Absolutely and you and I both get to work with organizations around the world. How do you think respect ties in to the five generations currently in the workplace?

Scott Lesnick: One of my passions is speaking on that and the biggest way it ties into it right is watching baby boomers and even older generations and Gen X'ers really understand and see the light bulb go on when we have discussions and it's all about discussing as are so many things in life. That's why you have this podcast. We talk about millennials and how important they are and why they do things differently, why it's going to continue and then I add a little fact that they're the number one generation in America and in the workforce, which some people don't get. I add the fact that they are parents now and they've got kids and all of a sudden people's minds begin to shift and they look at them not as kids anymore, not as children, but full grown adults and I also mention a lot of millennials or X'ers that have some pretty high level positions and the bottom line is, Mike, what I've learned is, the more we respect one another at work and we respect different generations by growing communications and sharing information, the greater our productivity, the greater retention seems to be, and folks at work seem to be happier too, because they look at it as, wow, you actually get me. You're 57 years old and I'm 28 and you actually have discussed things with me, you understand me better. I appreciate that.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and you and I have talked about this before so I'm going to ask you, because it runs right into this, they're really appreciating people from all different perspectives, which you just brought up, is it ever okay to not show respect?

Scott Lesnick: That's a great question. Lots of different answers. My answer is really, really simple. If there's something going on, I'm really good at walking away and I've also learned, and again, I still need several lifetimes to practice this, to curb what I say and to not get into deep conversations when I see things going in a way that's either going to be highly disrespectful. Uncomfortable is different, you can be having a conversation with somebody and have a nice, decent respectful conversation on something you disagree with, but is it ever okay to be disrespectful? There's two answers. Absolutely not, because it's easy enough to just walk away, but at the same time, if something's gone down in your life and you're faced with some decisions that have to be made, sometimes being

disrespectful to somebody is the only way you can get things done and that's really a last resort.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and I'm curious, is that disrespect? I think what you're describing is when you have to strongly stand your ground and fight, stand for something you really, really believe in and against somebody else who could be doing harm. Self-defense, and I don't mean physically self-defense necessarily, it could be emotional self-defense, it could be whatever it is. I don't even think that's disrespect, I think that's actually, operate the highest level of respect for yourself, for your boundaries.

Scott Lesnick: You're right. And there's that fine line that I've struggled with. I have no problem defending myself or respecting myself most of the time, but I think my bigger struggle, and your question is, is it ever okay to be disrespectful? It depends on what the definition of the word is that we want to use. Is it okay for me to not have admiration for somebody or to think their abilities are great, well absolutely. But, is it okay for me to be disrespectful? The simple answer I want to say is no, you should never be disrespectful, but I don't know that I'm that wise yet to figure out how to do that, which is why what you're doing is so important, because folks like me still need to be educated. Zillions of us all over the world.

Mike Domitrz: And I appreciate that and I think it is an ongoing journey. I think it's one of the struggles people have when you talk about respect, when we're talking about this in companies and organizations. They all want to say, well you have to earn my respect and when I tell the whole audience, no, nope, I don't have to. I'm going to respect you because you're a fellow human being. Now, you might professionally value me differently because of something I've done or haven't done or whatever, but treating someone with a basic level of dignity and respect should be across the board and somebody said to me recently, what about somebody who does harm to others, do they still get treated with dignity and respect? This happened in a live show.

Mike Domitrz: I said this is the hardest thing I have to answer, because the answer is yes. And they go, what! What do you mean? I said, here's the problem. If there comes a time where I get to choose who gets respected and who doesn't, that means there comes a time when someone else gets to choose whether I get respected or not and they could come up with a reason that they feel I'm the harm and therefore no longer treat me with dignity and respect, and that is a dangerous line I don't want any of us to be toting.

Mike Domitrz: I can say I treat you with dignity and respect as a fellow human being and still say you have to be held accountable. You still have to go to jail, you still have to go to prison, you still have to ... and still understand you're a human being.

Scott Lesnick: That is such a great point. I think many of the Scandinavian countries are well-known for treating their prisoners, and men and women doing time, with a lot of dignity and respect, something that other countries don't necessarily agree

with, but many studies seem to show, do show that there's a lower recidivism rate in those countries because of the training, the dignity and respect. They're still serving time, but they are taking care of them and training them so that when they leave, they will never see them again behind their walls.

Mike Domitrz: Some people think well, to say respect means that I think they're a great person. No, no, it means they are a person. They're a human being is what it means. I treat you with the respect and dignity because you're a human being and everybody deserves that. Now, that doesn't mean there's other things that you might be treated differently based on what you have or haven't done, but on that basic level, it's so important. Has there been a time, Scott, where you felt you were disrespected?

Scott Lesnick: Absolutely.

Mike Domitrz: What was the result for you? How does that make you feel when that happens?

Scott Lesnick: It makes me feel angry and it also motivates me. Most of the time when it would happen, it was in the professional arena, in corporate, and I knew that when that was happening it was incorrect and it was almost a challenge then for me to go, okay, you're calling me out and you're incorrect or you're stating something that isn't true. Now it's on me to right that and to show that that's incorrect and here is why.

Mike Domitrz: I love that you gave that example because you and I are built the same way and when I was growing up, what I mean is as a young adult even, 20s and 30s, somebody disrespected me, I'm like, let's go, let's roll. And I don't mean like let's roll like a fight. I mean, you're about to be proven wrong. That was my ... same thing you're describing, like oh, you think I can't, huh? Watch, sit back and watch, because it's about to ... whatever you thought I couldn't do is about to happen.

Mike Domitrz: And what's sad about that is that, that kind of degradation is what fires a lot of us up and I think what happens is, when we're younger, and I mean

Mike Domitrz: Younger, and it could be 20's, 30's 40's, it just depends what phase of life we are in when I say younger. We feel we need an external fire at our feet, and so we use disrespect as that versus realizing why don't I go somewhere I don't have to play this game.

Scott Lesnick: I love that Mike because sometimes you can make the decision to go somewhere where you don't have to play that game. Sometimes it's a hard decision and it comes at a cost. I've recognized that inside me, there's this passion and fire that's driven me every since I was a kid. It would drive me to do some things that were really successful and some things where I just fell straight on my face. Had to pick myself up and dust myself off and put some [inaudible 00:32:46] on my cuts. But, the bottom line is I didn't need somebody to be

disrespectful to drive me but I did realize that when that occurred, it instantly set off something inside of me that say oh yeah, okay. I'll show you, and it was the same thing, it wasn't going outside and fighting. It was just figuring out a way to get from Point A to Point B where they either said I hadn't or couldn't go, and I did it.

Scott Lesnick: Mike, can I ask you a question? Can I turn this around once and ask you one question?

Mike Domitrz: Sure.

Scott Lesnick: How do you show respect to everyone because it is such a challenge. And I have watched you and you do it very well and I know it's difficult for us, but I'm still growing. I'm still learning and I love that. But how do you find the ability to show respect to people even when, either I really don't agree with them or you may not even like them very much at all.

Mike Domitrz: Well, it's, I don't always. We all fail in the struggle at times. I would say that for me the key is in those moments, because it can happen from stage. Because I deal with such a sensitive topic. It can happen with my audience member in the middle of a show. Somebody can say something really outrageously harmful potentially or degrading or disrespectful. And back in the day, two decades ago, I would have just shut that person down. And the audience would have been like, wow, he owned that moment. You know that kind of a thing. But I didn't create a learning opportunity. And what I realized was, that's the person I'm here to connect with. That's the person I'm meant to meet, is that person.

Mike Domitrz: So when they present that comment, this is our opportunity for me to provide a learning opportunity. I can't do that if I'm looking down on them for what they said. They're gonna feel that so I have to connect with us on an equal level. I have to learn about you to understand how you came to that place. And if I can figure out how you came to that place, maybe I can open up a door of possibility of a new place you can go. Or, maybe I'm wrong and when I learn where you came from, I might have a new perspective that you helped me grow in that moment. And I become smarter because of you even though I thought you were an idiot when you said that.

Scott Lesnick: I love that because I went through that literally last week at a conference when I was done keynoting people really liked it, it went well. And there was one lady who came up afterwards and I could tell from her body language that something was gonna go down. You know, the first things out of her mouth was I wanna tell you I really enjoyed your presentation. Here's two areas that I didn't like, and here's why. Most people that were coming up and were saying things we just very positive.

Scott Lesnick: This was my learning moment and the same thing happened to me because she expected me to shut her down. And I didn't, I looked her right in the eye I said,

you know, you are giving me something to think about. I don't know what I'm going to do with it yet but I'd like to continue this conversation via email or phone call. Here's my card, because I really, I hear what you are saying, I'm just finishing from speaking so I can't fully develop my thoughts on it. But you are definitely on to something and I know that you believe wholeheartedly in what you are saying so I don't want to dismiss that. I actually want to learn and grow the conversation.

Scott Lesnick: So I'm waiting to hear back from her. I hope she will but it was one of those moments where, I think like you, I was like maybe that's the person I was meant to connect with because she's taking me now and taking my mind over to this. And it had to do with respect, she felt I was being disrespectful by saying something about a certain topic when I was talking about generations. I didn't see it that way. I wanted to find out why she felt that way and see maybe, maybe I'm doing things wrong. It's nice to have that ability to talk.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, and to know when it's okay to know this isn't gonna go anywhere, move on. I think that's the other essential element you need in moments like that. Where you may realize we are not gonna get to a common ground here and this could just get uglier. That's not the purpose of why I need to be either in this moment right now, or on this planet right now. I'm gonna move on.

Mike Domitrz: I mean it could be with family and friends. Maybe you walk into a room and everybody is having a conversation that you know is gonna trigger you into debate mode. And this is, even though you may win at it, you may be successful at it, you may get a rush from it. You are not gonna, it's gonna drain your energy, overall outlook. Why do I need to do that, let's go to the other room where that's not happening. So making choices where we also protect our own boundaries is critical in those moments.

Scott Lesnick: That's a great point Mike, that is why I love to learn. That's why your podcast is, as soon as you were kind enough to ask me if I'd be on, I was like oh my gosh yeah. I love the topic, I love talking about respect but at the same time I began to think, wow there's some things I do really well and things I need to do better. This is going to help and listening to the podcast helps and now just hearing some of your explanations is like, yeah it's not just me. Other people go through this too.

Mike Domitrz: Oh, absolutely. We are all on the journey together. And speaking of the journey together, you have a book that you love that I absolutely love too, The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. What do you love about that book Scott?

Scott Lesnick: What I love about it is it completely changed the way I looked at myself as an individual. They just boiled it down, Toltec Indians from Mexico. Four Agreements that you could live your life by. And I also realized that when I first came upon the book 10 years ago, it's not a hard read. It's not a think book but what's in there is so powerful that again, it would take me lifetimes to master. But with this life that I have, I've been able to make some strides moving

forward. And it's really changed how I look at things and how I do things. And I've recommended it to so many people who really dig it and love it. And it's just taught me those four important agreements which you know, I won't rattle off now but I will say are instrumental in how I lead my life and how it just allows me to focus more and have less stress and less drama in my life.

Mike Domitrz: Love it, thanks for sharing that Scott. And for everyone listening you can find Scott at Scott Lesnick, that's L E S N I C K.com. You know I'll be in touch with you Scott because we are always in touch. I want to thank you so much for joining us.

Scott Lesnick: Mike, it's my pleasure. I wanna thank you too, this was just great.

Mike Domitrz: Awesome. For all of our listeners remember you can join Scott and I in this conversation as far as asking questions after the show by going to our Facebook group which is The Respect Podcast Discussion Group. The Respect Podcast Discussion Group, ask questions, engage, we'd love to see you there.

Mike Domitrz: This weeks question of the week is from Phil. And Phil asked the question that is one that I've heard frequently, so I think it's really important we answer. The question is, how do you respect someone who has disrespected and potentially disgraced you and or your family, especially if they are a part of that family?

Mike Domitrz: And a lot of people struggle with this, there's someone in their stratosphere in their life who has caused harm and how do I treat them with dignity and respect? Here's the key competent for us to think of, I don't have to like the person. I don't have to love them, I don't have to want to be around them. I don't have to spend time with them but here's what makes us unique in that we are a civilized society. What makes us civilized is that we treat all people with dignity and respect, including those who have done harm. We treat them with dignity and respect, that does not mean we need to spend time with them. That does not mean we need to include them in our livelihood, in our schedule, in our activities.

Mike Domitrz: Those are all different discussion so I think it's super important for somebody to understand if I run into another human being, treat that person with dignity and respect, that doesn't mean I need to have that person in my life. You can choose to end relationships because they are unhealthy for your life. And some people say I'm gonna work through those relationships to create them healthy again, that's your choice. But there's a big difference there so we want to clarify. How and why is to remember that I am civilized and I believe that every human being deserved to be treated with dignity and respect. I wanted that for myself and this person, by the way, might not have given that to me. Which is why I know every human being deserves it and so I'm going to treat every human being with dignity and respect. Great question Phil.

Mike Domitrz: Do you know what I would love? I would love to hear your answer to this weeks question of the week. So would you please answer what your answer would have been if you were asked that question today on the show. All you do is go to our Facebook page, we have a special group where we have these discussions called The Respect Podcast Discussion Group. So The Respect Podcast Discussion Group and share with us what would your answer have been to this weeks question of the week and take a moment, post us a new question for future episodes. What question would you like to hear me answer on an upcoming episode. That's all done on Facebook in our special group which is The Respect Podcast Discussion Group. Can't wait to see you there.

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. And remember, you can always find me at Mikespeaks.com.