

Mike Domitrz: Welcome to the Respect Podcast, I'm your host Mike Domitrz from Mike Speaks.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.

Mike Domitrz: Welcome to this week's episode, we wanna get right into this and introduce to Jeanette Bronée. Is that the correct pronunciation Jeanette?

Jeanette Bronée: You are very close indeed.

Mike Domitrz: Founded Path for Life in 2004 to bring awareness to our own power for taking charge of our health avoiding burn out, while also seeking optimal performance at work. She helps leaders and companies rethink performance and culture to create sustainable success. She believes that our best resource is our humanity, and she's given TEDX Talks and speaks at conferences and corporate events about why the competitive edge we are looking for comes from the inside out. Thank you so much Jeanette for joining us.

Jeanette Bronée: Thank you.

Mike Domitrz: What is the correct pronunciation?

Jeanette Bronée: Jeanette Bronée.

Mike Domitrz: Jeanette Bronée?

Jeanette Bronée: Yeah.

Mike Domitrz: All right, excellent. Had to go way back to my middle school French class, so there we go. Thank you for joining us, and you dive right into the conversation here as far as why you do this work. You made a big path change about I believe about 15 years ago. I'm gonna let you describe what shift in your life, what were you doing and what shifted you towards this?

Jeanette Bronée: Yes, I am born in Denmark, so even though my name is French that's just because of my heritage and that. When I came from Denmark at 26 I was in the fashion industry and marketing, and continued in that world after I came to New York. Then all of a sudden I get a phone call and my parents are telling me that my dad has cancer. A lot shifted at that time because all of a sudden we had to have all our focus on how do we figure out how to take care of him. He was telling me he was between stage three and four, so my job was sort of taking most of my time and most of my effort. It was a bit of a conflict there between all of a sudden taking care of my parents. I brought them to America to come and get treated there.

Jeanette Bronée: Within three months my mother got cancer too. All of a sudden I had two people in cancer therapy in two different countries at the same time. Needless to say it was difficult, but what also happened was that my mother died suddenly three months later after she got her cancer and my job fired me. They fired me because now I had to take care of my dad. It was such a clash of everything because not only I had given everything to my work, to my career but I was also facing this situation where wait a minute these people that I care so much about. These people that I thought were around forever or at least till they got older, all of a sudden that all changed. I had to really sit down and really think about how do I choose to live my life, because within a year after that my dad was gone too. It was a big shift change for me to really look at what matters, and why I do what I do. I decided it was time to help people.

Mike Domitrz: I love that, and you've talked about the fact that the industry you were in, the fashion industry, was a really disrespectful industry. What do you mean by that?

Jeanette Bronée: Partly the idea that they look at self care as something like why would you need that? Nobody needs to take care of themselves, you just need to work all the time. That was part of it. My boss would say things to me like I don't need lunch, why do you? But also people are working basically 24/7, which is one of the reasons why they thought I couldn't do my job and take care of my parents at the same time. So that was one part of it, and the other part of it is just that the relationships in that industry are under a lot of pressure because of the way the industry works. The industry is very deadline oriented, very result oriented, which is fine. But when really it's about relationships in that industry as well in any other industry. It was forgotten that it was really the relationships that carry us through into really thriving and performing at our best. People were burning out left and right.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah, there are many industries, there's probably lots of people listening right now that can relate to this. Going geez my industry has a lot of burn out too. It could be for various different reasons. You step away, your dad passes away, and now you're starting on your own. You're starting your own business. What was your goal, at that moment you decided hey I'm gonna speak out on. What was your mind set at that point? What was the topic you wanted to address?

Jeanette Bronée: Yeah, I was personally told that it was only a matter of when I was gonna get cancer to now because both my parents were gone. They were sort of assuming that because of my family history. This was 15 years ago, so we didn't know as much about how our genes come into expression and how much we can take care of ourselves. I got a little, for lack of a better word, pissed off. I didn't want that verdict, I didn't want to just be a victim of my history. I wanted to know how I could affect my destiny. I also felt that people didn't know about taking care of themselves, so I completely shifted and changed, and went back to school and studied nutrition. Now I had already studied nutrition for my own sake, and I had studied mindfulness for years and been a practitioner of

mindfulness for years. It wasn't completely foreign to me, it was more of this is my personal passion and why can't I do this for other people too?

Jeanette Bronée: I founded Path for Life because I wanted people to not only get the tools to take better care of themselves, and take charge of their health. But also kind of knowing that's it okay that we do that. That we matter and one of the things I think was the big wake up call for me was this idea that the relationship we have with our very own body is one of just using it. What we really need to do is start honoring and respecting it because it is really our most essential tool for everything we're doing every day, right?

Mike Domitrz: When somebody says yeah, but you know if I can't enjoy all the desserts and the burgers and the fries. What's good living if you can't enjoy it? How do you respond to those comments?

Jeanette Bronée: I have two comments to that, one is when people say to well you gotta live a little. I'm actually saying yeah that's exactly my point, I'm trying to actually live better and longer. Which is why I'm taking care of myself, because we need to turn the bucket upside down I think. A lot of times we want all of these pleasure foods because we haven't been taking care ourselves all day long. So we're so drained and we just can't think any further. We just want comfort, so that's one of the reasons I think we sometimes we have to turn the bucket upside down. Be like well what comes first? How amazing we feel, so we don't need the comfort food after. That's one part of it.

Jeanette Bronée: The other part of it is too yes we are not talking about always eating just perfect, healthy food. Because we do want some of these other things too. Our relationship with food is social, it's about connecting with people. Since we're talking about how are we respecting both ourselves and other people here, like how can we respect all of our relationships that we have with food. Looking at, I talk about food memories and triggers, there is so much about the stories that we have that's connecting us to family and events and friends. I think we need to respect that we have those stories as well, and just not have this mindset that it has to be perfect all the time. It's a yes and kind of relationship I think.

Mike Domitrz: Let's go back to the first part you said, I think that's powerful about what you referenced. What if you could take care of your body, your spirit, your energy in such a way that when you came home food is not what you looked to for pleasure or for comfort. Food is an energy source, which is what it actually is. On the biological system of why we eat is for energy, for fuel. How does it help people understand well that just doesn't seem realistic for some people. I come home tired, what do you mean come home in a such a place that I'm energized and I don't turn to food that way?

Jeanette Bronée: Right. One of the things I teach people and companies is to bring self care with them to work, so when we can take better care of our various central needs. Even water, food, meal breaks, and have those things as part of our work style

as I call it or work day. If we can integrate work and life in that way, so that we can bring self care with us into the workplace that we don't feel so neglected and tired all day long. We can actually go home with an energy to spare. A lot of times I work with people that realize oh wait a minute, I'm not crashing at nine o'clock anymore at night or eight o'clock. They have time for their kids, because they have mental and emotional space leftover. They're not worn out, because they've taken care of themselves all day long. In terms of just the essential fuel that we need, water, food, and of course we need our sleep as well.

Jeanette Bronée: The pauses that we integrate into our work day, where we just understand that our nervous system needs a little bit of down time to work at its best. If we keep pushing and pushing and pushing, which is often what happens at work. Like we push ourselves harder to do more when we forget that the way our bodies really work at its best is to just have this on/off/on/off/on/off in intervals. We functioning best in intervals.

Mike Domitrz: So what are specific steps we can take at work to keep that energy consistent throughout the day and into the evening?

Jeanette Bronée: One of the things I always see is that people are dehydrated, which is essential for just your focus, feeling tired. A lot of times people get irritable when they're sort of dehydrated and hangry. Part of that disrespectful environment that we sometimes work in is just because people are hangry. We can avoid that, but so if we can actually schedule our day in such a way that we're actually taking either water breaks or at least pee breaks. Because what I often hear is people don't drink enough water, because they don't have time to go to the restroom and pee. It's such a silly, stupid, little thing and yet it has such a huge impact on our performance and our relationships every single day. So just water, scheduling to have these meal breaks.

Jeanette Bronée: A lot of teams if you look at team sport for example, one of the ways that they create a culture of bonding and care within each other, within the team is to just have meals together. So coaches that coach teams to work better together just sit down and have a meal without necessarily talking about work or what we need to do. When I worked with Esprit back in the 80s that was one of the things that were essential for the culture was that we actually say down and shared meals for lunch. It made us work completely differently together because we had a different relationship to who we were as human beings. It created this inner fuel of I matter, I belong, I am feeling safe. Also, the physical part I'm not working on survival mode where I'm just wearing myself out every day. Again, come back to this idea that we need to actually honor what it is that our human needs are. Both on a physical, emotional, and social level.

Mike Domitrz: What I love about this, you know this is a respect podcast. A lot of times people fail to think about respecting that body, respecting that energy source. You gave us two very specific skill sets the hydrate, the scheduled meal breaks. Anything during those, between those that we can do in those office hours? Because you

mentioned the start and stop, and we gotta be able to stop. You briefly mention that earlier. We gotta have those pit stops, so what would be some additional ways?

Jeanette Bronée: Our mind and our focus works optimal at 45 to 90 minute intervals. Our nervous system really needs just five to ten minutes of down time. Even though we think that we need to keep going, it's actually show that our attention and productivity goes down the longer we work. So we don't actually do more, and so if we can instead look at it and really respect these pauses and breaks as a culture. Where we actually make meetings 45 minutes instead of 60 minutes, which have also been shown to be just as effective and efficient as a 60 minute meeting. If you do it 45 minutes and give us ourselves and each other this disconnect from the on all the time. Where we can just switch off, so our nervous system doesn't get as wired into this exhausted place. Where we're pushing on stress and survival mode the entire day. The pauses help us focus better while we're at work, but it also helps us not go home so drained.

Mike Domitrz: Let's reverse it, let's say the person who comes home and dreads all they have to do when they get home. Now it's not about the work, now it's about I get home and I have all these expectations or could be stress that I'm putting myself, but it's stress.

Jeanette Bronée: One of the conversations I had with a woman that was in a leadership position at work, and then she came and she was shifting into mother gear. She was like I'm a mother, I need to take care of the household and the food. I asked her why is putting food on the table just one person's job? She was like well I don't what exactly do you mean? My husband sort of helps in that way, I was like well if it becomes a family event? She was really stressed out over the fact that she felt it was her responsibility and it may still be her responsibility as in the choices she's making. But it wasn't her responsibility all alone to create this family meal. Now they're actually completely changed the dynamic at meal time, and everybody's part of creating the meal.

Jeanette Bronée: They're actually starting family time much earlier in the kitchen, because she's not the only one standing there getting ready. Her daughter comes in and helps, and it's the joy of having that meal time has increased. Instead of becoming a dread, so that is one that I see people changing their relationship with what it means. To not only take care of ourselves, but also our family.

Mike Domitrz: You're a big believer in mindfulness.

Jeanette Bronée: Yes.

Mike Domitrz: Where does that show in that daily plan, that strategy?

Jeanette Bronée: In two ways, there are probably more ways than that, but in two ways for now at least here. One way is that we're actually mindful about the fact that we have

these human needs and just asking ourselves. Ask a better question of ourselves that says we tend to be like why am I not doing these? Why I cannot this, why cannot I that? If we can shift that and be a little bit more mindful about how our self talk effects us, we can shift then that question to be what I do I need so that I can XY and Z. Instead of beating ourselves up we are now coaching ourselves and supporting ourselves in figuring out how to solve or how to give ourselves what we need. Mindfulness can be a very active and engaged way to just shift our mindset, shift our way of asking questions also of each other.

Jeanette Bronée: You know as a leader, some leaders, tend to get upset and wonder why something's not happening. Instead of having the focus on how can we get this to work? Like what do we need as a team or what do you need as a human being, what do you need so that you can solve this problem? That's one way that mindfulness can work in a very active and engaged way, because it really just helps us focus on what it is we want, rather than what's not working. [crosstalk 00:16:56].

Mike Domitrz: I wanna pause on that one before we jump to the next one. I think that's also great for if you're in relationships, to be able to ask the question what do you need right now for this to take place? If your partner is stressing, they're emotional.

Jeanette Bronée: Very much so.

Mike Domitrz: It could be your children are stressing, what do you need right? I don't know what I need. Well why don't you just take some time to evaluate that. Why don't you take the time to figure out what you need for that to happen. It allows us to focus on the possibility versus the frustration, which is exactly what you were referencing. I love it, I just wanna pause for people to think hey I can do this for those around me too.

Jeanette Bronée: I think we can do it everywhere. I think it's funny because one of the things I notice is a lot of times somebody will use that skill to focus on finding the solution in their job. When it comes to the relationship with themselves they don't

Mike Domitrz: Right.

Jeanette Bronée: Oftentimes I say to people use the skills that you use at work to do what you do so well. Use that in all the relationships that you have, especially the relationship with yourself.

Mike Domitrz: So that was the first step, was what do I need to. The second one?

Jeanette Bronée: The second one is that we do, as you also mentioned, pause and just pay attention. Just notice what goes on around us. We are so often caught in the story of what we have seen before, or what we assume or what we believe. So we are caught in the stories and the narrative of what's going on around us.

Rather than actually pausing for a moment and just look and ask, is this really what's happening or is there something else going on here that I can pay attention to. Can I listen more, can I see it for the first time? In meditation or mindfulness practice you will call it beginner's mind, and I think oftentimes we lose out on innovation and creativity because we're just so gotta get it done, gotta get it done, gotta get it done. And we're sort of working on what we know already, rather than pausing for a moment and look and sit with that discomfort of not knowing.

Jeanette Bronée: Really look at what is maybe a new way to look at this. Maybe the way we're doing it is the best way to do it, but at least let's pause for a moment and just look and listen and ask. Is this what we really want to do to achieve what it is we're looking for. I think the mindfulness about looking and being curious is an important piece that we miss out on a lot of times in our busy daily lives.

Mike Domitrz: You talk about health being the new currency, that can transform company culture and the way we work. What do you mean by that and what is that?

Jeanette Bronée: I think it's important that we start realizing that we're bringing home with us, so we need to bring our humanity with us to work as well. Because work life is an integration at this point. I know we're all trying to find balance, but let's face it we're spending most of our lives at work. So if we can take care of ourselves and be healthy at work. If the culture and the company is one of taking care of both each other and ourselves. If the company says it's important to me that you are healthy, not just because it's gonna cost more money to the company if you're not. But because the relationships and the care that we have for ourselves and each other feed the culture in such a way that our relationships and the way we work together is a much more healthy relationship. We communicate better.

Jeanette Bronée: When we work on survival mode we tend to snap at each other or not pay attention and notice each other as human beings. I think all of those aspects of us feeling safe, feeling we belong, feel like we're being heard, seen and acknowledged. Which are so important for us as human beings and what essentially is what we're looking for at work. We don't got to work just to make money these days, we go to work because it matches something that's important to us and that matters for us. Can we bring health into the culture and make that foundation for how we take care of people? Then we also open up to a whole different possibility and opportunity for people to really thrive and grow and do their best work. Because stress has such an impact on everything.

Mike Domitrz: It would be curious how many companies have self care in their core values.

Jeanette Bronée: I don't think many do right now.

Mike Domitrz: I don't think so either, it says everything. Some of them may have the word respect, very few even have that necessarily in there.

Jeanette Bronée: Right.

Mike Domitrz: They'll put family and team environment but not self care, so they don't really mean family because you can't really be healthy for your family or your team if you're not taking care of you either. I think that's a really brilliant point that you bring up there, that we always need to be thinking about. Now you also discuss the idea that we brought up briefly earlier, that food is fuel. But you also say that fueling performance and culture is from the inside out, inner fuel. Now that's a different kind of fuel, so what do you mean by that fuel?

Jeanette Bronée: It is our relationship with ourselves, if we are confident, if we are feeling that we are, as I said before also feeling safe. That we are being seen and heard, we are focused on our purpose. We're focusing on the fact that we matter, and when we do that we're engaging in a completely different way. People become disengaged because they don't feel they matter. They don't feel that they are added to the equation, so why bother right? Where if we are seeing that we are contributing, that we are connecting with other people. That we're part of the community we are driven by something that's within, which is a bigger, sometimes bigger than ourselves. Sometimes because we want to feel seen and heard in and of itself. Also, sometimes it is because we have a bigger reason to do things. Like for me it is this idea that I would like to see everybody walk around this earth being healthy and having a healthy relationship with their own bodies, so that they can have a healthy relationship with everyone else around them.

Jeanette Bronée: There's a bigger purpose, there's a global or at least a sustainable relationship that is coming from inside out as well. We also have to remember that food is actually from the inside out. Even though we think of food as just energy, food actually is something that we can use as a tool to navigate the finer qualities of our energy. We can feel more grounded with certain foods. We can feel more energized with certain food, and we indirectly do that ourselves already. We're doing caffeine to get more energy or we drink sugar to either get more energy or to relax and numb out. We use it in both ways, so fuel and the nuances of it. Food really becomes this way that we are in charge of how our emotional and physical energy manifests. So there are many different versions of the inner fuel. So what I look at is the physical, the emotional, the social and how we contribute to our purpose as part of the inner fuel. Then I look at the environment that we're working in and the relationships that we have as part of what fuels us from the inside out too. Even though it looks as if it comes from the outside.

Mike Domitrz: With food especially as the fuel, one thing that a lot of people struggle with. I've certainly struggled with it myself is those sugar cravings, how do you help somebody break free from a mindset of understanding. And literally, physiological of what's happening there? To give themselves the freedom to let go of that need to, or walk away or not consume it or not look for it, not search for it in the house.

Jeanette Bronée: It's such a great question, because I think so many people have different relationships with it. That it does become one of those complex answers, but I'm gonna try to make it as simple as possible. Sugar has been part of your environment since you were born. Mother's milk is very sweet, so sugar is something that we innately look for. We have realized through evolution that sweetness is nourishing, it feels good, and it gives us this idea of feeling taken care of. Also, we are drawn to sweetness from the perspective of needing energy because carbohydrates and foods like the carbs are giving us a certain type of energy that we're also looking for. A lot of times when people are dehydrated they actually show up as sugar cravings, interestingly enough.

Jeanette Bronée: Innately we also know that when we're tired sugar is energy for us, so there's a lot of things we just automatically go for in terms of sugar when we need energy or when we're physically exhausted. But also with the emotional, we know that it's something that makes us feel nourished. We know that it's this sense of surrender and relax, and then there's the stories and the memories around it. Because most of us have at some point in time had a really great memory around something we shared that was sweet. Whether it's the ice cream when we're walking who knows where and shared ice cream with friends or family. Or around the table for the holidays and there were dessert. We all have memories of sugar that are helping us feel human even, like loved. Those will kick in the minute we're tired, the minute we're looking for comfort, the minute we're not feeling seen or heard. Well the sugar reminds us of those moments where we were. I think we're not completely understanding how much the memories are triggering in us unconsciously.

Mike Domitrz: Right, and letting go that. To say it wasn't the sugar that brought me the memory. It was the time I had with my dad or my mom or my friends, so instead of letting that go. And going I never needed sugar in my life to have happiness, it was the people I was with at that time. Reprogramming our minds to understand that, is that true?

Jeanette Bronée: Exactly, I normally give a fruit tart story. I was always like oh my god there's a fruit tart I must have it, I love it. I would sit down and I would eat and it was just not doing it for me. I was like trying again, trying again. I could never really get to that feeling that I wanted to have when eating it because we are felt sense beings. We are driven by how we feel in our choices, even though we think that we wanna make it all so we're smart people. We're all felt sense people, and so what I realized what was missing in that moment for the fruit tart to have what I wanted it to give me was the fact that I always shared it with my mom.

Jeanette Bronée: Once I realized that, every time I saw the fruit tart I no longer wanted the fruit tart. Now it's just a kind reminder of my mom. We can shift it that way, we can shift the relationship with it in that moment. And really be like oh that's right, now I can remember her or the times we shared and then it just becomes a fond memory. It's not a craving for the fruit tart anymore.

Mike Domitrz: Yeah you can say to yourself, hey thanks mom. That's your moment of saying hi to me today.

Jeanette Bronée: Exactly.

Mike Domitrz: Right, that's so powerful, and you're a big reader. The books that you recommend are Smile at Fear, Turning the Mind into an Ally, Focusing the Mind of a Leader. Why these books, and they're gonna be in our show notes. For our listeners you can find these all in our show notes at RespectPodcast.com.

Jeanette Bronée: I'll make it short. My mother was bipolar, and so as a child I was always trying to figure out her mindset. So for me one of the things I find so interesting is how we can be in the right relationship with our mind. How that can completely change our life and our world and the way we see things. When we really can be in the right relationship with our mind, which is also where mindfulness comes in. It's a way that we can learn how to practice something differently, so our fear for example is something that tends to drive us. I don't believe that we can overcome fear, but we can come into the right relationship with fear.

Mike Domitrz: That's very powerful, I wanna thank you so much for joining us on this episode Jeanette.

Jeanette Bronée: Thank you for having me here, I love it.

Mike Domitrz: Absolutely, and for all our listeners coming up next is our question of the week.

Mike Domitrz: Before I answer this week's question of the week, I'd love to ask you a question. Would you please subscribe to this podcast? The Respect Podcast with Mike Domitrz. By subscribing you can make a huge impact. Now you might be wondering, Mike how does my subscribing to your podcast make a huge impact? Well here's how, for every person that subscribes it raises the rankings of the show on the search engines. So for people who care about respect like yourself, when they're doing a search for podcasts they're more like to find this show. Thus providing an awesome opportunity for us to spread more respect around this world. All you do is hit subscribe under your podcast. Plus the second benefit is by subscribing you automatically get every episode right into your phone, or whatever device you're listening to the podcast on. It happens automatically, so subscribing also makes your life easier.

Mike Domitrz: Now let's get into this week's question of the week, oh and by the way you can always ask your questions of the week by joining us on Facebook in our discussion group. It's called the Respect Podcast Discussion Group. Go there on Facebook and ask whatever questions you would like me to answer and or address in this segment of the show. Then listen to each episode to find out when your question is included. This week's question of the week is Mike what is your favorite summer time exercise to engage in when it's warm out, it's nice out? For me that is biking, I love getting on my bike and riding around here. We

have a lot of lakes in the area that I live in, and I love the hilliness and I just love being out in the rural area, also out in the countryside. You can do all of that. I love to go for a 15 or 20 mile ride, just out there and enjoying that, taking it all in. The exercise and the spirit of it all. For me it's cycling, road cycling. No not like speed or competition, but just going out and really enjoying a great ride.

Mike Domitrz: Do you know what I would love? I would love to hear your answer to this week's 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 week's 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 Save Project at DateSaveProject.org. Remember you can always find me at MikeSpeaks.com.