

# RADICAL RESPECT

## Radical Respect Book Club Resources

A chapter by chapter guide to help you and your group pull apart the deeper themes, topics, and stories within the book.

### Introduction:

*We Can Fix Problems Only When We Are Willing To Notice Them*

1. Reflect on the Michelle story. Why was Kim so reluctant to notice the disrespectful way that people treated her colleague? It's probably not only Kim who feels that reluctance. Why are so many people so reluctant to name the different ways that disrespect shows up in the workplace? Have you ever felt that reluctance? Why? What can you do to move through the discomfort and address the problem?

## PART ONE: EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

### Chapter 1: A Framework for Success

1. What do you think of the two definitions of respect?
2. What do you think of the path to respect: optimizing for collaboration and respecting individuality at the same time?
3. What did you think of the "taxonomy"? Did this taxonomy on the bottom of odd numbered pages help keep you oriented as you read?
4. What did you think of the simple definitions of bias, prejudice and bullying?
5. What did you think of the four roles: leader, observer, person harmed, person causing harm? Are there other roles we play not covered by these?
6. Scott offers several common examples of unconscious bias. What others have you noticed at work?
7. Can you think of a time when you observed bias, prejudice or bullying as a leader? How did you respond? Are you willing to share the story with this group?

8. Can you think of a time when you observed bias, prejudice or bullying and were either an upstander or a bystander? Are you willing to share the story with this group?
9. Can you think of a time when you were harmed by bias, prejudice or bullying? Are you willing to share the story with this group?
10. Can you think of a time when you harmed another person with your bias, prejudice, or bullying? Are you willing to share the story with this group?

## **Chapter 2 - How Leaders Can Demonstrate Institutional Courage**

1. How did you respond to the idea that leaders roll out bias disruptors on their teams? Have you ever been in a situation where it was expected that you disrupt bias when you notice it?
2. Scott offers several suggestions for a shared vocabulary one could use to disrupt bias (“I don’t think you mean that the way it sounded to me,” “bias interruption,” “I’m throwing a flag on the field,” bias alert.) What might work on your team?
3. It sounds easy to identify prejudice in the workplace, but it’s actually really hard to identify where, exactly, is the line between one person’s freedom to believe whatever they want and another person’s freedom not to have that belief imposed upon them. What did you think of the Codes of Conduct Scott suggested? Have you ever worked in a place that had an effective code of conduct?
4. A core role of leaders is to create consequences for bullying behavior. Have you ever worked with a leader who was good at creating conversational, compensation, or career consequences when they notice bullying on their teams? How did they do it?
5. Have you ever worked with a bloviating BSer? What was their impact on the team’s ability to get shit done? Did the person’s leader step in?

## **Chapter 3 - How to be an Upstander, not a Silent Bystander**

1. Do you have a story about a time when an upstander addressed unconscious bias as deftly as the story about Aileen Lee’s colleague noticing she was getting ignored and swapping seats with her? Why are these incidents of standing up to bias so rare?
2. Do you have a story about a time when an upstander addressed prejudice as deftly as the story about David who helped Kim when she was asked to pee in a bucket on a business trip? Why are these incidents of standing up to prejudice so rare?
3. Do you have a story about a time when you stood up to bullying, or observed someone who did? Why are these incidents so rare?
4. What did you think about the 5d’s ([www.righttobe.org](http://www.righttobe.org)) for standing up to bullying?

5. Have you noticed examples of people who want to be upstanders but who give in to a hero complex? What other sorts of hero complexes have you seen besides the ones Scott mentions (moral grandstanding, the incredible hulk, the knight in shining armor/white savior complex, the opportunistic hypocrite, bad faith communication)?

#### **Chapter 4 - How to Choose a Response When You're the Person Harmed**

1. Think of a time when bias was directed at you. What "I" statement could you have used in this situation?
2. Think of a time when prejudice was directed at you. What "it" statement could you have used in this situation?
3. Think of a time when you were bullied. What "you" statement could you have used in this situation?
4. Scott offers some common reasons people give for remaining silent in the face of bias, prejudice or bullying. What others are there?
5. Have you experienced what Scott calls "silence and rage?" What happened? What was the impact of your silence?

#### **Chapter 5 - How to Make Amends When You've Cause Harm**

1. For many people this is one of the more uncomfortable roles to acknowledge. And yet we ALL harm others, usually without meaning to. And it feels really risky to acknowledge that we've harmed another. What can we do to help ourselves and others understand that NOT acknowledging the harm is much riskier than acknowledging it and making amends?
2. What steps do you take to become more aware of your own biases? Do you have a bias buster in your life?
3. Have you ever had a prejudiced belief? What changed your mind?
4. Have you ever been a bully to another person? How did you feel when you became aware of the impact your behavior had?
5. What's the worst apology you've ever seen? What's the best?

### **PART TWO: MANAGE POWER SO POWER DOESN'T MANAGE YOU**

#### **Chapter 6 – Design Principles for Radical Respect**

1. Scott talks about the importance of creating checks and balances so that no leader in an organization has too much power. You probably talked about the importance of checks and balances in a political system. What do you think about checks and balances in management systems?
2. Many people are in denial about their own biases. What do you think about the idea of proactively looking for the ways that bias can show up in hiring, pay, promotions, and the like?

3. Scott describes a situation where bias has crept into hiring, pay, and promotion decisions as “oblivious exclusion.” Have you seen this kind of oblivious exclusion in your career. Another word for it might be “unconscious discrimination.” What do you think of that term?
4. Scott describes an organization led by a coercive leader who demands conformity as “brutal ineffectiveness.” The Weinstein Company was one example of this. What other examples can you think of?

## **Chapter 7 - Apply Design Principles to Management Systems**

1. Have you ever worked at a company where compensation seemed systemically unfair—some people got paid more than others not because their work was better, but because of who they knew or some other reason? What was the impact on morale? On results?
2. Have you ever worked at a company that systematically gave unfair ratings or promotions? What was the impact on morale? On results?
3. Have you ever worked at a company where some people got coaching and mentoring but others did not? What was the impact on morale? On results?
4. Have you ever worked at a company that hired for “culture fit” and therefore wound up with a homogeneous culture? What do you think about hiring for “culture add” instead?
5. On page 198 Scott tells a story about imagining that if she were founder and CEO women would be treated better. However, just because she was in charge didn’t mean that human nature changed. She learned the hard way that she had to design systems to be fair or get systemic injustice. What did you think of that story?

## **Chapter 8 – Create Virtuous Cycles, Prevent Vicious Cycles**

1. What do you think about the idea of the conformity dynamic between bias, prejudice, and abuse? Have you ever seen this dynamic play out the way Scott describes noticing it as a child at her parents’ tennis club? Does hiring for “culture fit” contribute to a conformity dynamic?
2. What do you think of the idea of the coercion dynamic between bias and violence? Scott describes how the coercion dynamic can kill the collaborative spirit on a team. Ultimately this dynamic can lead to sexual assault or other forms of violence. Have you ever seen this play out?
3. Did the idea of discrete incidents of bias, prejudice, bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical violations vs dynamic injustice make sense to you? In other words a man can experience discrete incidents of bias, but that is

different from sexism. A white person can experience discrete incidents of bias, but that's different from racism.

### **Chapter 9 – Speak Truth to Power Without Blowing up Your Career**

1. What do you think about the 7 steps (document, build solidarity, locate the exist nearest you, talk directly with the person who caused harm, report to HR, take legal action, tell your story publicly) you can take as a person harmed? Have you had to engage in this process before (or maybe supported someone else who was)? (Page 231)
2. Scott suggests that documenting (either in a journal or sending emails to someone you trust) disrespectful/illegal behavior can help dispel gaslighting. What helps you avoid getting gaslit?
3. Have you ever had to report someone's behavior to HR? What was the experience like?
4. What did you think about the "cupcakes and toxicity" story about Françoise Brougher at Pinterest? Were you surprised that such a senior leader could be treated that way?

### **Chapter 10 - Reinforce a culture of consent**

1. Have you ever worked in a place that was truly characterized by a culture of consent?
2. What did you think of Scott's proposed articulation of a culture of consent (It is the responsibility of the toucher to be aware of how the other person feels about being touched. If the other person doesn't want to be touched, don't touch. If you're not sure, don't touch.)
3. Have you ever worked in a place where you truly trusted the system you were supposed to use to report sexual assault or other forms of violence in the workplace? What do you think about anonymous reporting, or putting victims of the same attacker in touch with one another?
4. Scott had some pretty draconian advice about limiting alcohol in the workplace. What was your reaction?

### **Chapter 11: A letter to My Younger Self and Her Boss**

1. Were you surprised about the way that Scott was treated in her first job out of college? Did it seem egregious, par for the course, or not so bad to you?
2. What did you think of the advice Scott gave to her younger self? Does that advice apply to you?

### **Chapter 12 - Put Some Wins on the Board**

1. Scott ends where she began—everyone has a role to play. Leaders, even really senior leaders, cannot create a respectful culture without the help of upstanders who intervene, people who are harmed choosing to respond, and people who cause harm being willing to make amends. What do you think of this assertion?
2. So often we feel a sense of dread when we talk about bias, prejudice, bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical violations. Poet Toi Derricotte wrote, “Joy is an act of resistance.” Do you think it’s possible to approach the work of creating a more respectful work environment with love and joy?
3. Have you ever worked in a place where everything felt more or less fair? If so, what did it feel like? If not, can you imagine such a place? What would it be like?