

Why We Need Women in the Workplace



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

CrisMarie Campbell and Susan Clarke

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: Welcome to *The Beauty of Conflict*, a podcast about how to deal with conflict at work, at home and everywhere else in your life. I am CrisMarie.

Susan: And I'm Susan.

CrisMarie: We run a company called Thrive Inc, and we specialize in conflict resolution, stress management coaching and building strong, thriving teams and relationships both in person and virtually.

Susan: We are starting 2021 with a series based on our book, *The Beauty of Conflict for Teams*. We'll be sharing tips, tools about how to make your team work more effectively especially in this remote and virtual environment. We hope you'll walk away from this episode and this series with some fresh ideas that change your day, your week and even your life.

CrisMarie: Hello. I'm CrisMarie Campbell.

Susan: And I'm Susan Clarke.

CrisMarie: And we are continuing our *Beauty of Conflict for Teams: Harnessing Your Team's Competitive Advantage* book series on this podcast. And today we're also honoring Women's History Month in the month March.

Susan: And we're doing it during the first week of March which also happens to have International Women's Day as a part of it. So it seemed like a perfect time to do this because frankly right now in the world, women are leaving the workplace. And now there's a lot of press out there about how that has to do with the pandemic and all sorts of things.

CrisMarie: Taking care of kids, having to leave work to stay at home or work at home.

Susan: There's various bits to that. And we will talk more about that. But this isn't necessarily just a new problem. And part of why we could bring it

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

in with our teams series is it is something that we have addressed and brought up in the book prior to the pandemic.

CrisMarie: Yes. We covered this in chapter 14, Why You Should be Emotional at Work. And emotions are not a male or a female thing. But what they found and we talk about this in the book is women usually take a hit for being weak or too emotional in the workplace. But more and more research shows that women leaders are better at building relationships and demonstrating empathy. And as a result they are overall, they're better at getting organizational results because empathy is tied to our ability to resonate and feel emotion with another.

And women score higher on these softer skills, even in a Harvard Business Review study that evaluated more than 7200 people, women scored higher not only in the expected areas but actually every level. They were rated by their peers, their bosses, their direct reports, even other associates as better leaders overall. So we believe this speaks to the trust and influence that's built through empathetic relational leadership by men and women, our ability to feel and relate to the feelings of others.

Susan: So we want to sort of kick it off there because we do want to say we really don't believe this is just a pandemic issue. Because to take that back even further, just recently I was listening to a podcast with Brené Brown and Melinda Gates. And they were talking about her book that had been released, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*.

Now, Melinda Gates has traveled all over the world as part of the Gates Institute and has spoken to leaders everywhere as well as people in their various cultures. And what she's discovered over and over again is when women get empowered, cultures change.

CrisMarie: This is when women are in governments, or councils, or just having women a part of even boards and leadership teams.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

Susan: What was interesting because part of the interview was she was traveling during this past year and so she had the chance to sit down with the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Ardern, who's done such a wonderful job. And most of the time when you talk to people about how it's going, they talk specific – these countries were doing exceptionally well dealing with the pandemic. But when she asked the question they didn't want to talk about how they were doing well, CrisMarie.

They wanted to say, "I'm so concerned because we're doing okay." But around New Zealand it was like, "But some of these islands around us are not and I'm focused on that." The same when she talked to the Chancellor of Germany. And she was saying, "No, I'm actually really concerned about some areas in my country that are more poverty related where these things are not happening."

CrisMarie: So what do you make that mean?

Susan: Well, I mean in that conversation it really is about women can and tend to take a more systemic approach.

CrisMarie: Bigger picture.

Susan: Systems, more looking at all of the interactions, not just a linear, we're getting better, we're getting worse. But looking at how something is a systemic issue within a family system, within an organization, within a government. And that tends to be more like every A, B, C and D all have a part, not A+B+B.

CrisMarie: But linear view, yeah, that really makes sense.

Susan: Not as cause and effect. Now, not that these are inherently men things or women things, but they are things that tend to have been strengthened through women over the years and are worth having in the workplace, so are really vital to having in our workplace.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: Yeah. I know sometimes workplaces can be places where I've just got to climb the ladder. It's all about me, my personal brand, how do I get the bigger raise, the promotion? And when cultures, business cultures foster that you really lose both in men and women that systemic, wait a minute, we all have to cross the finish line together. We want to bring this whole company forward.

And I think women who typically, not always but typically are taking care of a whole family, not just their career but the kids and the husband or the partner and the house and have to think more systemically like you're saying, include all those different elements.

Susan: And make them all important. So that's actually probably one of the biggest challenges is that I mean in general, we as individuals do this differently. Some people focus in on something and other people are much more able to kind of spread out and see the entire big picture.

CrisMarie: We talked about this in narrow focus and wide focus, yeah.

Susan: Yeah. And I think about it related – I mean I'm going to talk about horses because...

CrisMarie: Just because Susan you work with horses and people, people with horses.

Susan: Well, what I love about working on horses is in their natural state in the herd it's usually not the stallion or the male horse that's the leader, it's the mare that's the leader. And the reason for that isn't because she's the strongest or whatever. But what it is, is she's in her body, she's able to kind of track and identify when there's a crisis and when something's happening.

CrisMarie: Isn't it because she's so calm she sees so much more?

Susan: I don't know calm, but definitely wired to pick up other – the information beyond her so she is not focused. The stallion might be the

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

strongest and is focused on procreation, let's just get more horses in the herd or fighting off or doing this, but while that's happening she's sort of monitoring are we safe? What's going on here? And she sets very clear boundaries. She doesn't need to, you know, and that's how come she becomes the matriarch of the herd because she's the one who's going to identify when safety is crap and do something about it.

CrisMarie: She will lead the herd to a safer ground.

Susan: Yes. And that is something that is really valuable. And I think we sometimes miss both, you know, that energy of the stallion needs to be important but equally important is the person who can – the horse or the person who is paying attention to everything that's going on around.

CrisMarie: It's so funny because I don't think in our society we reward that type of person who sees the bigger picture. And maybe even does preventative things before they blow up into big issues. We tend to reward the problem solver, the hero of the day versus wait a minute, I was kind of thinking of this. And I quietly took care of that piece and so we're continuing to move forward.

Susan: Yeah. I mean and these are just things that we want to continue to foster and have in the workplace. Another set of data that was fascinating to me is some of the data they've been looking at. And what happens in venture capital and investment firms. And there's a lot of research that founders when there's women or at least a team that is not just men, and there is women on that team, they always outperform the men.

CrisMarie: Yeah. Well, I was thinking, the research by All Raise which is they found that only 15% of venture capital funding is allocated to female founders. But what's more troubling is despite a lot of concern and advocacy we really haven't given money to those women founders but they actually outperform the men in terms of ROI on investment women rule.

Susan: Yeah. I mean they perform. Female founded companies that had been funded are 63% better than their all male funding teams. So that's

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

one set of research. There was another one through the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation that found that women led teams generate 35% higher return on investment than all male teams.

CrisMarie: You can tell we're looking at our research that we collected for this podcast because these are just small samples of how are biased against women leaders is she's not going to do as good a job. But actually she gets a higher ROI and she's not given the same level of lift that male founding...

Susan: And I did find it helpful when I was listening and I've heard, I mean this goes all the way back to years ago, I'm going to show my age here. When I got to hear Gloria Steinem speak when it was during the whole Women's Movement. But the thing that struck me when she was speaking was she was like, "This isn't about women's equality." This actually gives equality to men who, if they want to be at home they could be at home, if they want to do this different. It's not about taking anything away. It's about leveling the playing field.

It just was super fun when she said, "We're not just talking about this for women. We're talking about it for all, for men."

CrisMarie: Well, it goes back to what Melinda Gates was saying, like societies, because she studies all sorts of societies, that when women are involved better results happen for all, not just for a few.

Susan: Yeah. She's not actually saying women are better, she's just saying the same thing we talk about in diversity and inclusion. The more diverse and inclusive we are the more likely we are going to get to new creative, integrative and important ideas that we need to have to better handle the challenges we're facing these days.

CrisMarie: Which is really the main tenet of our book *The Beauty of Conflict* because the more diverse your opinions, which means they come from diverse people, the more you're going to have that larger team IQ to make better decisions. And it's interesting, this other piece about women as

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

only's, because I remember early in my career I was a Boeing engineer. And when I made it to flight test I was one woman out of 80 male engineers. There was one woman manager but I was the only one in the pack.

They found that this wasn't about that level, but I know how uncomfortable it can be to be the only woman. You don't want to show any weakness. You don't want to be emotional.

Susan: Well, and I think what they found – they have done more research now even since your days. Some of the research shows that women who are in those positions they face even more challenges, more pressure, they feel more pressure. They experience more microaggressions, they often have to provide additional evidence of their competence. They will be questioned. Their judgment will be questioned.

CrisMarie: I mean even they give statistics, 49% of women will be questioned on their judgment versus 32 in a more balanced environment. They'll be mistaken for someone more junior. And this happened to a client of ours, she was a CBP at a high level company and she traveled with a male person, a junior person. And they – when she would come to the client they would always talk to him, they would defer to him. And she's like, "No, it's me." That happens all the time.

Or the other piece is subjected to unprofessional and demeaning remarks. So these are usually senior level women that experience this but no wonder it's so hard. And I think a lot of times women go numb or just think this is what I've got to do to make it. They just take it.

Susan: Yeah. And we're talking about this and yes, this is true for women and it is even more true for women of color. And yet these are the challenges we're facing right now about diversity and inclusion. And then how do you begin to address these things? And now, because really there is a lot of research with what's happened in the last year. We're likely to go

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

back; way back in terms of there was movement forward for women. Now it's just going further and further back.

CrisMarie: Isn't it like 240 years before we hit gender equality?

Susan: That was before the pandemic. And it's actually worse now because what's happening is a lot of women are in situations where they're leaving the workforce because they're prioritizing family. That's not just childcare, it's elder care, it's all sorts. In our country we have not had a Medical Leave and Family Act, any type of law or public policy about it until 2020. There is a lot of research out there about how much it costs. There is all this unpaid labor related to childcare, dog care, cooking, cleaning, all sorts.

And now even a lot of the women who had service jobs or were in different jobs during the pandemic have lost them.

CrisMarie: Yeah. The Office for National Statistics in the UK estimated that the value of this unpaid work, which is what Susan was talking about is close to \$23,500 per person, that's in 2016. And it's Gates, Melinda Gates was saying, daily in the UK women work a 100 minutes more than men of unpaid labor and in the US it's 90 minutes. On average over a lifetime that's about seven years more of unpaid work than men. That's just staggering.

Susan: And the thing about that is that's things like family leave. So now I find this fascinating because they really have showed research that in other countries most men, they have paternity leave, family leave, kind of they de-genderized it.

CrisMarie: Yeah, de-genderized it, yeah.

Susan: And some countries men don't hesitate to take paternity leave. Here most men don't take it. Now, I happen to have been fortunate enough, I have my nephew was born during this pandemic and I was so proud of my nephew because he took his paternity leave.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: So your grand-nephew was born and your nephew took.

Susan: Well, I said, yeah. And so it was kind of neat because that is – not everyone does that. And I love that we're getting closer to that being maternity, paternity, doesn't make a difference.

CrisMarie: Even my aunt passed away and my cousin who had a very high prestigious job, now, I don't know if this was the main reason but she left her job to take care in the last six months because of the decline of my aunt. And so again another woman choosing family which makes sense, but it's still an impact to our workforce.

Susan: So we bring that up because we believe that having women in the workplace is vital and important. And we may have to change some of the things that we value, reward and make so important to be able to actually take a more – maybe a more systemic view in the way we look at things, in the way we see things to support, you know, it's not all about just getting in the hours or getting more work done. It is about the relationships and taking the time to give people what they need whether it's because of stress or because of some other reason.

CrisMarie: Because if doing that, that person is going to have much more resiliency and have better results long term. So I think we have the short term focus like you're not producing results now, bye. And it's like wow, how can we take care of this human because we have invested so much time and effort into this person and they have all this experience. We don't want to lose that, how can we support them through this time to keep them?

Susan: And we have had a lot of different movements like the Me Too movement has been helpful in trying to kind of put some attention on some of the issues related to sexism in the workplace, harassment. The biggest challenge with all that though is how do you begin to really have the real conversations, not get people to have good conversations, but to actually have the real conversations?

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: I think so often when businesses are confronted with these issues they are like, “Okay, we need diversity and inclusion training. We need to have policies. You can’t say these words. We need to fire that person who made the bad mistake, somebody who said something inappropriate.” We’re not saying those aren’t all part of the solution but they’re not the entire solution because if I am a man and I made a mistake and I’m just fired, do I learn anything? I just learn I better shut up and say the right thing. I don’t necessarily address my own bias.

Susan: I mean yes, there has been a culture that has allowed this to happen and maybe it’s just the patriarchal culture, power. But there’s also been a way in which we’ve all participated in, in some way. And you don’t just change unconscious behaviors or bias by punishing it and shaming it. You have to let people find a way to hopefully get to the point where someone can say something that’s sexist. And somebody else can say, “Wow. “That was uncomfortable. I didn’t like that. What’s going on?”

CrisMarie: Was it your intention to insult me?

Susan: Yeah. And talk about it versus just check them out.

CrisMarie: Brené Brown has done a lot of research on this. You do not create social change through shame. So when you shame somebody and make them wrong that’s not really going to change them. They’ll kind of buckle down and feel more defensive. So it really is how can we help teams and organizations take those moments, those moments when the mishap happens and pause and have the conversation like, “That did not land okay.”

Susan: And not just have the conversation, but really let someone be curious and interested in did you see the impact that had what you just said? Because sometimes somebody who’s been numb and blind to this, they don’t see it. And they actually need to experience and hear first hand from somebody the impact.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: Even when we've been in – because we've done this with teams and a lot of times when we start we pause, especially if it's the leader. And we're saying, "Whoa, time out. We want to check something out with you." Everybody's like, "No, no, it wasn't a problem for me." "Not me." "Me either." Because it's the power dynamics and it's like oh no, we don't want to put the boss on the spot. He's got to be okay or she's got to be okay. And we really have to cultivate because there's still a human on the other end that's getting impacted, and have that conversation.

Susan: Yeah, because as long as there is no conversation there is really going to be no change, no substantial change.

CrisMarie: So, listener, I want you to think about what are situations where you have seen things that are sexist, or racist, or just inappropriate and has everybody gone silent? Do you feel comfortable saying, "Hey, wait a minute, can I check out what your intention was? Did you mean to insult Mary over there? Because that's how I took it but I want to find out."

Can you speak up or do you go silent? Does everybody else go silent? How do you handle those moments? Because those are the moments, those are the magic moments, they feel so threatening. But when you can learn the skills to – and the team can learn the skills those are the moments we have to mine and work through to actually create the change, to actually address the bias. It's not just the training; it's not just the policies.

Susan: And it's not just the numbers and the stats. And that is an important piece that we're going to be working on that for a long time.

CrisMarie: Yes, I know.

Susan: We often talk about the fact that team work, it's a discipline.

CrisMarie: It's not rocket science but it is a discipline.

Susan: It's a discipline, it takes doing the same things over and over again. And it means not just saying, "Well, that's just Charlie, that's how he talks

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

to all women.” No, you don’t just excuse Charlie and you also don’t ostracize him because eventually he probably will get fired for being Charlie. And it’ll be like I was the – what’s the word? The martyr, and it’s like well, it’s because no one ever gave you feedback and you never listened to feedback.

But you want to be able to say to somebody who repeatedly does something that’s inappropriate, “That was one of those times, Charlie. You may not have realized it but when you said that it was really offensive.”

CrisMarie: It is. Susan and I really want to support teams having a learning environment around diversity and inclusion, having these conversations because it’s not about making men, or white, or whoever, the person in power, wrong. It really is about how to help all of us because everybody has unconscious bias and beliefs, and how to actually take them from unconscious to conscious, and it’s an iterative learning process.

Susan: I think about it because I do think there’s really something to be said for – you want to be able to say to somebody, “That’s just not a good thing to say.” But that’s not as helpful as helping them understand why it’s not a good thing to say. Because if all I say to you is, “That is a racist comment, that’s a sexist comment, that’s a whatever comment”, that may or may not change you, you might be afraid.

CrisMarie: No, I would be thinking, okay, I’d better cross that off my list, now that’s not safe to say. I don’t actually really know why.

Susan: And maybe that seems kind of like why wouldn’t you know why? Do you not understand the pain of that? But a lot of times someone who has lived in privilege, or someone who has lived without that ever, does not know the impact, and so trying to take that moment and say, “Instead of me just telling you not to ever say that again. I’d be curious, are you interested in how it lands over here when you do?”

Because that person got interested in the impact and recognized, and maybe in that place they would feel their own sense of whoa, I had no idea.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

And if I step into that I don't like it that I did it. That's going to be a more profound transformative change.

CrisMarie: I think that's really powerful Susan, I just want to echo that. Because we don't change because of a rule or shame, those two, which we tend to think is going to really work on the outside. But when I actually drop in and connect to this other person and how they felt over there. This happens in couples. It happens in teams. I think we can have it happen in our society. That person really is hurting over there and I can realize that that was me unconsciously because I didn't really want to hurt them. This is a work colleague. I'm not trying to do that.

And so to raise that awareness is that's the change moment, that's when the penny drops and I start to care and I start to feel the ramification of my own behavior.

Susan: So we're bringing all this up because we actually do believe that supporting women continuing to be in the workplace is actually pretty fundamentally important to all of the things we need to change these days.

CrisMarie: I know. It reminds me of when I was at Boeing and I was in engineering, in the manufacturing we had TQI, all these quality things. And safety became a really big piece of the puzzle because people would let safety issues go because it was unsafe to speak up. And this kind of reminds me of if we can start to cultivate a culture like, "Wait, there's an issue." And not make it wrong for the person who spoke up and also not punish the person who's made the foible. And actually investigate it like a safety issue, like a manufacturing safety issue but it's a human safety issue.

Susan: Yeah, with curiosity.

CrisMarie: Dialog.

Susan: With vulnerability, with dialog and with emotions, because we started this off talking about how we think emotions need to come into the

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

workplace. And especially now if we want to really address some of these issues, these big issues it's going to be pretty vitally important that they come into the workplace.

CrisMarie: Yeah. So we wanted to share some tips for you if you are wanting to support people that you see, one is to reach out and connect. And that may seem awkward because we're in this virtual environment. But still connect to people and create relationships and be an ally, especially if you're in a leadership role or a privileged class, whether you're a man, a white man, or a white woman or I don't know, you're just the boss, to actually really be an ally and say, "Wait a minute, time out. I really want to check this out and find out what's going on here."

Support the person who is either trying to speak up or has just been impacted, you can tell has been impacted in some way.

Susan: And also remember this is about having real conversations. So it's not about doing this right. It's about doing this real which is going to mean saying sometimes, "I had no idea. I think I just said something that really wasn't too smart. Help me understand what happened."

CrisMarie: So the only way I can know that is if I'm actually tracking and being curious about the impact, what may be the impact over there and asking for feedback from people around me. And so those are some tools you can start to cultivate on the team. And maybe having a conversation, how do we deal with these issues? That's a great team discussion to have with your team.

Susan: Even the people who have been identified as privileged, this is going to be painful for them. They're going to have to deal with something. And that part has to be dealt with compassionately too. We can't just expect people to override, even if it's been systemic privilege for eons, there is a place where that has to be, someone needs to be able to talk about that as well.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

CrisMarie: Yeah. It's like educating with compassion versus shame. And it's tough when somebody who has been so marginalized over, and over, and over again. It makes sense that you'd want to lash back, it makes perfect sense and it doesn't work to create change.

Susan: Well, and it's fine if you don't want to hold that, but other people in the room can hold a space for all parties, the person who has every right to be outraged and angry, and for the person who may be at that moment feeling like they're under attack and don't have a clue how they got there. And so we're not saying that the people who have been victimized all this time need to be the ones who hold that space, we're just saying someone needs to be able to hold that space.

CrisMarie: So be an ally. Be an ally, be willing. And actually build these skills on your team to have these real conversations and mine those moments. And have the discussion of how do we handle before it happens maybe, how do we handle racist comments, sexist comments, even smartest comments? We work at one culture where if somebody asks a dumb question it's like contempt, the eye rolls. It's the same sort of conversation you want to have and not keep going numb to those behaviors, not keep colluding with them.

Susan: Or just policy-izing them. I don't know if that's a word, to get rid of them because you can get rid of the words but you can't get rid of the emotional content that's underneath that unless it gets addressed and dealt with.

CrisMarie: And that's where the real change occurs, is that underneath piece. So hopefully this has been valuable. We have tons of other content that we are releasing on LinkedIn, on Thrive Inc. So if you haven't followed us on LinkedIn at Thrive Inc do that now because we've got new content every day. And we've got fun stuff. We've got playlists. We've got videos. We've got polls, all sorts of neat things. So be sure to follow us at Thrive Inc on LinkedIn.

Why We Need Women in the Workplace

Susan: Okay, take care.

Susan: Wow, CrisMarie, I have sure been enjoying doing this series for teams and utilizing our chapters from our book *The Beauty of Conflict: Harnessing Your Team's Competitive Advantage*. It's been fun to go back and review the material and apply it to virtual teams.

CrisMarie: It's true. And it's so much good bite sized material in these chapters, I mean if I do say so myself. And if you want us to speak at your organization, or work with your team, yes, virtually, we've been doing that, team sessions, or coach you or leaders on your team, please reach out to us. You can check us out at our website www.thriveinc.com, that's t.h.r.i.v.e.i.n.c.com or send us an email, write to us directly, we're happy to chat, t.h.r.i.v.e@t.h.r.i.v.e.i.n.c.com, that's thrive@thriveinc.com. Okay, take care.