



**WHITE PAPER
NEW BOOK RELEASE**

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ISBN 978-00718-16090

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The Respect Effect: Using the Science of Neuroleadership to Inspire a More Loyal and Productive Workplace

By Paul Meshanko, President & CEO, Legacy Business Cultures

INTRODUCTION

The best leaders are the ones who motivate employees to want to perform at the highest level possible – which is never accomplished with an iron-fist style of management. The best results are achieved through one of the most basic human behaviors: the showing of respect.

In his new book: *The Respect Effect: Using the Science of Neuroleadership to Inspire a More Loyal and Productive Workplace*, Paul Meshanko, author and organizational change expert, has studied how the human brain responds in various workplace situations – and his conclusion is astonishing: People perform at their highest level when treated with respect. Conversely, when an employee is emotionally attacked by disrespectful behavior, he or she shuts down. In *The Respect Effect*, Meshanko reveals the transformational power of respect in the workplace.

Given the pressures of the workplace, this is sometimes easier said than done. So Meshanko provides a practical action plan you can use to train yourself or others to get on track and stay

on track. His proven strategy helps you understand the initial, biological reactions to what people say and do.

Through his research in neuroscience, Meshanko teaches you how to create positive situations, avoid negative ones, and ultimately build a better work environment for everyone. *The Respect Effect* explains:

- **The hard science proving why respect is the most powerful employee motivator**
- **How to build a corporate culture based on respect, starting with senior leadership**
- **The 12 Rules of Respect – simple but powerful ways to communicate respectfully in any situation**
- **The strategy, resource requirements, and tools for sustaining a respectful workplace culture**

How do you use the concept of neuroscience to achieve a great work environment? The answer is obvious.

THE DEFINITION OF RESPECT:

Respect is an active process of non-judgmentally engaging people from all backgrounds. It is practiced to increase our awareness and effectiveness, and demonstrated in a manner that esteems both us and those with whom we interact.

Feed others a diet of respect (real, deserved, genuine respect) and you will see amazing things happen in your organization.

By examining the neurology of human interaction, Meshanko explains how our brains are profoundly influenced by how we are treated by others. When we are treated with respect, our brains literally light up and perform at their highest levels. When treated with disrespect, the higher thought process and chemical reactions cause our brains to go dormant. Hijacked by our

primitive survival wiring, we become diminished and less productive to our employers and organizations.

The Respect Effect is a powerful addition to the arsenal of organizational tools leaders need to successfully guide companies, manage change and increase productivity. Work environments which consistently value, provide esteem and respect will increase employee engagement.

Simply stated, engaged employees become emotionally committed to the success of their organizations and are more likely to give their highest levels of performance.

In contrast, disrespectful work environments result in a marked decrease in production coupled with unhappy workers who show up merely to collect a paycheck. Meshanko makes a compelling case for the value of respect and why it's important that the transition to a more civil work environment start with the company leader.

Through real-life examples and case studies (though, in some cases, the names have been changed to protect the guilty), Meshanko illustrates how respectful and disrespectful organizations function. The book has the bonus of providing information that's not restricted to the workplace. The principles of respect apply to every facet of people's lives and provide the rare opportunity to positively transform our culture.

THE CHALLENGE

According to statistics published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), U.S. corporations paid \$445.8 million to settle discrimination-related violations in 2012. Frighteningly, these figures represent only reported fines paid for those cases that went to court and did not include attorney and other legal fees incurred. They also did not include money spent reaching settlements for claims that did not go to court, damage to corporate "good will," and lost workplace productivity. While hard data for these costs are not available because settlement details are often kept confidential, some estimates put them at over four times the actual amount of fines collected. It is safe to assume that U.S. businesses spent over \$2 billion to settle claims of disrespectful, and typically unlawful behavior.



You don't have to major in finance to be impressed by the potential cost of disrespect, either individual or systemic. When you add low productivity, absenteeism and high employee turnover to the monetary mix, company leaders have a real problem.

The greater the authority a person has in an organization, the more damage they can do.

A single act of disrespect can have profound consequences. It can devastate a relationship that took years to build, with the primary casualty often being trust. Damaging behaviors can include, among others, stereotyping, verbal taunting, gossiping, dishonesty and public humiliation. Meshanko points out that the greater the authority a person has in an organization, the more damage they can do. For those employed in a workplace where hostile behaviors are openly tolerated or even encouraged, there is no doubt the damage such behaviors cause to work productivity. Energy spent perpetrating or deflecting hostility is energy that can't be spent doing the work individuals are hired to do.

Classroom training and follow-up are an important component to cultivating respectful workplaces, and these efforts need to be reinforced. Meshanko empowers readers by providing an amazingly simple and logical addition. When leaders have the power to influence their employee's levels of engagement and esteem through their own actions, the resulting changes are more permanent. By taking the focus off diversity as solely a workplace training issue, change is inspired and led through behaviors that can be applied to every aspect of our lives.

WE CAN'T FIX WHAT WE DON'T KNOW IS BROKEN

We can't fix what we don't know is broken, and for most of us, that includes the scope of awareness required to treat others with respect. *The Respect Effect* is exceptional in explaining why humans act the way they do based on our primitive wiring. Our brains create a unique blueprint of how we see the world, those around us and ourselves. The result is that we tend to

treat people based on our past experiences with people "like" them. What we feel when we are around people determines how we act even if we aren't conscious of the reasons for our behavior. By understanding what happens psychologically and physically when we are treated with respect or disrespect, we become aware of ourselves in a way that makes us open to change.

Ten years from now people aren't going to remember the exact things you did, how late you worked or what you said at a staff meeting. What they will remember is how they felt when they were around you.

One of the most important benefits created by respectful leaders is trust. Trust leads to the perception of safety, and the feeling of safety helps free organizational potential. Even when the outside environment is in flux from the economy, changing technology or competition, trust that co-workers and leaders look out for each other and are truthful creates a stability that will survive external pressures. Meshanko cites the example of one company that emerged from the recent economic downturn with the enthusiasm and commitment of its employees largely intact. How did they do it? Throughout the economic downturn, the company kept their employees fully informed of their financial situation. When employees were let go, everyone understood why. The remaining workers stayed engaged by doing odd jobs around the plant in preparation for when business improved. Doing the "right thing" led to an astounding degree of loyalty, trust and enthusiasm on the part of the remaining employees. When orders did increase, the company was in the best position to move forward. Employees felt valued because confidential information on the company had been openly and freely shared. They became vested in the future success of the company.

In a workforce that increasingly reflects the demographic differences within the population, getting people from dissimilar age, gender and ethnic backgrounds to work together can be a challenge. People who are different

from each other (race, age, social values, etc.) can work through prejudices and be coaxed into working collaboratively under the right conditions.

What's most important for this principle to work is:

- **All substantial sources of conflict be dealt with or removed.**
- **All individuals have equal power, stature and privileges.**
- **The members of the overall group be given a task which can't be accomplished successfully unless all members work together.**
- **The environment in which the contact takes place is neutral and conducive to positive, friendly interactions.**

THE 12 RULES OF RESPECT

Meshanko presents **12 Rules of Respect** that make surprisingly good sense. Examples illustrate and explain the dynamics taking place when we interact with people, and the reader is challenged to be curious about the perspectives of others. The 12 Rules of Respect are coupled with information on behavior change.

The behavior patterns we use most often are the ones our brains are most skilled and efficient at using, even if they're not the ones we desire. Our brains prefer to stick with tasks and behaviors that can be successfully performed with the least amount of effort.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE LASTING CHANGE?

The simple answer is practice. When we practice something new, especially when it's driven by motivation to improve, we get better. The trick is to stick with the new behaviors long enough that the brain becomes comfortable and proficient with them. This is an area where a company leader has an amazing potential to lead through example.

12 RULES OF RESPECT

1. *Be aware of your nonverbal and extra-verbal cues*
2. *Develop curiosity about the perspective of others*
3. *Assume that everyone is smart about something*
4. *Become a better listener by shaking your "but"*
5. *Look for opportunities to connect with and support others*
6. *When you disagree, explain why*
7. *Look for opportunities to grow, stretch, and change*
8. *Learn to be wrong on occasion*
9. *Never hesitate to say you are sorry*
10. *Intentionally engage others in ways that build their self-esteem*
11. *Be respectful of time when making comments*
12. *Smile!*

SELF-ESTEEM: THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING OURSELVES

It's almost impossible to treat others with respect on a consistent basis unless we respect ourselves first. Physical vitality, stress and how we feel about ourselves all play a role in determining our capacity for treating others with respect. A healthy self-esteem frees up valuable energy for building mutually respectful relationships.

Self-esteem is the degree to which individuals feel comfortable with themselves as they are, believe that they have inherent value as individuals, and demonstrate confidence in their ability to successfully achieve their own measure of success.

Healthy self-esteem supports a board range of attitudes and behaviors that are individually and organizationally beneficial. A few examples include:

- **Being more receptive to new ideas and other people's approaches.**
- **Respectfully sharing opinions that may run counter to those of the majority.**
- **Constructively managing criticism and feedback from others.**

Individuals with unhealthy self-esteem are more prone to perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that hinder their performance and often harm others. They may act in ways that reflect their own low sense of worth or in aggressive ways that attempt to make themselves feel superior to others. To aid the reader, eight helpful steps are provided for building respect for ourselves.

The Respect Effect concludes with a blueprint for respectful organizations, including four recommended paths consisting of consensus for taking action mapping, the invitation and cultivation reinforcement.

Meshanko emphasizes that respect does not mean always agreeing with others. On the contrary, respectful organizations not only encourage but require the healthy exchange of different ideas. On a final note, mistakes will happen. The good news is that the cultural norms that resonate best for most people tend to be enduring. Some values and their associated behaviors simply lead to stronger, smarter and more adaptable organizations.

SUMMARY

A commitment to a respectful workplace becomes part of the fabric of an organization's culture. The greatest leverage to shape and influence culture is at the top of an organization. *The Respect Effect* shows leaders how to create, through example, environments where respect and workplace civility are routinely practiced. The results are a more engaged, creative and productive workforce with a reduction in EEOC litigation, absenteeism and turnover.

"If you have some respect for people as they are, you can be more effective in helping them to become better than they are."

— *John W. Gardner, Educator, Public Official & Political Reformer*

How we engage others leaves a lasting impression. The question to ask ourselves is how do we want to be remembered? More importantly, what are we willing to do to start responsibly building our legacy of respect today?

Knowing how to leverage culture, emotion and neuroscience to improve workplace engagement and productivity is the

winning combination leaders are looking for to move their organizations forward. *The Respect Effect* successfully delivers these tools to the doorsteps of corporations worldwide.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Paul Meshanko
President & CEO, Legacy Business Cultures



Paul Meshanko is an author, internationally recognized speaker and business leader with over 20 years of experience in leadership development and organizational culture change. After a 12-year career with AlliedSignal, he opened Legacy Business Cultures in 1997 to serve corporations growing demand for change management and employee engagement training.

Under his leadership, the business has grown to become one of the most successful staff development and employee survey providers for companies of all sizes. Legacy's client list includes the Fortune 500 and many global organizations seeking to enrich their productivity while creating a dynamic environment for each employee's success.

As a presenter and facilitator, Paul has captivated over a quarter million leaders and business professionals on five continents. His training materials have been translated into over 25 languages and his newsletter is read by thousands of subscribers each month.

His clients have included The Cleveland Clinic, DuPont, Parker Hannifin, BASF, Progressive Insurance, MTD, Johnson Controls, Symantec, McGraw-Hill, Toyota, The U.S. EPA, and Ernst & Young. Always with an eye toward research and science, his speaking themes include organizational and personal resilience, work-life balance, neuroleadership, diversity, employee engagement and respectful work cultures.

Paul holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration from The Ohio State University and a master of business administration degree from Baldwin Wallace College. A dedicated husband and father, he has been an active member of the Human Resource Planning Society and served on the board of directors for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland. His first book, *Conversations on Success*, was released in May 2006.

In July of 2013, Paul with his wife, Kim and their two children relocated from Cleveland to Washington, DC to open a satellite office for Legacy Business Cultures.

"We will keep our headquarters in Cleveland and have now launched a presence in the beltway where Legacy has strong linkages with companies and organizations looking to incorporate our training into their workplaces," said Paul.

"Our teams of partners and advisors on respect, resiliency, diversity and employee training will continue to serve our global clients with a new emphasis on the east coast of the United States."