

# 43. Yvette Durazo on conflict IQ, negotiating at work, active listening, and conflict resolution

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**Michelle Harris:** From Bosstrack. It's Her HypeSquad, a show about amazing women who've made incredible strides as leaders in their industry. They're here to support you and your leadership growth to encourage you and hype you up as part of your hype squad. Hello everyone. This is Michelle Harris bringing you another episode of Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack.

This week I sat down with Yvette Durazo, CEO of Unitive Consulting and author of Conflict Intelligence Quotient, Conflict IQ, the Missing Piece to Turbocharge Conscious Leaders and Organizations Emotional Intelligence. We talk about conflict IQ, negotiating for what you want or need at work, active listening and resolving conflict.

Before we get into our conversation, I'd like to share a [00:01:00] little bit about Yvette. Yvette Durazo, author of the book, Conflict Intelligence Quotient, Conflict IQ, is the founder of Unitive Consulting, specializing in workplace effectiveness, conflict management, and leadership development. With a master's degree in conflict resolution, negotiation, and peacebuilding from California State University, Dominguez Hills, Yvette holds a PCC coaching credential from the International Coaching Federation.

She brings innovative techniques to promote positive workplace cultures, trust, and inclusion. Services offered include conflict mediation, training, anti bullying prevention, settlement negotiations, and addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Yvette is a former consultant at Santa Clara County experiencing change management and conflict transformation.

Additionally, she serves as a professor at various universities and actively participates in ADR associations [00:02:00] and the wellness community. If you enjoyed my conversation with Yvette, be sure to subscribe to our channel and help more people find us by sharing this episode with others or by leaving a review.

Or subscribe to our weekly newsletter filled with things we found that we're excited about and we're inspired by, along with valuable leadership advice to watch, listen to or read. It's a little bit of joy for your inbox each Monday. You can subscribe at [www.thebosstrack.com/weeklyjoy/](http://www.thebosstrack.com/weeklyjoy/). Now without further delay, here's my conversation with Yvette Durazo.

Well, hello, Yvette. Thank you so much for joining us here on Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack today.

**Yvette Durazo:** Thank you, Michelle, for inviting me over to your podcast and to visit your audience.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, I'm really looking forward to our conversation and digging into your book. But I'd love to start by you sharing a little bit about yourself with the audience and maybe talking about a little [00:03:00] bit what you do relative to what we're going to be getting into, which is conflict, management.

**Yvette Durazo:** Sounds good. Well, a little bit about me is that I was born in between the borders to Tijuana and San Diego. So I am a Latina and I do speak Spanish as well as you can hear an accent in there. I was born at a family of seven. So you can only imagine that I had to learn from the cradle to learn how to mediate and negotiate especially with, uh, when being the youngest of seven.

I was first generation, graduate of a master's degree of all my family. And the master's degree that I, that I earned was in negotiation and conflict management and peace building. And that is how the journey started about developing my consulting business. And also about writing a book in conflict intelligence, based not only on the educational portion of it, but also of [00:04:00] my my, uh, experiences regarding leadership, starting from my father all the way from me going and working in the private sector and having my own personal experience of toxic managers.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, I love that you bring up that example of your, your background of being the youngest of what, seven, seven kids. Yeah. Because a lot of people think of negotiation and conflict management as something that is related to some kind of a business deal or something that is not out of reach of what we're dealing with every day, but it's really not.

It is helpful to know how to deal with that in everyday life situations and and as we're talking to women leaders in your leadership position and working with teams and working with different people in the organization.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah, and that is one of the things that women overlooked that it's so critical [00:05:00] important to have those skills because the truth of the matter is that we learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict through our well meaning parents that brought us in, right? We learn this through social transmission. Perhaps a good mentor, your, you know, elementary teacher might teach you some certain skills. Don't realize that you go into the workplace and you don't have new or updated skill sets. You bring back whatever you learn when you were young and perhaps It's not going to help you as much when you're when you're working in a professional level, or it's going to go against you, especially when women, especially when they want to negotiate salary, for example, because of the background, the way we're, you know, we're brought up as women, for example men are more typical to [00:06:00] grow up in an environment that it's a normal thing to negotiate, right?

To, to do these types of negotiations for assisting women. We tend to use more empathy in negotiating and, and we don't, and we don't address our needs whenever we're, we're negotiating for salary. So every day we wake up every morning and we deal with our own impersonal conflict, external conflicts that we have, we negotiate ever since we wake up every morning.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, I want, and I want to dig into your book a little bit, but I was curious if, do you ever talk with women about negotiating for salary? Like, do you have any helpful tips there for people that might actually be getting ready to do that or thinking about, approaching their employer about that.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah, I do work with a lot of women that are in, in, you know, already in the mid levels of their career and they want to go up the ladder and, and I teach them [00:07:00] negotiation skills. And one of the first things I work with them is to create awareness of what is it that they have been programming to think because if I scale the person prior to doing that.

They're not going to be, they're not going to feel comfortable or assertive enough to use the skill, so I have to work on the mentality first. Then help them with the skills and help them with behavioral modification in order for them to feel more comfortable in doing negotiation. I do have an entire good list of questions that talks about how not to land a toxic environment because that is one of the things that we never think of that when we go into a, a job interview.

We don't think about that. They're not interviewing us only. We also have to interview the company to see whether we're going to be in a good environment and where there's, uh, fertile, you know, fertile grounds in order for us to grow

our career.[00:08:00] So I, I did a one sheet that talks about questions on how to, what to ask and it's on my website.

But I'm more than happy to, um, You know, if people contact me, I'm more than happy if they mentioned your podcast, I can give them a quote so they can download it for free. But you know, these are ways that I try to empower and work with women in order for them to negotiate and not only to negotiate salary, but also negotiate space and their T on the table when they have to work on projects and, and raise their voice on things that they have done because it's.

It's very common to hear women that they come up with ideas and all of a sudden somebody else takes their ideas, especially a man, right? Or a men takes credit for their ideas.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. What do you suggest that people say when that happens? Because I know I've talked to people about that exact scenario, like they're in a meeting, because we've talked about[00:09:00] what happens, where can bias exist and where can those issues be?

And that comes up so often. And you have like, Is there like a magic response that you can say like in those meetings when things like that happen?

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, you know, unfortunately, I don't have that magic wand to say you can do this. And every single situation is very distinct. Why? Because the characters in the situation are very distinct, right?

I have worked with women to empower them to have a communication with this other person. And that other person has created awareness, has negotiated and work with the other person not to do that. And then eventually work well professionally. Right. But it all, all, all depends on the other person as well.

You know, If I hear that the other person, it's a person that is in a very high position, nobody, nobody's gonna take them out of that thinking [00:10:00] that's the way that that he or she leads that that would be very tough. I would start either helping that individual or that women to to manage the situation or to start looking for ways to finding other opportunities within the organization or perhaps outside.

So it all depends. It all depends on the situation, it all depends on the character involved, it all depends on the structure of the organization, where in the structure that person is, so that I can provide some coaching around what to do

about that. But in all of those, in all of those spaces women feel empowered because they find first of all, they find a space where to vent.

They find a space where to think clearly, and then they found a space in where they can be, be coached in an environment in where they, they know best. And, and how are things are going to work better for them, right? [00:11:00] Yeah.

**Michelle Harris:** I'm glad you brought that up because a lot of times we do give very generic responses, but you're right.

Context matters so much and who it is that's actually creating that conflict can be a big factor in how you respond. So I, I understand there really isn't necessarily a cookie cutter answer to that.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah. I actually saw somebody post a video. One of my colleagues post a video about a similar situation and his response was very generic.

And the reality is that conflict is very insidious. All situations are different, just like every single brain is different. Therefore, yes, skill sets will help you a lot. But then you have to really see the scenario, see the situation and sometimes people are so close emotionally to what's happening with them that it can be of a lot of value to bring somebody to talk to or a third person or a neutral third [00:12:00] person that has nothing to do of their environment so that, you know, that they can help them objectively to see what is, what is in the best interest to them.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah, well, thank you. Thank you for that. I know we went off on a little separate direction there, but,

**Yvette Durazo:** No problem. You know, you know, this is very important. Every single topic that I deal with that when it comes to humans, communications, conflict, negotiation, bullying, and all that, it's, it's, it's have a lot of value and a lot of need.

To give resources, information, and for people to know that there's people like me that specialize in this field. I'm not the only one. You know, there's, there's a, there's a field study that it's here in order to support them before before alternating to going into an attorney.

Before going into formal complaints. There's people here that can support you and work with you and, and that are skilled enough to, to give you the value [00:13:00] that you need in order to move forward in the situation that you're at.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. I'd love to move to your book and your book is, Conflict Intelligence Quotient.

And can you explain what is Conflict IQ?

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes. The Conflict IQ, it was a, it was a download in a night that I w I couldn't sleep. I actually running in your own business. You probably, Michelle can attest to this. Sometimes we spend a lot of time building marketing the business.

And, and one day I was thinking about my experiences, you know, that I had already have with professionals working with them and questioning and questioning about the fact that there were people that I was working with that, you know, so they have a good, fair level of emotional intelligence.

Yet they were still fearing having those difficult conversations. Mm-hmm. Not sleeping at night, worrying every [00:14:00] hour of the day that they were gonna have to talk to these people that they don't know how to have those difficult conversations so that they don't wanna deal with that the individual that is making them emotionally angry or upset.

Right. So, I was already working with a lot of people and I, and I realized, I said, okay. When I work with these people, some of these have good emotional intelligence, I realized that they come out of the coaching session or the mediation session way better. So something happens to these people that they become extremely more equipped than they were coming in.

So that is where the word conflict intelligence came about and throughout the experiences and just. Also having an experience with my father that he was a very good leader with no education whatsoever. He barely went to second grade, but I had that great [00:15:00] experience with him and then having my own personal experience.

I said, there has to be a certain level of intelligence that people can gain in order to be able to lean into conflict and be able to be good leaders. And that is the idea behind this book that if I can contribute in any way possible to our organization to have good leaders that lean into situations, uncomfortable situations, and they are able to maneuver and handle these situations.

Those are the type of leaders that you want to have in the organization. And those are the type of leaders that others will follow, right? And if you, Michelle, think about. Leaders that you in the past have worked with which are the ones that you would follow? What are the traits of those leaders that you would follow would have?

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Are you actually asking me that or

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes, I am. I [00:16:00] cannot ask your audience because this is going to be recorded, but I can ask you because I'm pretty sure every single person on your audience, if they go back and think about. What traits did that leader that I follow that I admire had? What traits were those?

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, I mean, for me, when you said emotional intelligence and somebody who is willing to say What they should say, because I, I've been in so many situations and it feels like that person is very weak when they are, they struggle to be honest and tell somebody what. They really feel about something or give the feedback that's hard to give.

I think that is something that I think has been missing a lot in the leaders that I've worked with. So from seeing that, I mean, that that's something that I, [00:17:00] to, to have a great leader that I feel great about working with, having the ability to be open, honest, and have those conversations with me or with.

The people around, around us. I I think that's, that's so important, but I mean, of course, you know, somebody who is very interested in creating a culture and creating a team, team environment. I mean that those are all, I think those givens that you want to find in a leader.

**Yvette Durazo:** Exactly.

Right. And for that leader to be created, it has to have the ability to not only be selfless. You know, being a servant leader, but also have an ability to have a lot of skills that would allow them to have these type of conversations and be able to show up as a person that can handle those things. So that is what the book is all about.

The book is not necessarily only to give skill. It is about [00:18:00] how can you transform an individual from within in order to become it. The idea is to create leaders that become conflict intelligent. And in order to become conflict intelligent, you know, there has to be a series of work within themselves. And then we skill them behavior modification so that they can become it.

And they can be at any point in their life and work situations are not working very well, and they can lean in and they can work with. The situation and with people. You don't know how many times on this side of my screen. I hear and I see the same pattern over and over and over again. General managers, supervisors, managers not wanting to deal with problems and sending , their direct reports to deal with the problem. They overlooked the problem. They don't want to deal with a problematic person and they're just hoping that they're going to get to another position and leave that [00:19:00] problem to somebody else because they just don't want to deal with the situation because it takes time.

It takes energy. And they just don't know how to go about doing this. And then in the middle of it, it's affecting everybody. It's creating toxicity in the workplace. And then all these wonderful things in the mission statement organization, in the cultural of the organization goes out the window.

Because the employees are not experiencing the purity of that mission because of these leaders that don't want to do anything about problems with people because they just don't, they just want to leave it in there thinking that it's just gonna go away. It doesn't go away. People are human beings, people have memories if somebody in the workplace that you just don't like.

You're going to continue working with that person. You're just going [00:20:00] to continue not liking them. And things are going to escalate through months and years, just because you, you don't like that person. Yeah. And if that does not get resolved, and, and, and work with people so that they can find amicable ways to work professionally this is going to, this is going to continue in the workplace and it's going to affect the entire toxicity of the culture.

And we don't want that. I was just minutes ago talking with somebody in a very known hotel industry that are dealing with these type of problems in the, in, in, in the general managers does not want to do anything about it just because I'm pretty sure that person doesn't know how to deal with the conflict.

They're expecting that it's going to go away, they're directing their direct reports to deal with it, that, and at that level, sometimes like whenever I was mentioning that it all depends on the situation, depending [00:21:00] also on the power structure, if you're going to request somebody else to go and deal with the situation and deal with the peer, sometimes it's not going to work.

There has to be an environment in a process. In order for it to work, and that is where we're where I see that it's missing in organizations that awareness is missing because for many, many years companies were only focused on



performance people skills were not even talked about there were there were there were not even taken in considerations.

I still get the phone calls or the emails that companies want a one hour conflict resolution class. They don't realize that conflict resolution does not, you know, does not work in a one hour course. You really need to invest in your employees in order to become conflict intelligent, because that is going to benefit the bottom line of [00:22:00] the organization.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Without giving away the, your whole book, what are some of the things that are helpful in building conflict What are some of the, maybe the overarching things that you talk about?

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah, well, I share in the beginning of the book and I, not an idea, but the quote of Albert Einstein, you cannot resolve the conflict from the level of consciousness and where it was created.

So we need to learn how to, how do we function from within out in order to be able to understand our reactions, what are the good things that we do in order to de escalate conflict that we probably don't even know or haven't realized. What are the bad things or behaviors that you do that tend to escalate conflict that you need to create awareness of?

You really need to know, need to know yourself better through [00:23:00] personality assessments, be able to understand how is it that you react to conflict? How many people here in your audience, if I were to ask, they would know right away how is it that they deal with conflict? Nobody stops to think, how is it that I really deal with conflict?

Right? Most likely people with double Eyed trait to avoid it. A lot of people do that. But then there's other varieties of ways of how people deal with conflict, right? If we don't understand how is it that we deal with conflict, how, why is it that we deal with conflict in that way, right? We're not going to become good conflict resolvers, right? You're not. We're just not. We're going to just continue to putting that those conflicts in a place in our brain where, you know, it's kind of going to go away. It might resolve by itself, in thinking good wishes [00:24:00] about you know, in the serious human conflict. And sometimes they're not going to go away.

People can survive and work in an environment in where That is a status quo already that there's a conflict in there and they try to avoid it, but they don't realize that it's really costing the organization. And the leaders tend to believe

that is the human resource, the staff or the professionals that have to deal with that type of conflict.

But then you find a lot of HR people that are not equipped with these type of skills either. They only know policies and procedures and whatever they're being dictaminated by the legal counsel. And that's the way that they deal with people. And at the end of the day, you ended up losing a lot of money because you have to let go of a lot of people.

And then you ended up having a [00:25:00] lot of months and years of silent quitters. Because they're not, they're not dealing well with other people in the workplace, and they're just going and dragging their feet, not performing well, just going for the paycheck. In the meantime, they find something new or elsewhere to work.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. That's one of the things that you bring up in the book is about how conflict can lead to a leaky bottom line. Is that what you're talking about there?

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes. And a lot of leaders don't realize this. Because how much I don't know if you know, Michelle, or you have been in the HR industry, but how much does it cost to fire and hire new people?

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. I actually have read studies. It can be as much as like \$70,000, \$100,000 for like high level executives, way more than that. Yeah.

**Yvette Durazo:** So it usually costs you about [00:26:00] 30 percent of the salary of the person that you're letting go. And, and that includes that bringing the new person and waiting about three or four months in order, or maybe six months sometimes in order for that, that new person to get a hold of the new system, learning how the company works and all of that.

And you have to start the new cycle and everything gets stopped and everything goes slower because of that. And on top of that. We're not even taking in consideration all of the months and years that that person that you probably ended up getting rid of was sabotaging somebody else's work, sabotaging their work, being you know, being a pest and not performing well, you know, all of those months.

And if you calculate in hours, how much that is, and then that person, how it impacts everybody else that by standards, it's a lot of money [00:27:00] and that is something that organizations don't even pay attention to, and that is what I'm,

I'm hoping that they can create awareness into. Creating, you know, I always say companies should create a, a, a, a line item in their budget to deal with these type of things to this hour of the day.

Companies don't have that. Yeah. Don't create that. Sometimes they ended up taking the money out of training and development, which is okay. Especially if I'm going to go and get training, but if I have to go and get coaching and mediation. They said, you know, we don't have any idea.

We don't have any budget, but we're just going to pull it because this is very important.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. So going back to once you kind of understand how you respond to conflict, are there steps to then, figure out your personal way that you should then deal with conflict?

Do you [00:28:00] walk people through that and in your book?

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, I have an assessment that helps you to identify whether if you have good or medium or very low conflict intelligence. I also work with other assessments that I help people to identify what is their personality styles when dealing with assessments.

What is their to go to way of dealing with conflict? That's another assessment that I also use. There are several assessments that I work with people in order to make them aware of the within themselves in order to help them to equip them. If I don't create that awareness, I'm not going to be able to achieve to create a new viewpoint.

That eventually that viewpoint will become something that they do often and often and often it becomes part of their personality. Our personality is only that. Our viewpoints that we created into values and beliefs that we [00:29:00] for years and years and years keep repeating to ourselves and that creates a personality, right?

So I have to dismantle that. In order to get in and be able to help them become more conflict intelligence when, when I bring about the skill sets, the behaviors and all of that. Right.

**Michelle Harris:** Understand. Understand. I'm curious if you'd mind sharing is maybe you have a personal experience of a negotiation where maybe it didn't go as planned and what some of the key takeaways, like what can go wrong in a

negotiation or maybe if it's not a personal situation, something you observed that people listening can learn from.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes, definitely. Their techniques into negotiation. And when I work with with people one on one to help them to negotiate things, I help them to realize what is it that they can negotiate? And what are the other things that you can [00:30:00] negotiate that you can live with? That would be called BATNA, the best alternative to your negotiation.

What is it that in the negotiation process things don't go exactly 100 percent the way that you wanted it to be, but then you realize I can live with this, right? You have to be aware of that before you go into a negotiation. You have to do your homework. You also have to be aware of what is it that you will have to walk away from.

What is it that you cannot change in order to say yes to something that is your WATNA that's what that's the abbreviation of what you need to walk away from. So when I suggest when people are going to go into a negotiation to think about before going in, prepare yourself, think about what is it that you can walk with, and that's going to be okay that you can maneuver and say [00:31:00] okay I can survive with this.

And what is it that you would say no, I don't want to deal with this. I don't, I'd rather walk away from it, right? And what are the other positions or other things that you can negotiate? That is, that is very important. And try to be a good listener. Yeah. Because when you're a good listener, you're going, you're going to understand what are the needs of the other person instead of just, uh, negotiating on the position.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, listening is across the board such an important skill for a leader and active listening. And we all get in the mode sometimes of thinking about what we want to say next. And our brain wanders. And by the time a few seconds go by, and all of a sudden, we're, we lost the whole conversation of what the other person's trying to tell us.

I, I think that's generally human nature. But I think for leaders most importantly, I mean, everybody really they really need to have that awareness, like [00:32:00] a very heavy awareness on that listening aspect and being very conscientious about that.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes. That is another skill. That's why I said to, in order to bring about a, a, a good leader, that is conflict intelligence, there's meta skills, many skills that need to be learned.

But like I said, in order to install those skills, we need to. We need to upgrade the brain, and I talk about that in the book as well. And why is it important to do that before just pouring in and putting in some skill sets in there? And you said something very important here that listening skills, people take it for granted.

We are equipped. Our body is equipped in order to do active listening, but we just sometimes don't know how to use our own equipment. You know, We have two ears, one mouth and listening, it's just not involved just being a good listener. I have been in situations [00:33:00] that I have seen people's ears move because they're very good about listening.

Wow. You know, Because I live in this world, I live in this world of mediation, I live in the world where I train people, where I develop people in mediation, where I go and give feedback in mediation. It's so interesting. I even have seen people that their ear move. Like when you see a dog, when the ear moves, when they're like, I've seen that on people.

But listening is just not only be still and listening. It involves your entire body language. When you're genuinely listening to somebody else, the other person will not only see it, they will feel it. They will observe it. Yeah. And that is what creates. Trust on the other person to let go guards and open up and when they do that is where we touch humanity.

That is where we can, when [00:34:00] can find ways and mechanisms to dialogue, more deeper, deeper state. Yeah. When people, yeah, when people don't hear themselves they don't have the ability to listen to others. The other person sees it, feels it, and then they shut down. Or they create barriers, they, they bring out their barriers.

So what we need to do, it's lower barriers, good leaders, conflict, intelligent leaders, know how to do this, know how is it that the psychology of people work? They understand also the, how is it that in society we influence each other, right? Yeah. So, so not only do we need leaders that understand companies

organization, what is it that they do services and everything, but the higher they go on rank, the [00:35:00] more they're going to have to lead people. And the

better it will be for the entire organization for those leaders to know how to lead people well. Yeah. At that level of the game, it is not so important for that person to understand and know every single detail of how supply chain works.

At that level of the game, that person needs to be well skilled of how is it that people function. Yeah. Not only in themselves, but in, in, in a group, and that is going to help the company do well, because if employees feel good about a leader, they're going to feel that they belong. They're going to feel like, you know, that they have a place that they can bring in their whole humanity in it, and then be able to have situations that they can go and talk and have somebody to support them to be able to be the person that can listen to them, be neutrally [00:36:00] involving situations where they would be They can help others in the workplace communicate better.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. That's so true. Work better together. So true. I'm curious. A lot of leaders obviously are working with teams and then there's conflict. They can run into conflict, like within their team or is there anything different that you would say is important in resolving conflict on between people on your team versus just between you and somebody else?

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, it all depends. If you're working on a team and let's say, for example, I'm a project manager and all of a sudden they gave me about 20 people to work with. These are people that I'm not supervising. That's why I feel so bad for project managers because They sell them the idea that they're going to manage projects and they go through an entire pen book right at that thick of how to, to [00:37:00] use Gantt charts that I am also certified as a project manager, that's why I know and they sell them the idea that they're going to manage projects, but in the end of the day, what they're really doing, there's managing people and it's worse because they're not the supervisors of those people.

They're not the managers. Right. You know, the manager supervisors or somebody else that they're just lending you the employee in order to work on that project. Yeah. So what I always say to the project managers is you really need to realize what that conflict that it is. And it also be strategical to understand how is it that it's affecting everybody else.

If it's a situation that is being deal with with a couple of people, but it's not affecting the performance on everybody else. It's not affecting the deadline. And let's say, for example, you're going to be working on the project for a couple more months. As a project manager, I would suggest that that's okay.

That's a [00:38:00] good place where you should avoid situations. It's not affecting the other people around. It's not affecting the project. It's not affecting the deadline and eventually these people are going to go back to their, to their immediate managers, right? But if it's a situation is where people are being affected because of the fights and problems, that is where a project manager can be suggested to be like a neutral third party that should be having these type of conversations with them.

But again, project managers are not skilled in having these difficult conversations. They're not skilled how to mediate situations, and they just don't know how to deal with it. And they don't want to go to HR, right? Because HR, it's a red flag. And then they feel like if I go to HR, they're going to think that I don't know how to deal with this.

But in reality, nobody knows how to deal with this situation. Yeah. Oops, sorry. Go ahead. Yeah. [00:39:00] If they're not skilled, if they didn't go to classes or, or, or have good ways of dealing with situations.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. You brought, you brought up a good point. So with project managers, do you think that their first step if it is affecting the project. If they have the skills, you think their first step should be to try to address it, to bring the two parties together, understand where the conflict lies and try to take that step or, you know, what, what, what do you think would be the right approach for somebody in that situation?

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, I think in that situation, a project manager, if they're skilled enough and they feel comfortable enough, they can go ahead and address that and say, you know what? Overall, this is the situation. This is how it's affecting everybody. And this is how it's affecting the project. If we don't, if we don't, you know, if we don't work things out, you know, I understand, you know, I'm not asking you to be friends or anything, but if you [00:40:00] don't find amicable ways to work professionally, you know, it's going to affect the project, right?

Because the project manager's priority is to make sure that project gets done on time. Right. Right. But let's say the situation continue. Right. Then is when the project manager has to elevate this to the managers of these people so that they can have a conversation together. And perhaps also the project manager can be involved at one point so that.

The managers deal with the situation, but then if you have managers that don't know how to deal with the conflict, they're just not going to look the other way.

They're just not going to meet with these people or, or they're just going to meet and, and hopefully it will work or not. Otherwise, then the manager has to deal and take this to, to HR.

Yeah. And I, I guess. HR, it's a mechanism, you know, [00:41:00] carrot and a stick. Otherwise we do a performance evaluation. If you don't perform well, we're going to get rid of you, but they never address the problem and then it perpetuates the situation because then the people don't take responsibility of their actions.

Then they get anger between themselves.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. I was just, I was just thinking that, you know, you gave the example of the project manager, but I think if you are a leader and you're leading a team and you are that manager and it's just an everyday situation where two people on your team have conflict, it's really the same approach, right?

It's really understanding what is going on with each person, and explaining to them how it's impacting the team effectiveness, the morale, and I mean, but I guess with a, as a manager, you have a little more leverage because you have more control over their careers versus if you're a project manager and you don't have that leverage.

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah. [00:42:00] But a lot of managers will just send the peers to deal with it. Yeah. And that doesn't work sometimes because at that level, the power balance between these two people.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Sometimes they will not work because they're lazy managers, either they're lazy, they don't have the skills, they don't want to deal with it, and it's like, well, I'm just, you know, I'm just going to have them deal with the situation without understanding what is going on, right?

Without understanding what is really going on. Yeah. And that doesn't help. That doesn't help.

**Michelle Harris:** And if they don't have the skills for conflict resolution, how, why do they assume that their people on their team have that skill? How do they expect that to work out between the two? That's interesting.

**Yvette Durazo:** I have a, I have a personal experience where I, because I had a master's degree in that area, I was being sent out to deal with a situation that



should have had been dealt with the manager and the manager just didn't want to deal with it.[00:43:00] The manager sent me to deal with a situation and where it involved policies and procedures and she didn't want to do the work and that perpetuated anger into this person and years and years of anger because that person didn't want to do anything about it.

It was a situation with this person was smoking you know, the, the, the, what is it? The electrical cigarette. Oh, the vape, yeah. The vape inside, inside the organization, inside the office. And eventually, I ended up getting sick. But at that time, research had not even shown that was toxic. A year or two years later, that came about that indeed, it creates toxicity.

So, Even though you know that the research wasn't there, that was something to deal with policy. If a person, you know, policies have been in place that nobody should be [00:44:00] smoking inside an office, right? Same thing with the, with the electrical cigarettes. So I did my best that I could to talk to this person, but I knew that I was defeated already because if the, if, if the manager who is the manager, shouldn't have come and say, you know what, based on policy you need to get at least out of the department to go and smoke or do this and this and that.

I was already in a position of powerless because it was not something to do with you know, a small project that we were working together and maybe perhaps there was a different opinion of how to do things. No, this involves something serious. I became sick off of that. Obviously I could, I could not prove it and I could not go to the doctor, although the doctor signed in a letter for me and guess what?

I was the problem person. I became the problem person.

Right. [00:45:00] So I deal with that situation and I became sick out of being in an environment where I was smelling that toxic fumes. And it was very bad. It was a very bad situation with me because I could barely go up the stairs. And even though that I would talk to this person, I said, I'm sick.

I'm dealing with this. I actually got to a point that I ended up with a pneumonia to the point that I was gonna eventually had a heart surgery because I ended up with constrictive pericarditis. I was lucky enough God bless that I was able to get rid of that surgery, but it's also a huge surgery.

Imagine that imagine it was something very serious. So whatever I'm talking on the book, I'm just not coming out of me researching and learning everything

from a degree or all my certificates that I have because I do have a whole bunch of other certificates in this area because I wanted to [00:46:00] become a subject matter expert.

I'm also bringing this because I lived these things firsthand and I knew and I know how is it that HR will deal with these type of situations and will get rid of the person that is the least problem that they can, that they're not going to get into a lawsuit. Yeah. Yeah. And even when I went and talked to the attorney and said, you have it, you should be looking for another job position.

**Michelle Harris:** Wow. Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, that's, I know. Yeah,

I'm like speechless on,

**Yvette Durazo:** You know, I, I got the opportunity to develop my consulting work and here I am and doing all these work, right? And that is why I'm very passionate about this because I know firsthand. What it means to be in a very toxic environment and working in toxic environments I also have my stories about bullying as well so I know firsthand.

Yeah, and not only do I know [00:47:00] firsthand how to work with the bully but also with the other person because I also did my own my work my own work, you know, sometimes we as people of very emphatic personality we become doormats if we don't know how to deal with these situations and we attract environments like this because we don't ask the right questions.

We think everybody's a nice person and we just go with it, right? Yes. So with all of that, I learned how to empower people, how to help them, you know, ask the right questions whenever they're going to go and apply for a job, how to deal with a situation like that, right? So that it doesn't affect you. in your health.

Because at the end of the day, conflict that is not resolved in the appropriate way, the humanistical way, it's going to affect your health. And this is another thing that companies don't realize. If you have more [00:48:00] people calling in sick, not wanting to work, always not feeling well and performing less because they're not feeling well, the insurance company will start charging more to the company.

The insurance not only will go up to that person, but it will go up to everybody else. Yeah. So there's a lot of leaking, leaking things happening in companies because they just don't want to address the conflict, because they think

performance, performance, performance, no matter what performance. And that is what it tends to happen.

They bring in leaders because of their performance all the way up, but they're not.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. And I know we talk about being sick and employees calling in sick, but a lot of that times that's driven by anxiety and things that are happening in the workplace. And I think that's what you were saying.

And , it all comes back to, the leader and, knowing how to[00:49:00] lead effectively and be emotionally intelligent, being conflict intelligent. And, , there's actually so much more we could talk about and even going into bullying and I wish we had more time and I know we're really running out of time.

But if you have a few minutes, I'd love to ask you a few of the standard questions we ask all of our guests. Definitely.

I have. Okay. I'm curious, do you have a mentor that you attribute your, some of your success to in your career?

**Yvette Durazo:** Oh, well, I, I, I always surround myself with people that I learned from, you know, this field of work that I'm at. It's a field of work that you're constantly learning. And I'm, you know, I'm a life learner by the way.

It's one of that part of me and my personality that I'm constantly learning from books, from people. And I'm always open to finding the right mentors. Um, and, you know, I, I, [00:50:00] I think that my, my strongest mentor that it's the back of this book was my father. He was my biggest mentor because he gave me the experience of what a great leader could be, and a great leader with no education, no, no elementary graduation, middle, high school, no education.

So for, because of that, I feel that there's no excuse for not having good leaders and organizations. We should have great leaders because we have people that have already gone through an educational process. that have skills. So we can build this great leader. The educational system, most likely than not, it's, it's not the right combination of things that will create a good leader.

It is their humanity. It is their people skills that are going to bring the best out of a great leader in an organization. [00:51:00] Yeah. So that, that, you know, if that answer your question, that is my, my biggest, my biggest mentor. But like I

said, I have other mentors in my field of work, I always look for those that have done a great job in this field because the field work that I'm at is not new.

It has been there for a long time, but it has been overlooked because companies for many years fall into that idea that performance, performance, performance, performance, no matter what. Right. Because of the research that was done, that that was the most important thing. So I always look for other mentors in my field that are doing great jobs, that are succeeding in my field of work as well.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Do you have a routine that you follow daily, whether it's in the morning, evening, that you attribute your wellbeing, your mental wellbeing to?

**Yvette Durazo:** Yes, I stick to my gratitude in the morning and at night. Because [00:52:00] you need some fuel in the morning to put in your brain so that it can start reactivating what's going to happen throughout your life. In, in life, it's about, you can see it in two ways like everything goes bad or everything is a miracle. And if I have that choice, I rather believe that I can see life through like everything. It's a miracle. Everything's it's a good thing like I told you about this experience that I had.

If they wouldn't be for that, it wouldn't have been the big push that I needed in order to go in into my business. Yeah, because I had been building my business for a long, long time, little by little and be scared not to have a patron. And because of that experience, I would say, well, I had to move from cities actually, but it gave me the opportunity of a lifetime to go into a, into a city that opened up my worldview.

in other dimensions. So it turned out to be a good thing because I chose to write. So because of [00:53:00] those gratitudes every morning, I do my gratitude journal. I, you know, if I don't have time mentally, I do my gratitude journal and a night I close my eyes and that is what I put. I install good things in my brain.

And I need that because I work every day with people, you know, I, I'm the hope for other people, right? So I need to be in a good mental state in order to be able to be there for other people.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, I, I love that. I haven't been able to be consistent at night. And I'm working on that. That's something I'm working on, because I know it's so important to, to, for your own well being to go to sleep with, you know, to have that, those thoughts in your head and not the stress of the day, but what are you grateful for?

So I, uh, I, I completely understand

**Yvette Durazo:** Yeah.. And to add to that, I always leave a post it by my bed table. Because we go to bed and it's like, Oh my God, I forgot to send that email. Oh, I forgot to send that proposal. Oh, I forgot to do [00:54:00] this. And then I just grabbed my little post it, write it there and put it in there.

And it's like all taken care of. I'll take care of it tomorrow morning. Yeah. And then I go and do my, my gratitude.

**Michelle Harris:** It's so interesting how that step of just writing something down your it gives your your brain that alleviate alleviation that okay, it's written down, I don't have to think about it anymore.

And, you would think okay, just because I wrote it down doesn't mean I'm not going to still think about it, but you did. Somehow, magically it works.

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, it's because we always fear that we're going to forget, right? And knowing that you put it in a place that you're going to come back tomorrow and know that it's there, it guarantees you not to be fearful that you're going to forget.

That's true. I always have my post its in there. And then in the morning, I got my post it and I bring it over to to my desk and it's like, okay, I need to take care of these things first and I take care of them. Oh,

**Michelle Harris:** I love that. That's a great, great tip for people [00:55:00] listening. Is there a song that you'll listen to when you need a little confidence or energy boost?

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, talking about songs, maybe it's not necessarily that I have a song for boosting myself. I like bachata music, salsa music. That gets me in a very nice mood. It's interesting that people invite me to karaoke, and it's like, Yvette, I know you sing a little bit. Can you sing a song? And it's like, I don't know any songs.

I don't know any lyrics. He said, what is it that you listen to? I listen to salsa bachata because it gets me in a nice mood. But I don't even hear the words. I only hear the music. But talking about songs, I have an entire list of songs that have to do with conflict. You know, It's so, it's so humanistic to have conflict.

And I, as you know, I teach at the several universities and I teach undergraduates and master's degree students. And that's one of the things that I play with them to bring in new songs, especially the new [00:56:00] ones that I probably have not here because it's. new generation songs, but I show them like very old and goodies, like 60 70 songs.

And this is, you know, these are songs that talk about conflict resolution and I play them and I have a whole list of that. And then I asked the students bring that and I give them points for bringing new songs and stuff like that. And we play them a little bit in the, in the in the class and I teach through that and I say what is that he's trying to, or she's trying to say what is that that person is looking forward to receive and blah, blah, blah.

**Michelle Harris:** Is there a song you can think of that's on the playlist off the top of your head?

**Yvette Durazo:** Oh my goodness. Gosh, there is a, uh, what is it? Which, which song? Let's see. You caught me off guard, uh, to be honest with you, but I have a whole list about there's so many songs that talk about conflict and, and, and stuff like that.

There's also a lot of great songs that, that society has [00:57:00] developed in the past just to, to address societal conflict that exists. Yes. As well. True. And songs and music, it's a way to conflict resolution as well, to conflict management. But because, what I can remember, there's a very famous song in Mexico that talks about the, it's, it talks, it's a very nice musical type of song.

But embedded in that, it is a. How do you say a, a proclamation or, or, or, or insinuation that something is not going well in, in, in the politics, but because people could not say verbally or accuse politicians or write things on newsletters, or newspapers, they would develop this thought. Yeah. And, and, and at least that is conflict management.

Right? [00:58:00] Because not all conflict can be resolved and I am not here telling you that everything can be resolved, but learning how to manage things can give you a way into, into a better life instead of just keeping that toxicity in your body.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. I always find it really interesting to hear like songs or even movies, like some movies that have an underlying theme that's not obvious.

In what's happening on the screen, but it's really it's there. And if you really look into what's going on there, they're talking about that. And same with the music. It's always interesting to hear that there's actually a, a different story that you're actually, you're not hearing when you listen.

**Yvette Durazo:** Exactly. Because sometimes you hear the lyrics, you like it, you don't even know exactly what they're talking about, but it's there, you know? Yeah. I'm trying to come up with, [00:59:00] with the name of one song at least, but you know, well, maybe you can, I, I didn't get my vitamins today, but I do have a list.

**Michelle Harris:** We have show notes. So if you maybe could share one or two after by email to me and I'll just include them in the show notes.

**Yvette Durazo:** So yes, and I will include that other song that I'm talking about. But it's a very emblemical song that it's actually travel worldwide.

Yeah, but it's a Mexican song and it means that it they're complaining about the government, but they couldn't complain that bad. So they created a fun song with it. Yeah. Right.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. That'd be great. That'd be great. Is there something under a hundred dollars or around a hundred dollars that you've bought in the last year or so that has made a difference in your life in some way?

**Yvette Durazo:** Uh, let's see. Less than a hundred dollars. I've made this different. My goodness. You just go to Amazon. There's so many great things, [01:00:00] especially, you know, I'm an organizer. I, I used to have a lot of OCD. I have been getting better, but I always go to Amazon and I like to buy these little gadgets to organize things.

And in that organizing things for me, it's nice. It's something that brings me joy and, yeah. But I don't recall one thing that, you know, I have been trying to not to buy a lot of things because I've been trying, you know, I've been traveling more, in, in going and doing workshops, trainings, and then traveling a little bit and, and that has allowed me to buy less.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. No, that's a fair answer. That's definitely something that I've,

**Yvette Durazo:** Maybe what I can think about is, uh, it's, uh, some bags that you buy to put on your luggage that you zip them all. And then the clothes become smaller. Yeah, that could be one thing that has brought me a lot of joy, especially being women and traveling, you know how it is.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Do [01:01:00] you find that helps with wrinkling? Does it keep it from wrinkling as well? If you put it in those bags?

**Yvette Durazo:** I think so, because the bags are made from these materials that it, that is being used for parachuting. Oh, yeah, yeah. Very, very, uh, soft material. And when I put it in there, nothing happens to it.

And then I tend to buy clothes that... That I'm not gonna, you know that I don't have to iron.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. Yeah. I love when I find something that I like that is that type of material because that's it's always it always goes in the dryer first. And then if worst case scenario, I I'll pull out the iron, but Is there a book that, besides your book, obviously, is there a book that you've read recently that you would recommend to the audience?

It can be fiction or nonfiction, something that was, would be worth their time.

**Yvette Durazo:** Well, I've been reading a lot of marketing books lately, especially to market my business, [01:02:00] but in reading a lot of articles. And recently and actually I'm also writing an article about how we said that companies ended up bringing leaders to a higher level and these are toxic leaders.

And we already talk about that and then I'm going to be writing an article about that as well. And I have a newsletter and LinkedIn that I sent. And also a newsletter that I send in if people sign up in my website, but it, you know, it's about that it's about really putting into perspective.

Is it worthwhile to have these type of leaders if they masquerade the fact that they're bringing in revenue when when money is going off the drain in different in so many different ways.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah, that's an important, you don't, yeah, I don't see many articles come up about about that side of things.



And it's, uh, it's so important to have that realization that it's not all about the [01:03:00] top line. And so many people get hung up on the top line and don't think about everything that causes. Impact to the bottom line, which I mean, your business can't exist without

**Yvette Durazo:** And then another book that I have been that I listened to whenever I'm walking and doing that.

It's, I just want to make sure I told you the right one is Decoding Greatness. That's, that's an amazing book. It's called Decoding Greatness.

**Michelle Harris:** Okay. Well, we'll, we'll also add that in the show notes for everybody to check out. So Yvette, I thank you for your time. We know we went over a little bit and I appreciate you, you giving us all of this great information, I really would like everybody to check out your book.

You are officially in everybody's hype squad now is there one piece of advice or words of inspiration that you would leave everybody with before we end, today? [01:04:00]

**Yvette Durazo:** I think be kind to yourself, be kind to yourself because we have been forgetting that. I see that a lot, especially because we have been dealing with so much difficulty, the pandemic, sometimes we don't even know that we have burned down that we have gone through so much change that it creates a lot of emotion depression, unfortunately, but be kind to yourself, and be aware that, everybody in the society had been dealing with so much difficulty that we need to also be kind to ourselves and forget to do that.

**Michelle Harris:** So true. So true. Great words to end our conversation with. So if everybody wants to reach out to you, or if anybody wants to reach out to you listening, is LinkedIn the best way, your website, like what would be the best way for them to reach out to you?

**Yvette Durazo:** They, they can Google my name, Yvette Durazo, and they're gonna, you know, I have a website under my name and then that would lead you to my personal [01:05:00] website and put my consulting website.

There's a whole bunch of YouTube videos that I put out there. LinkedIn, I put a lot of content to help out the community through your post, uh, you know, podcast. They can probably look me up as well if you're gonna put the links.

**Michelle Harris:** Yes, of course. I will add the links and provide and I'll also provide a link to your newsletter that you mentioned and some of the other things that we talked about.

Those will all be in the show notes and I'll provide you that link as well. Um, so, well, great. Well, thank you, Yvette. Thank you so much for coming on. Yeah.

**Yvette Durazo:** Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

**Michelle Harris:** Yeah. I appreciate you. And I look forward to hearing what you've got going on and staying in touch.

**Yvette Durazo:** Will do.

**Michelle Harris:** All right. Bye bye.

**Yvette Durazo:** Bye bye.

**Michelle Harris:** Hi, everyone. This is Michelle again. If you enjoyed this conversation, hit subscribe. So you don't miss out on our weekly episodes. And if you're really feeling it, please leave a review. We'd love to have your support. [01:06:00] You can also subscribe to our weekly newsletter where we share things we're excited about, things we found funny or inspiring and must read leadership videos and articles we came across that week.

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