

WorkWell

A Deloitte podcast series to empower your well-being



Exploring the relationship continuum with Carole Robin

Jen Fisher: Hi WorkWell listeners. I'm really excited to share that my book *Work Better Together* is officially out. Conversations with WorkWell guests and feedback from listeners like you inspired this book. It's all about how to create a more human-centered workplace. As we return to the office for many of us, this book can help you move forward into post-pandemic life with strategies and tools to strengthen your relationships and focus on your wellbeing. It's available now from your favorite book retailer.

Building strong relationships with others is crucial in our personal and professional lives. Yet, many of us struggle to build new connections or maintain the ones we already have, especially when conflicts arise. How can we connect across differences and develop relationships in which we actually see and hear others for who they are? It starts by understanding what a successful relationship looks like and learning strategies to help you deepen your connection. This is the WorkWell podcast series. Hi, I'm Jen Fisher, Chief Well-being officer for Deloitte, and I'm so pleased to be here with you today to talk about all things well-being.

I'm here with Carole Robin. She's a former award-winning Stanford Business School professor who taught the legendary Interpersonal Dynamics course for nearly two decades. Also known as the touchy-feely course students consistently described it as life-changing. She also co-authored the book, *Connect: Building Exceptional Relationships with Family, Friends and Colleagues*, which incorporates many of the lessons from that course. Carole also co-founded Leaders in Tech, a nonprofit which brings what she taught at Stanford to tech startup CEOs and their organizations. Carole, welcome to the show.

Carole Robin: Oh, thanks for having me Jen. I'm excited to be here.

Jen Fisher: Absolutely, I'm excited about this conversation. It's a topic that is near and dear to my heart, but also near and dear to your heart. So tell us who you are, your personal story, and then talk to me about human connection and how you became passionate about this topic.

Carole Robin: OK, I'll try to be succinct. A long, meandering story.

Jen Fisher: That's OK, take as long as you need.

Carole Robin: I've had six different careers depending on how we count, maybe seven, anyway, and I started out in sales and marketing and industrial automation. I was the first woman hired into a non-clerical job at one of the largest industrial automation companies in the world in 1975. So yeah, I was first woman in a non-clerical job. That was an interesting experience. Interesting, you can double click

on and say full of learning and then I had a career in consulting. I had an era that I called my “nonprofit era” while my kids were young, and I was raising them. Then eventually I went back to get a PhD, because I decided I wanted to get into organization development and leadership development, and I wanted to understand a little bit more about psychology and sociology and a lot of other things that I'd only learned through experience. There I met somebody who introduced me to David Bradford, who is my coauthor about the book that I suspect we'll talk about at some point and that took me to Stanford Graduate School of Business where on a lark I went to meet with him because somebody said, “Hey you know, they teach this class over there that is really starting to take off and they need somebody else to teach.” At that time I was a partner in a consulting firm and I went over to meet David, and he said, “Hey, why don't you come teach for us a quarter a year,” and I went to my partners and I said, “Hey I got to get off the road one-quarter a year,” because I was traveling all over the world. They said well yeah it sounds relatively prestigious to have one of our partners be at somebody teaching at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, so go ahead. So that's what started my Stanford career/saga. I ended up staying there for almost 20 years. I went from teaching one-quarter a year to having my partners buy me out and stayed at Stanford full time and taught initially this course that's called Interpersonal Dynamics. It's actually known by the students referred to fondly as touchy-feely. It's very famous at the Stanford Business School.

Jen Fisher: Love that. And beyond.

Carole Robin: Yes. It's one of those legendary courses and still to this day probably the most oversubscribed elective at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. A lot of people think I invented touchy-feely, which is absolutely wrong. I became known as the queen of touchy-feely. I'll come back and tell you why, but I did not invent it. If anybody invented it, it would have been my coauthor, David Bradford. I became known as the queen of touchy-feely, I think because for two reasons. One is that I was not a career academic. It was the only non-career academic teaching at the time, and I think that gave me frankly more credibility with the students and also gave me an opportunity to connect the dots for them a lot more and help them understand how they were going to use what they were learning. Back to your original question. It wasn't until I started teaching touchy feely that I realized that was actually what I was put on the planet to do. I was put on the planet, A, to teach, which ironically at my first dissertation committee meeting I said, “Please don't make me do all that crap that academics care about because I'm not ever going to teach.”

Jen Fisher: Never say things like that.

Carole Robin: Yeah, the Chair of my dissertation committee, all those years I was at Stanford, sent me a birthday card every year, addressed to Carole Robin Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, and it always started with: I just want to be really clear. I am never going to teach. She was the first to say, “Never say never.” Those words have continued to ring true for me many years later, so you know what? I discovered not just that I loved teaching, but that I loved teaching this. This meaning: helping people learn how to do a better and more sustainable and reliable job of creating stronger, robust connections and relationships with each other. It's not an art, it's a science, and one of the things that I really came to understand is that most people yearn for deeper connection, stronger relationships, even learning how to move from dysfunctional to functional. The course is legendary because I get as many emails and calls and visits from former students decades later saying the predictable, “I just became a CEO, I owe it all to what I learned in touchy-feely,” or “I just got funding for my startup,” but I get as

many if not more, “Pretty sure your class just saved my marriage. I just reconciled my relationship with my best friend who I hadn't talked to for a year because we had a big fight. Thank you for finally writing a book so that I could actually sit down with them, and we could figure out how to repair our relationship.” It's life changing, it's transformational, and it is deeply fulfilling work for me.

Jen Fisher: Apparently it's having an impact on so many, but I guess the question that I have for you about that is we hear often that humans are wired for connection with others.

Carole Robin: Yep, Brene Brown said that.

Jen Fisher: Why do we get it so wrong so often?

Carole Robin: It's a wonderful question, Jen. That's part of the reason that David and I wrote this book. Because you're right, most people for some reason don't intuitively know what to do right or how to fix it when it goes wrong. There's a whole bunch of reasons, I think. The first is that while we are wired for connection, we are also sometimes our own worst enemies, and what I mean by that is we are all works in progress. That means that what I did to create more connection with you right now today may or may not be what I need to do to continue to create connection with you a year from now. Second of all, what I do to create connection with you might be very different than what I do to create connection with Jamie. So to assume that one size fits all is the first big mistake and the second one is to assume that what works for us is what works for other people. So, those are a couple of the things that get in the way. The third is that some people are much easier to connect with than others, I'm sure you know that, and it turns out that some of that has to do with how similar we are. It's much easier to connect with people that are just like us. However, life is much richer and fuller and exciting when we learn how to connect with people that are actually not like us.

Jen Fisher: Right.

Carole Robin: That's a whole lot more challenging, and I think that's one of the reasons that the course is so legendary and popular, which is being interpersonally competent is a determinant of professional success. Also, personal success, by the way. There are a whole host of reasons, not the least of which we also hold, what I call mental models. These assumptions and beliefs about what I need to do in order for you to want to connect with me or like me or want to work with me and sometimes we're just dead wrong. Boy! I work in Silicon Valley where learning how to spin your image to perfection is one of these single biggest reasons people don't really connect. Because if I don't show you the real me, whoever you connect to is this version of me that isn't even me. Yeah, and there are some tried and true, we can talk about them, there are some tried and true skills actually to move along this continuum. Relationships exist on a continuum. At one end of the continuum is contact and no connection, which by the way, is what social media is and/or dysfunction. At the other end of the spectrum is something we call exceptional, which is why the book is called *Connect: Building Exceptional Relationships with Family, Friends and Colleagues*. That's what we saw happen at the Business School, but along the way there's also plain old, robust and functional. So when you learn how to move along this continuum, you might not want all your relationships to be exceptional. First of all, that's not what we're advocating, it would be exhausting and it's impractical, but you might want to know the skills to get there so that with a few you can and along the way you can move any relationships to at least robust and functional.

Jen Fisher: I want to dig into this because I definitely want to know some of those skills. We talked about human beings are wired for connection, but we didn't really talk about why connection is so important, and you talked about connecting across differences and you talk about that a lot in the book. Okay, we go there first and then get into the continuum and how to move along that continuum. Also, I'm asking a whole bunch of questions, is there a way to assess what we want certain relationships to be or not be?

Carole Robin: Yeah, OK, so that connection matters, we already know. One of my favorite books on this topic by the way. It was written by Vivek Murthy.

Jen Fisher: Oh, *Together*.

Carole Robin: *Together* yes.

Jen Fisher: Fun fact about Vivek Murthy. Where I went to high school here in Miami, Florida, he was our valedictorian.

Carole Robin: Of course.

Jen Fisher: Yes. Great guy.

Carole Robin: What's the subtitle of that book? *The Healing Power of Human Connection in a sometimes lonely world*. So we need it because without connection we feel lonely. We need it because without connection we feel empty. We also, by the way, need it because, and we talk about this in the book, in order to know ourselves better, we need others. We often say it takes two to know one, and of course, we need it in order to learn and grow. Living systems are either growing or they're dying.

Jen Fisher: Well, that's a pretty strong reason for why we need connection. I don't know that anything more needs to be said about that. You said it's easier or easy to connect with people that are like us and it's harder to connect with people that are different from us. I guess that if people are different, then obviously we're going to grow in different ways than if we're constantly spending time with people that are just like us, but I mean I guess why is that more challenging? Because they have different backgrounds, different points of view, and like this is kind of a stupid question, but let's dig into that.

Carole Robin: Well, it's actually not a stupid question at all. What we don't realize is that when we are with somebody that sees the world the same way we do, we immediately know we have something in common. We might more easily and more quickly trust them. These are some of the basic fundamental building blocks of relationships. Commonality and trust. When we encounter somebody that is different than us, then depending on how different and around what, those things aren't automatic. By the way, it's a mistake even sometimes to think that just because we have these four things in common, we see the world the same way about these other two things. But at the heart of learning how, and this is going to get a little bit into moving along the continuum, at the heart of that are two elements of strong relationships. The first is disclosure, your willingness to be more known. The second is inquiry and curiosity, i.e., the extent to which you are able to invite the other person to allow themselves to be known.

Jen Fisher: Let's talk about the continuum. You already talked about the polar opposites, complete dysfunction.

Carole Robin: Yes, poor contact, no connection.

Jen Fisher: Yes, exactly, otherwise known as social media, which I love that. Then exceptional relationships, which is, what you talk about so much in the book, so take me along that continuum, but also talk about what an exceptional relationship looks like, and how do we identify where we are or where a certain relationship is on that continuum, and if and how we want to move it to a different place.

Carole Robin: Let's start with the element of an exceptional relationship, which by the way are present, to a greater and lesser extent as you move along the continuum. At the very end of the continuum at the exceptional end, you both feel more fully known by each other. You trust that your disclosures will not be used against you. You are able to be honest with each other and know that that only deepens your relationship. You deal with conflict productively. It doesn't mean you have no conflict and you're both committed to each other's growth and learning and development. When you have all six to a significant extent, you've reached the exceptional end. We have the metaphor in the book of climbing a mountain, and sometimes it's good enough just to get to the upper meadow, which is lovely, and it's hard to get all the way to the top and sometimes not worth it because the meadow is lovely, but you need some element of those even to get to the meadow, even to get to functional and robust.

Jen Fisher: How do we then identify certain relationships in our life? Like where they are on the continuum? If I think about a really dysfunctional relationship in my life, are there ways to assess whether or not should we always want to improve a relationship or are there some relationships that just don't serve us and therefore they shouldn't be relationships in our life?

Carole Robin: Yeah, well, it does take two to tango, so you both have to want to have more than you have right now or different than what you have right now. Because you can't do it all by yourself. On the other hand, somebody has to start. So if I wait for you to start, you wait for me to start, nothing happens and sometimes you might want to take our relationship to a more functional place or to a deeper place and not know how. So there are lots of reasons why we might get stuck, so to speak. I think that was one of the reasons that the course was so transformative for thousands of students for decades and continues to be, which is that too often where they landed was well, this is no use or this is impossible or this is as good as it's ever going to be, or I just have to give up. That's not necessarily true and to your point, that's not to say every single relationship, first of all, the word should, hate that word, wish it was eliminated from the English language.

Jen Fisher: Agreed.

Carole Robin: Every relationship has the potential, but not every relationship might be worth the work.

Jen Fisher: And that's OK.

Carole Robin: And that's OK. Only you can determine whether you're OK with wherever it is. What makes me sad is that so many people give up so much sooner than they needed to because they're not equipped with the competencies and skills they need, and what makes my work so personally meaningful and fulfilling is that I've seen over and over again how people learn this stuff and actually have breakthroughs in relationships over and over and over again, relationships they thought would just never be more than contact with no connection or just plain dysfunctional. Now, let me just add one other thing there though. It's work, it's a lot of work, so at some point one of your first questions has to be well, how much is this worth it? That's one of the most disappointing things that I have found,

particularly since our book came out, which is no I'm sorry there are no three easy steps to better relationships, really, and yet that's when I ask podcasters and when I ask people in the media who say my God, every person on the planet should read this book, and I say, well, then why have we had so much trouble getting more coverage? They say oh that's easy because if you'd written three easy steps to get rid of toxic people in your life, you'd have a runaway bestseller. Well, that's pretty disheartening.

Jen Fisher: Yeah, and as you talk about in the book, it's you don't ever finish right? I mean if you want a relationship to be exceptional and continue to be exceptional, it's ongoing work. It's not like OK, we reached it and now we can just stop trying.

Carole Robin: That's exactly right.

Jen Fisher: Yeah. So I guess that's where you decide if it's worth it or not.

Carole Robin: Yes, and that's why I said, boy, you know, we're not saying, I think having more than a handful of exceptional relationships is probably enough, but you could have many relationships at the robust and functional level.

Jen Fisher: You talked a little bit about social media, but just in general, how has or how does like technology, social media, especially in the workplace impact our ability to connect with one another. I think one of the things that in that book that Vivek wrote, he talks about we are more, "connected than we've ever been," connected through technology, but we're lonelier than we've ever been.

Carole Robin: Yep. Well that I think social media gives us an illusion of connection, and so you know how many followers do we have? How many friends do we have? I don't think that's connection. The other thing that happens of course is that what people post, regardless of which medium, they post a little sliver and they usually post the smile at dinner as we say in the book, instead of the conversation about whether or not you were really going to have kids. So there's I think technology, which has enabled social media, creates too much opportunity for very superficial connection, which is not particularly satisfying. Second problem I think we have especially in business, and boy especially since the pandemic and with Zoom, is that what we've done is we've foregrounded task more and more and backgrounded relationship more and more. Well, that doesn't create any connection either, and the combination is really bad. The only kind of "social interaction" that we have is either superficial or the throwaway, how are you? I'm fine. Let's get to work.

Jen Fisher: Yeah. How was your weekend? Good?

Carole Robin: Exactly.

Jen Fisher: How do we use technology in a positive way to enhance our connections? Are we able to do that?

Carole Robin: That's a great question. I think there's a possibility for using technology to make it easier for us to drop in together into something more meaningful conversation or whether it's on the phone or on Zoom. I think it's harder and harder as it becomes more and more what's the word asynchronous. The other thing, Jen, that I think is worth noting is there's a reason the students call the course touchy-feely, emphasis on the feely, not the touchy, and that's because they discover how powerful feelings are and emotions are in creating stronger connections with others, learning to identify our feelings and share our feelings and invite others to share their feelings. It's a whole vocabulary. I think it's telling that

we had to create a vocabulary of feelings that's part of the syllabus of the course, and it's in the appendix of the book, because we've been socialized to leave feelings out of it especially in business.

Jen Fisher: I was going to say, especially at work.

Carole Robin: Especially at work, but in general, from the time we're little, you fall down you hurt yourself, your mom comes running over and she says you're fine, you're fine. Wait, I am not, I am in pain. So, the combination of technology and the de-emphasis of feelings or completely leaving them out of the communications is a double whammy. It's one of the reasons why people had to come up with emojis, but the emojis won't do the trick.

Jen Fisher: Yeah, and sometimes I don't even know what emotion the emoji is supposed to be.

Carole Robin: Correct.

Jen Fisher: So, it doesn't always get its point across, but let's continue on this line of conversation because emotions and feelings, we talk a lot about that on this podcast, but understanding or having a vocabulary, being able to identify your own emotions, other people's emotions, what is the role that that plays in deepening our connection specifically?

Carole Robin: Well, let's start with the fact that emotions and feelings are what give meaning to facts. So if I tell you I went ziplining, then that's a fact you learned a little something about me. If I tell you I went ziplining, and I was exhilarated, you learned a little more about me. If I tell you I went ziplining and I was terrified, but I went because I felt coerced and didn't want to be left behind by my family, which is the true story, you've learned something completely different about me, right? So, we tend to exchange a lot of facts and not a lot of feelings, especially in business like who needs the feelings at work, but frankly, how do you motivate anybody without feelings? How do you inspire anybody without feelings? How do you create something bigger than you without any feelings? I don't know, to me it's become such second nature to always include my own feelings and to ask someone else for theirs. That's where inquiry is important. I said that earlier that disclosure is one element of building a stronger relationship. Curiosity and inquiry is another, and that's where learning how to ask the right questions is important. For example, let's say I notice that you look upset. I can just say, "Gee Jen, I don't know how to read the look on your face." This is where it's a whole lot easier for face to face, but maybe in the last three exchanges we've had even on the phone, I can say the tone of your voice shifted. What's going on? Just what's going on? How are you doing right now? Simple questions. By the way, the most important word to avoid if you're trying to get somebody to maybe share a feeling with you is *why*. Why are you feeling sad? That will immediately drive me into my head for an explanation, and it will certainly take me out of my feelings and is also likely to sometimes make me feel defensive, like I've got to somehow explain to you that it's OK for me to be feeling angry or sad or disappointed. So what, where, when, how, really good important questions. Why, stay away from why.

Jen Fisher: How do we develop? Is there a practice associated with adding feelings to the facts, right? You said I went ziplining and then you gave the second example about it being exhilarated and the third about not wanting to be left behind by your family. Obviously that doesn't come natural for everyone. For some people they're probably better at it than others, and so how do we start to kind of develop that practice or that language so that we can deepen our connection.

Carole Robin: If you have a meditation practice or mindfulness practice and you meditate or do whatever it is to enhance your mindfulness, that's super helpful because you start to identify feelings in the moment when you're having them. Then you have the choice to actually express them. It's another thing we talk about in the book, the two antenna. We're all equipped with two antenna. One is the one that picks up internal signals like what's going on for me right now? How am I feeling right now? The more mindful I am, the more in touch I am with that moment to moment. Like right now, I'm aware that I'm excited to be talking to you, eager to get my message across. Have a tiny bit of anxiety about whether or not this is going to make any difference to anybody out there. I'm aware of all of that in the moment, and then I can make choices of which of those things do I want to share? But unless I become aware of them, I don't even have the choice. So that's the internal antenna picking up signals on what's going on for me. There's also the external focused antenna which is trying to pick up signals on what's going on for you that also informs the choices that I make, and so depending on how you respond to my sharing of feeling, I may or may not share more feelings, I may stop sharing feelings entirely. I may have a feeling about the fact that you didn't respond to my sharing feelings and feel vulnerable. So there's lots of places to go here.

Jen Fisher: So one of the common probably fears in the workplace, but I think generally in life, perhaps we all have some fears around rejection. So how do you get comfortable with being vulnerable without letting the disclosure of your feelings or emotions be used against you or taken in the wrong way.

Carole Robin: Or overwhelming to the other person when you over share right? Any number of bad outcomes, right? Well that's one of the reasons that a core concept in the course and in the book is the 15% rule, which essentially means you have your comfort zone where you don't think twice about what you say. You have your danger zone, which is in a million years, you'd never share that, but there's this zone in the middle, which is the zone of learning and growth, but when the students used to say but Carole, the minute I'm outside my comfort zone, how do I know I'm not in my danger zone? This amorphous zone in the middle, it scares me. We used to say try stepping 15% outside your comfort zone, a little bit. If you step out a little bit, you're unlikely to freak yourself or the other person out. You have an opportunity to see how that went. If it goes well, then you've got a new comfort zone with that person and then you can experiment 15% beyond that. That's how we learn and grow in a relationship.

Jen Fisher: In these relationships, should we talk about these things? I know you covered this in the book. Should we talk about, it takes two right?

Carole Robin: Yes.

Jen Fisher: Me just wanting to deepen my connection to you without you being aware may or may not work.

Carole Robin: Yeah, in fact I would argue it's unlikely to work.

Jen Fisher: So how do we go about having those conversations without them being awkward?

Carole Robin: Well, we start with a couple things we've already talked about, which is maybe disclosure 15% beyond your comfort zone. So I might say I really enjoy hanging out with you and sometimes I wish we knew each other just a little better, I wonder if you do too. For me that would be 15% outside my comfort zone. By the way, some people go to a question. How do you feel about our relationship? I don't think that's fair. I think that if you're going to ask a question, you should actually be willing to be

vulnerable first, and depending on the relationship and the other person, I might add to what I just said and I feel a little vulnerable even saying this, but somehow not saying it doesn't seem fair to both of us. When in doubt, speak about what's going on for you in the moment.

Jen Fisher: It humanizes you and the other person.

Carole Robin: You know, I'm a little jittery, I don't know how you're going to react. Also, remember to include your intent. The reason I'm bringing it up is that I really think this could be more and that could be cool, and totally get it if for you it's fine.

Jen Fisher: That works the same whether in your personal life or at work.

Carole Robin: Absolutely. Now, in the case when they're at work, there are power differentials that we have to remember, and that's where it's even more important for the person in the higher power position whether it's because they're higher up on the hierarchy, higher social status, whatever. People who are in a higher power position often need to be the person to start because if I'm in a lower power position, I'm already feeling vulnerable, and if you're asking me to be more vulnerable when I have no idea how you're going to react, that's a big ask.

Jen Fisher: Yeah, so then I guess as a leader or manager are there things that I can do to help empower my teams not only to connect better with me, but to connect better with one another?

Carole Robin: Yep. Well, for starters you can role model. One of the things that you can do as the manager is first of all be willing to take the first risk 15% and to even say, you know, I think relationships are a really important element of... let's just start with a basic. People do business with people. They don't do business with ideas or machines or products or money or strategies. They actually do business with people. So to say I actually think the people part of businesses is a really important element and I would like to be more deliberate and intentional in building stronger relationships with the people who work for me. That already makes me feel a little vulnerable.

Jen Fisher: I know, but I'm just thinking, on the other end of that, if I had a leader that actually said that to me.

Carole Robin: Yeah how would you feel Jen if you had a leader actually said that to you?

Jen Fisher: I would feel valued. I'd feel like I mattered that I was in a safe space after I got over the shock perhaps. But really just valued and kind of seen as another human being, right? Because you said we do business with other people but often we don't behave like that.

Carole Robin: That's right, and imagine what would happen if in addition to saying what I just said, I included my intent and the reason I'm saying this is that I want to make sure you feel valued and cared for and then that makes it even easier for you to respond with wow, I really do feel valued and cared for right?

Jen Fisher: Obviously you have to back that up with actions, ongoing relationship development if you will. Yeah, the value that you get from a simple couple of sentences.

Carole Robin: As a manager, I often in the past and to this day, will follow what I just said up with and I want to make sure that you let me know if there are things that I'm doing that are making it easier to connect with me and/or feel valued and anything I'm doing that is actually working against that, because

if you don't tell me, I won't know. Now I'm also asking you to hold me accountable to what I just said I wanted.

Jen Fisher: And creating psychological safety for me to provide you feedback.

Carole Robin: I often say it's not rocket science

Jen Fisher: But it is..

Carole Robin: Except that I once did a workshop for a bunch of rocket scientists at a very, very large national agency.

Jen Fisher: Did they say it was harder than rocket science?

Carole Robin: Yes, they looked at me and said, "Carole, this is so much harder than rocket science."

Jen Fisher: I had a feeling that was coming. Well this is awesome. I have one final question for you Carole. What are your favorites? We've talked about so many, but how do you personally maintain your relationships or build new ones? What are your top two go-tos, and I know that goes against...I'm not asking for the three tips to make all of my relationships successful.

Carole Robin: No, I hear you. My two go-tos, the first one is to make sure I've created conditions where the other person can give me any kind of feedback anytime about anything, and that's because I believe feedback actually creates depth and creates relationship and deepens it, because when you give me feedback, you show me that you actually are invested in my growth and development and in our relationship. Think about how often we say, "It's not worth it," when somebody does something that you know annoys us. So then what do they do? They keep doing it because they have no idea that it's annoying. So instead of saying it's not worth it, try saying I'm not worth it, you're not worth it, we're not worth it. I got a different meaning, isn't it? So that's the first thing. I try to both give and in giving make it OK to signal that I want constant comfort around being honest. So for me the being honest piece of the elements is really important. I think maybe related is the I take responsibility for how known I feel, and when I don't feel known and understood, then I do something about it. Rather than just mope away and think, "Oh yeah, well, that relationship is not going anywhere."

Jen Fisher: Well and I love what you said previously if there's something that annoys me, and I just brush it off, I think over time those things grow.

Carole Robin: Exactly, that's why we call them pinches in the book and they become crunches.

Jen Fisher: Absolutely and then you explode when you could have addressed it in a much better way, if you'd addressed it early on.

Carole Robin: Exactly, it would have been so much easier, and I have one more thing, if I might that I really want to say just because I...Why do I want to say this? I want to say this because I feel so passionately about this. It feels so important to me that more people in the world learn how to do this. I often get really discouraged by what a difficult time we're having, getting the word out into the world that this exists. Yes, we've sold 57,000 books and people say my God, that's like great for a book. It's been translated into 15 languages, but you know, Jen, 57,000 is like a drop in the bucket. I believe with every cell of my being that if more people were equipped with these skills, we wouldn't just have better teams and more functional organizations, we'd have healthier families. We'd have more functional

schools. We'd have stronger communities. When I dream really big, maybe we'd even have a more functional government.

Jen Fisher: I was going right there.

Carole Robin: Yeah. But you know I don't know. I'm back to how discouraging it is that people are like, "I don't know that's too much work. I think I'll just stick with connect with people that are easy to connect with, and by the way, even if it's superficial, that's OK." It's like, ah, ah, the potential is so huge.

Jen Fisher: Alright, so Carole what can the listeners of the WorkWell podcast do to help you with that mission because I love it.

Carole Robin: Well, for starters, go start living this, and by the way, look, I did spend 10 years in sales and marketing, so yes, go buy the book, but beyond that, don't just buy it and put it on your bookshelf, don't buy it and read the first thirty pages. Actually, every chapter in the book ends with a deepen your learning, with suggestions on what you can go do. People don't learn how to be more interpersonally competent by reading about it or by listening about it. They have to actually engage in it and learn what it is that created connection and then stop and think about, "Oh, that worked, I think I'll remember that." That's the power of the course. Second of all, follow me on LinkedIn and then share what I put out on LinkedIn, write reviews of the book on Goodreads and on Amazon. There's a website for the book www.connectandrelate.com. There's a free downloadable self-assessment. Want to get some sense for how good you are at this stuff? Download the assessment, and after you've answered the questions for yourself, give it to two or three other people and see whether they answer them the same way you answer them. Download the free start your own learning group with a guide on how to pull some people together and actually up your game with regard to how you do this and then of course, just in the immortal words of a well-known shoe manufacturer, go do it.

Jen Fisher: Alright, well I hope and know that you will get at least a good handful of people that are going to heed your words there including me.

Carole Robin: Thank you.

Jen Fisher: Thank you for being on the show Carole. Thank you for all of the insights. I read the book and I learned even more talking to you in person. So, thank you for your time today.

Carole Robin: Thank you, Jen. Thank you.

Jen Fisher: I'm so grateful Carole could be with us today to talk about human connection. Thank you to our producers Revit 360 and our listeners. You can find the WorkWell podcast series on deloitte.com or you can visit various podcatchers, using the keyword WorkWell, all one word, to hear more. If you like the show, don't forget to subscribe so you get all of our future episode. If you have a topic you'd like to hear on the WorkWell podcast series, or maybe a story you would like to share, please reach out to me on LinkedIn. My profile is under the name Jen Fisher or on Twitter [@jenfish23](https://twitter.com/jenfish23). We're always open to your recommendations and feedback, and of course if you like what you hear, please share, post, and like this podcast. Thank you and be well.