

WorkWell

A Deloitte podcast series to empower your well-being



Humanity in the workplace

Jen Fisher (Jen): Hey, this is Jen. Before we get started with today's show, I have a quick ask of you. If the show has helped you in any way, please take a couple of minutes to rate and review the show, let us know what you think, let us know what has helped you, let us know what you want more of, what you want less of, but just take a couple of minutes to do that – it would mean a ton to me, and it will help us get better and better in the future. I really do want to hear from you.

Connection is an innate human need. Like food and water, we need it to survive but despite its crucial role, it's often overlooked in society, especially in the workplace. Meaningful relationships at work are one of the greatest drivers of workplace engagement and satisfaction. As the saying goes, "People don't leave companies. They leave managers". How can we create work cultures that encourage and support greater connection?

This is the WorkWell podcast series. Hi, I am Jen Fisher, Chief Well-being Officer for Deloitte and I am so pleased to be here with you today to talk about all things well-being.

I am here with Erica Keswin, a speaker, author, workplace strategist and founder of *The Spaghetti Project*, a platform dedicated to sharing the science and stories of human connections. Erica, welcome to the show.

Erica Keswin (Erica): Thank you so much for having me.

Jen: So, tell us about Erica. I want to hear about your journey, and I want to know what led you to become so focused on the area of relationships at work.

Erica: I would say I've always been a connector, you know. If you talk to people who knew me in nursery school, in middle school, and college, and Business School, and if you would say to them, "What is one word that you would use to describe me?", they would likely say connector. I've set up a couple of marriages, which in the Jewish religion means I'm going right to heaven, and I used to work in executive recruiting, connecting great people to great jobs. So, I think I was somewhat born with it, you know, in my blood, but there are two instances that really highlight how I got into the business of relationship at work. The first is in 1998, I was working in executive recruiting and I got my first device, which was a BlackBerry, which kind of dates me. So, I was engaged at the time to my now husband and he had to go to a conference in Bermuda and he said to me, "Can you go?" and I didn't have any vacation days, I was saving them for our wedding, but I had this handy dandy,

new device and I said, "You know what? I might be able to go." So, we went to Bermuda and I worked during the day and saw him at night and got to know his clients and I remember saying to myself out loud, with my new device, "This is the life, like there's nothing better than this." Fast forward 10 years, I still had my BlackBerry, but I had gotten an iPhone and a couple of kids later, I began to see the impact. I would say the good, the bad and the ugly of the technology on my relationships, both at home and at work. In contrast to that moment in Bermuda, I literally said to myself out loud, as I was one day running around with these two phones and the little red light on the BlackBerry, you know, beeping away and I said to myself, "I can't believe this is my life." It was really that moment in those two bookended experiences that where I said to myself, "You know what? If I'm struggling with integrating this into my life and I'm such a relationship person, I mean, I can't imagine what everybody else is going through." That was where I began to turn my attention to the impact of technology and relationships at work and how, through my consulting background and human capital work, I could begin to help people and companies stay connected, even in this age of technology.

Jen: So, let's talk about that. What has the impact, "the good, the bad and the ugly" I mean, in your mind, what has the impact been? And what have you seen when it comes to our relationships at work and technology? And our relationship with technology itself, I suppose, plays into that.

Erica: Hundred percent. It's so interesting having this conversation now, in the midst of the pandemic. Well, let's take a step back. If we were having this conversation a year ago and you would ask me that question, I would have said, "I go into so many companies and meet with leaders and one of the things that I see everywhere is people texting each other from one cubicle to the next. People calling into meetings from down the hall and people being in the same physical space, but mentally or psychologically, not being present." This was people of all ages. This wasn't a Gen Z or a Millennial thing and that was one of the biggest challenges that I saw. I work with people to try to get people to be more connected and to come up with "rules of the road" and protocols to help people not want to call into a meeting from down the hall and actually get up and walk down the hall. Fast forward to where we are today, we've been hearing this phrase over and over, "silver lining of this pandemic", is that I do hope that coming out of it, there is more of an appreciation of the benefits of connection and better understanding how to find the sweet spot. You leveraging technology to find the sweet spot between tech and connect. What I mean by that is, let's leverage it for all of our greatness. I mean, right now we're using lots of different technology. You're in Florida, I'm in New York, to connect, but also make sure that we put that "technology" in its place so that we connect with others and ourselves on a deeper level.

Jen: Yeah. I talk about it as making our technology work for us versus working for our technology, which it often feels like we're doing. You talk about bringing your human to work. As a matter of fact, you wrote a book called *Bringing Your Human to Work*. So, what does that mean and what does it look like? Especially, I mean we can talk pre-pandemic, we can talk during pandemic, and maybe you have some predictions for us for post-pandemic?

Erica: The subtitle of the book is *10 Surefire Ways to Design a Workplace That Is Good for People, Great for Business, and Just Might Change the World*. The premise is that if we can create a more human workplace, a place where people feel that they can bring their whole selves, it's not only good for them as people but we're in business, so this is a bottom-line issue. Each chapter talks about different ways that companies can do this from your world,

focusing on well-being to thinking about making meetings more human, which kind of sounds like an oxymoron at the moment. How do we give back? Thinking about space, which I think, as we go back to work, is going to be a really interesting thing to think about. Then there's a part on what I call "taking professional development personally". That a human workplace is one that helps people develop, which for many young people especially, is even more important than compensation. Then finally, there's a focus on gratitude and making sure, within the workplace, that you can say thank you. Many people will say to me "Well, gosh. Do I have to do all of them? Are they in any particular order?" and my response is "No. You don't have to do them all and they're not in any particular order except for chapter one, which is first for a reason." The first chapter of the book is about being real and speaking in a human voice. I highlight that one because it's focused on knowing your values and getting your values. I talked about getting them off the walls into the halls. I talked to companies and 99 percent of people at companies will raise their hand and say, "Yes. We have values." and half the hands in the audience drop, when I say well, "Do the values mean anything? Do you really know what they stand for?" The companies that do the best job of really creating a place for people to feel psychologically safe and they belong and it's healthy and again, all the things you talk about bring those values to life and that to me is the most important place to start.

Jen: So, psychological safety. Let's talk about that because you hear it a lot and I'd love to kind of demystify, what does that mean? What does it look like? How do you take it beyond just a buzzword? Because I feel like it is becoming a little bit of a buzzword in the workplace.

Erica: I agree. Psychological safety is where you feel like you can be you. If you were to really boil it down, that you can talk about what's on your mind, that you can share ideas. One of the reasons why we're hearing about this so much right now is in the context of diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Leaders can do an amazing job getting the most diverse group of people in a room for a meeting, but if we only hear from three people, we're not going to get the benefit of the diversity in that room. As we know, the data shows that diverse teams have higher revenues and more engagement, and all the important things that we need for strong business. So, what I try to do in my work is help leaders create cultures where people do have that level of comfort. A tool that I talk about a lot, which will be in my new book, is how do we use rituals as a way to get everybody in the room talking and engaged. So it's a starting point, it's one of the most important things that managers need to learn, which is, as a leader, a big part of your job is to make people feel comfortable and to create a culture that encourages people to participate.

Jen: So, I want to talk a little bit about relationships and human connection in the workplace and why it's so important. There is a lot out there and there are different points of view that say you shouldn't have a best friend at work because then you are too emotionally connected or emotionally tied to outcomes or emotionally tied to what happens to this person or that person. So, it's better not to have friends at work or human connections at work- and I disagree with this too, but why do you disagree with this?

Erica: Yeah, I disagree with that. You are correct. There's a level of appropriateness too. What do you mean to really bring your whole self? Well, it's really your best self or your most appropriate self, given that you are at work. Two reasons why relationships at work are important are, number one, and this is pretty uneven in the middle of COVID, many of us spend more hours working than we do not working. So, it would be pretty darn lonely if you're spending most of your waking hours at work and not having real connections. So, as

I know you've seen your work, we're in the midst of a massive loneliness epidemic, you know, really spurred on by the technology that relationships at work, we need those. The other piece of this, and it's the pushback from the people who say, "Oh. This is all touchy, feely stuff", that it does impact business. One of the clearest examples that I can share and you can take this and extrapolate it, really to any kind of business, comes from a study out of Cornell, where a professor named Kevin Kniffin was studying what makes one team performance. What makes Team A better than Team B better than Team C? His dad was a firefighter and when he was getting his PhD he decided I'm going to study the firefighters to do my analysis. What he found was that the firefighters that were the most dedicated to the ritual of the firehouse meal, of sitting around a table and connecting as people and building trust, those firefighters actually saved more lives. So, there was a direct impact on their performance. I said to one of the firefighters, "Can you just explain that? Like that sounds great but tell me what that means." I love this example, and he said, true story, he was sitting around the table having lunch. If you work in the morning, the 9 to 6 shift, you have lunch with your fellow firefighters and this guy's name is Bob, he comes from a family of firefighters and he was talking to his colleague, Dominic. Dominic said to him, just shooting the breeze over lunch, "Hey Bob! You would never know this about me, but as a kid, even now sometimes, I'm afraid of heights" and Bob said, "Afraid of heights?". So, I'm thinking to myself, he's telling me this story, it's the last thing I would think for a firefighter. So, they were talking about it and how he got over it and he just was bringing his whole self and just chitchatting. Four hours later, the fire alarm goes off and Bob, having this information in the back of his mind, he actually used it to make certain kinds of decisions around the best way to fight this fire and to swap Dominic out with somebody else, doing a certain role. So, I think it's such an interesting example of, if we're not getting to know our colleagues and building a sense of empathy, figuring out ways to really know what's going on with them during COVID, and not feeling that they're going to be at risk by sharing their child care issues or of taking care of a sick parent. If we don't have the relationship where they're going to be honest about it, we as leaders can't figure out ways to help them, and that's not good for them and it's not good for our business.

Jen: So, are there different types of relationships? Like are some relationships really just meant to be kind of transactional, and I get things done because that's how we get things done? And others are meant to kind of be deeper connections where you learn more about the person, that leads to kind of more productive and effective and efficient work all around and happier and more well employees. Are there certain connections or relationships at work that aren't designed for that? Or are you advocating for it across the board?

Erica: I would say, you start with all of the people that you're actually working with on a day-to-day basis. So, who's on your team? Who are you working with on a project? You might meet people through employee resource groups. There might be people who you become closer with in terms of a friendship. You know, a lot of young people that's where they make friends. I was listening to a podcast the other day, they got young people, like this is where they meet potential significant others. It's where we socialize. From a work perspective, I believe that we need to build the kind of rapport that enable people to bring their whole self. I think about it first, within these concentric circles of who's in my direct team? Who's in my department? Who am I working on special projects with? Who are my clients? I mean, if somebody is a client of mine, I can certainly serve them much better if I'm in a position where they're really telling me what their needs are, and so I try to think about it from that perspective.

Jen: So, what's been lost? Like why has the workplace lost some of its humanity over the years and how do we get that back?

Erica: Kind of what I was saying earlier that as, you know, with my own personal struggle with the two devices. I call them all "Tray Takers", right? All these companies had lunch in a cafeteria and when I was writing, *Bring Your Human to Work*, I went to some of the well-known names in Silicon Valley where you hear about "Oh! Every 50 feet, there's food and people are connecting all over the place." I remember standing in one of the micro kitchens, that I read so much about, and I said hi to someone and the person said to me, "Oh, are you new here?" and I'm thinking, "Oh, maybe this isn't what happens in terms of people connecting." I think we just get used to some of the perks that are offered in the technology just started to pull us away. Many, many times, people would just take their food and their tray and bring it back to their office and we were just sort of stuck in those patterns. There was one organization, just made me think of it, in New York that I met with and they decided to bring two groups of people together they thought, from a business perspective, it was front office and back office. Let's bring everybody together to connect over meals once a month. First month went pretty well, second month, not as many people came, and by the third month, people were coming and taking the food to go back to their desk. So, then they decided to get rid of the to-go boxes because the idea was to actually have that interaction. So, what it comes down to for me, it's actually the name of my podcast that I launched during COVID, which is called *Left to Our Own Devices*, we're not connecting. Even someone like me, and you can tell me what it's like for you, but we're both connectors and we both believe this stuff. Unless I'm intentional about how I connect and where I connect, the whole day could go by and I might not have moved. What I do is work with leaders about creating opportunities and rituals in different ways to help get people off of their technology to connect on a more personal level and a deeper level.

Jen: So, are you saying we can't use our technology to connect on a deeper level at all?

Erica: No. I'm a huge fan and I love technology, but I talk about finding the sweet spot between tech and connect. So, let's leverage it for all of its greatness and let's also make sure that we put it in its place. COVID has been the big test because, for those months, all we had was technology. What I found, personally, was that not every zoom call was created equal. There were some that felt meaningful and there were some that we're mind numbing. One of the things I think about a lot is, let's think about all of the different types of technology that we have at our fingertips and to be strategic. Maybe there are certain things that we can do with our teams and put them on a messaging system, an internal messaging board, to post fun pictures of your pets and your kids and bringing your human that way. Then there are zoom calls with your team, where unless there's an emergency, the once a week meeting, your camera needs to be on because we need to remember there's a person behind the screen. Then maybe there are days where it's optional. Maybe there are days where we all decide to talk on the phone and get our steps in. I never thought I would be saying this as such a face-to-face person, but over the last six months, I've had some of the more productive and intimate conversations on the phone where I wasn't on zoom and looking at people. We need to leverage technology. I talk about matching the message to the medium and not making the cameras mandatory for everything, but when they are, making sure that everybody participates and there is that group cohesion.

Jen: Yeah. I think that might answer, in large part, where I was going with my next question. Are there best practices for creating stronger social connections at work and

perhaps, what we just talked about? You're talking about that here and now, but what are some best practices for those that might be back in person, or when we go back in person, but also for leveraging our technology?

Erica: I would say the first thing you need to do, in person or remote, many of the best practices I find are the same. They're almost just more important when you are remote because there's more of an opportunity for misunderstanding. So, I would say the first thing is to try to be real and to speak in a human voice. The leaders that have come out of this, the strongest in my opinion are, they're communicating, communicating, communicating, and they're as transparent as they can possibly be. The North Star for leaders right now is to even be vulnerable. I mean the stories that I've heard about the impact that some of the leaders have had when they've been at a town hall or even sending out an email. Again, thinking about the use of these different mediums where they've reached out and told employees what was going on in their life and to your point, "the good, the bad and the ugly". Even though I'm the CEO, even though I'm the manager, this stinks right now, and here's what's going on in my life. So, in terms of building relationships, a special and this is pre-COVID, but right now is the more real you can be, the more likely your employees become more open themselves. The second thing is to continue to check in with employees. This pandemic is happening to all of us but it's happening to all of us in very different ways. People will continually ask me, "It's been six weeks, it's been two months, it's been six months now. Do I need checking in?" and my short answer is yes. It doesn't need to take 20 minutes of a 45-minute meeting for everyone to say how they're doing or again, we're not going to get work done, and this is in person or remote. So, there are ways. Something like going around the room and everybody can give an adjective of how they are in that moment. If you, as the leader, are hearing what's going on with certain people, it gives you the opportunity to connect with them afterwards to see how you can be supportive. A CEO yesterday shared with me, and this is with the senior management team of a bank here in New York, said that each senior executive will say, red, yellow or green. Green, I am present, I am here, I'm good to go; Yellow, I have some stuff going on; and Red, I am physically here, but mentally, I am somewhere else. They are curating connection in a way that enables colleagues to follow up, but also again, we're talking about business. It really touches on both sides to make sure that the people in the room feel connected and purposeful, but we're getting a sense from a human perspective, of what's going on in their lives.

Jen: You talked about your own podcast called *Left to Our Own Devices*. What happens if we're left to our own devices and why do you call it that?

Erica: For me, *Left to Our Own Devices*...we're not connecting. I thought when we all went into quarantine that I would have so many hours in the day to connect with this person and that person, all of a sudden it would be 5 o'clock and I don't know where the time went. So, what I found was that even in COVID, if I was not intentional about connecting with others and connecting with myself, which I know is something that you talk about a lot, it's not going to happen. It's about honoring relationships with others and with yourself, and for me, if I am not intentional and planful about when and how I do it, it often falls by the wayside. I'm getting 1000 emails. I have this going on, that going on or I can say "You know what? It's 11 o'clock" and every day at 11, I stop and I get fresh air and I take a walk and I call someone that I'm thinking about.

Jen: That kind of leads into rituals and the importance of rituals and creating those rituals for ourselves in our personal life but also in our work life. So, can you talk a little bit? Clearly there's some overlap, especially now, but really I would think anytime.

Erica: Yeah. So, what I realized after I wrote, *Bring Your Human to Work*, and continue to speak with leaders in companies, really people at all levels was that, rituals are one of the most important tools in creating a more human workplace. Even that example of the CEO that got everybody to go around and say, red, yellow or green, to him that is one of his rituals. I began to hear more and more stories of whether it was in meetings, whether it was when people were measured, getting performance reviews or awards at the end of the year, all of these things were built into the fabric of the companies, linked to their values, and they were rituals. I decided to look at rituals from the perspective of the employee life cycle. So, if you're a leader, in any company, big or small, where are the opportunities for rituals? I started with when you onboard people, you know, when you bring them on. What are your rituals to make them feel connected? Into our conversation earlier about psychologically safe and belonging ... your first day at work, a pretty important day to feel good. You only get one chance to make a first impression. So, look at onboarding, meetings. I've a chapter on, it's funny, one chapter is meetings and the next chapter is eating, you know, after the firefighters. There's another chapter on taking a break, which back in the day, people took smoking breaks. Yes, that's terrible for your health, but it really was a time of major bonding and friendship building out on the street, puffing away. I'm not advocating for that, especially on a Wellness podcast, however, those were times where people really build those relationships. So, I called the chapter "The No Smoking Break" and get rituals in companies that bring people together to take breaks. What I found is that rituals are an amazing way to build that sense of belonging and there are opportunities to connect people back to the purpose. Why do we come here every day? Why do we do what we do? It's been a really, really cool journey and talking to companies big and small about the impact of their rituals.

Jen: So, tell me what your favorite rituals are.

Erica: So many to choose from. One of the things about rituals is that they're both top down and they're bottom up. Some of the best ones, they're started by somebody who might not even be at the company anymore, like they just are sticky. You can't always overdesign rituals and I tell people, look if you try something and it doesn't work, just move on because the last thing you want to do is sort of force feed "this is what we do here" and then you get all the eye rolls. So, one of my favorite rituals is the company, *Allbirds*, who makes the really cool shoes. The story that they shared was that they had one of their employees, I think the number 3 employee whose been there from the beginning, went to the doctor one day, probably because he's working 24/7 on a startup, and he decided to set some real fitness goals for himself. He said "Okay, I am going to do X amount of push-ups between now and the end of the year." He divided that number by how many days were left in the year and he had to accomplish his goal, he needed to do 40 push-ups a day. So, he started doing them at work and then the next person joined and then the next person joined, next thing they know, the whole company is joining him for these push-ups. So, it evolved very naturally into this ritual called "40 at 4", where the whole company would stop and do these push-ups or just stop and chitchat with each other. Kind of like the smoke break but the healthy break. So, it morphed into the push-ups, but then people would volunteer to lead the 40 at 4. This is timely given RBG's death, but there was somebody who dressed up as RBG and wore the gown and her glasses and was leading push-ups..."I

am woman, hear me roar” kind of thing, and people would do all kinds of wacky things. So, during COVID, I reached out to them and I said, “Are people missing this opportunity to connect with each other?” This is like a big thing, every day at 4. What they were doing was that people really were craving that connection and that sense of psychological safety and normalcy. I talk about the importance of, especially during turbulent times, to maintain some of your rituals if you can. So, people would volunteer and would film these videos at home doing their push-ups and they sent me some of them, they were hilarious, and personalities would come out and so that's one of my favorite ones.

Jen: That's awesome. I guess rituals can be big things, small things, fun things, serious things. There is no real formula for what they are.

Erica: Well, how do you know if something is a ritual at work? People would start to go crazy if it went away. So, you would wonder, was the company being sold? If 40 at 4 didn't happen, everybody would be like, “Huh? that's sort of weird” because it just stuck. Other rituals, meetings are an important time for rituals or an opportunity for rituals. At *Eileen Fisher*, the clothing store, they ring a chime before every meeting to get people to settle and take a deep breath. There are companies in the automotive industry where one of their values is safety and before every meeting, somebody shares a safety story from one of the plants or something. So, it can really be anything and that's why I looked at it from the employee life cycle perspective to say, “Where are the opportunities?” The first step for people is to even look at what they are currently doing because you may have rituals and not even realize it.

Jen: Do rituals, like in the workplace, do they have to involve other people, or can they be personal/individual rituals? Things that you do to kind of start your day or end your day. I think this is a ritual, you can tell me if it is or not, but if I get an email that triggers me in some way emotionally, I have a rule and a ritual that I try not to respond to it right away until I have gone on a walk or taken some deep breaths or given myself a chance to kind of pause and think about it.

Erica: We know it's a ritual when there is intention around it and purposeful and when it's personal. So yeah, that would be a ritual because when you are thinking about that email, you are not blindly just deleting it. You are saying, “Okay. I just received something that triggered me and with intention, I am not going to respond, and I am going to go out for a walk. I am going to process it and think about it.” So, yeah to me, that would be a ritual. It would be interesting if one day you just responded to it and something would seem off about that.

Jen: Well, I am guilty of doing that too.

Erica: I actually think it's a great ritual, which I should probably try myself.

Jen: I am kind of switching back to relationships, but you have talked a couple times about connecting with yourself and the relationship with yourself. Why is that important and how does that impact our relationship with others?

Erica: As a woman, I can also talk from that perspective that I/we, many women with whom I have spoken, we tend to put ourselves last on the list. We are taking care of the world, whether it's a pet, whether it's our kids, whether it's our parents, and this is a bit of a generalization or stereotype but in my experience, it's pretty true for many of the people with whom I have spoken. So, it's the old adage of putting on the oxygen mask first and it

goes back to being intentional. It's funny that we are having this conversation today because my son is 15, I have twin girls who are 17 and my son is 15, and when he was six months old, I said to myself, "I am going away for a week by myself to focus on self-care." My friends thought I had lost my mind, I wrote a 20-page memo for my husband to try to figure out what was going on and I made this commitment to myself and I have done it every year. There are a lot of years where it's not the right time and there is no way I can go away, but I figure out a way to do it. I am better for it, my family is better for it and I try to walk the walk when it comes to it. The reason why I said it's weird that we are having this conversation today is that I just got back yesterday. I thought I just can't this year, I can't do it, but given how insane everything has been on so many levels, for all of us and I know I had my own stuff during this, I really pushed myself to do it and it was not easy. I can feel the shift and the energy to come back and be a better person. So, I think that self-care and rituals and that relationship with yourself is so important. On my podcast, I ask everybody this one question and it gets to the question you just asked me about focusing on yourself and the question I ask people is, "What do you do in your life that makes you feel most like you?" People kind of pause and sometimes have trouble but I think if we push ourselves to answer that question and know what makes us feel like us, it helps us to honor that relationship with ourselves. In all the work that you do around helping people around wellness, it enables us to come back stronger to help others and again to bring our best selves to work.

Jen: I love that and I actually have a question that I ask all of my guests on my podcast too and I am getting ready to ask you this question. What's your definition of well-being?

Erica: My definition, for me, I would say it's making sure that I honor that relationship with myself. Even just this example of what I just said and what might seem like a crazy time to go away to focus on myself from an overall well-being perspective. In the end, I think about my well-being, my family's well-being, my work well-being, and all of it I have to start there, even if it's hard.

Jen: On this trip that you do for yourself, with yourself, by yourself, since you have been doing it for so long, does your family now kind of push you to do it even when you think the timing isn't right?

Erica: Yes, they all know. In the beginning, the kids were like, "You're leaving! You're leaving!" but because it's a ritual, I don't even get the pushback. I don't know if I necessarily have shared with them that I can't do it. They hear about it after I say, "Okay this is when I am going this year." Even when they were little, it only took a few years for them to say, "Okay. She comes back and I don't need to worry about it." I hope all three of my kids, but especially my girls, can really see the importance of taking care of yourself and resting and reenergizing and just even taking time away to think or read a book. I set different goals for myself each year. Sometimes, I will work and sometimes I won't work. When I am away, the work doesn't feel like work, and I don't put pressure on myself, I can't be on technology. Each year I try to get something different out of it.

Jen: Do they notice a difference when you come back? Obviously, you notice a difference, because you said, but do they notice a difference in you?

Erica: I should have asked them this morning since I got back last night. I think they do. It's tough, you get back and you are more patient, you miss everybody, and then in two seconds you are kind of back into "Oh my gosh, I never left". What I find is in the midst of

the “Oh my gosh, I never left”, there are these moments where you feel the shift. For me a lot of times too because I try to use this time to think and do a lot of dot connecting and thinking, I have really moved many things in my life forward, personally and professionally during that time.

Jen: So, what is a day-to-day or weekly ritual for you and your well-being? Because we talked about this once a year thing, but there has got to be something more you do than that.

Erica: For sure. So, I am a big exerciser. I walk or hike every day, I do Pilates. During COVID, again I talked earlier about the importance of maintaining rituals as a way to manage stress and feel connected. Every Tuesday for the last five years, I do Pilates with a close friend and it's just what we do. We walk the kids to school and then we go to Pilates and all of a sudden we are both home. With leveraging what has been so amazing about this technology, is all of a sudden the Pilates teacher is online and we kept our same day and the same time. It kept us doing it and staying fit and healthy, but even more, it was like laughing and hearing her voice and watching her on the screen and seeing her dog come lick her face during the Pilates. I would say a lot of my wellness rituals are about physical fitness, but also for me around connecting with friends. I live with my family, but my friends and seeing them and making regular dates to see them is what fuels me.

Jen: I hear you on that one. Well, Erica, thank you so much for sharing your insights with us today. I really appreciate and appreciate the conversation that we just had. So, thank you again.

Erica: Well, thank you for having me, it was great.

Jen: I am so grateful Erica could be with us today to talk about Human Connection in the Workplace. Thank you to our producers 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 episodes. If you have a topic you would 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. We are 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.

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