

TRANSCRIPT

Ep 089: Shannan Monson on The Power of Speaking Up, Giving Yourself Permission to Have Your Voice Heard, and Handling Conflict in the Workplace

Shannan Monson, Intro Clip: So you're making it about the greater good. And hey, I am not going to say that there are not times to say this is not okay we need to find a solution that is okay to it is safe to speak up, it is important to speak up. Even if you don't get the desirable outcome that you want. What I want to equip you with is the tool so that when you speak up, you gain respect. You provide solutions to problems and you help people see just how valuable you are.

Suneera Madhani: From CEO school it's Wine Down Wednesday, pour yourself a drink and join us for CEO happy hour as we share the messy behind the scenes, straight talk and real world advice to help you level up in leadership and in life. Cheers.

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I have decided to start an advice column like Dear Abby, and in today's column, I want to share a question I got an Instagram DMS and my best advice. So here it is:

Hey Shannan, so I have a question for you. And I don't really know who else to ask because I don't really have any really strong female role models in my life. And I want to know how you navigate difficult work, conflict because I'm a very straight up blunt person, I actually had a kind of an argument with a co worker today. And I never know, is it good that I'm voicing my opinions? Or am I just being a bitch, I can't really tell. And I want to do it without emotion. I don't want to be lashing out at people. But I don't really know where that line is. So if you have any advice around that I want to be a good leader. And especially when I have my own business. And I don't know really where the line is, hey bestie.

So first of all, repeat after me, it is safe to speak my feelings. It's safe to speak up. It's safe to be bold, it's safe to have an opinion. Unfortunately, women get a really hard time about speaking up, especially women of color in particular. But that does not mean that we should stop speaking up. In fact, the absolute best thing that you can do not just for yourself, but for the woman who comes after you in this job for the people that follow you Next, the women that follow you Next, the minorities that follow you Next, the trans women that follow you Next, the people that are marginalized, that have the gumption to speak up, the absolute best thing that you can do right now is normalize you speaking up. So the culture needs to change and it's going to shift with you. So you are not a bitch for speaking your mind. And I'm really proud of you for speaking up. So now that that's out of the way, let's talk about the most constructive way to speak up. Because your feelings are valid, and your opinions are important, and your voice matters. But that doesn't mean that there aren't ways to help you get what you want in a better

way. So let's put this into an example here. I don't know your, your particular example what's going on. But let's say your boss gave you an unrealistic timeline to complete a project. Now, you can say this is an unrealistic timeline, and we need to adjust it. Option one, that's bold, it's important, it's important for you to say you have a right to say it. But is that going to get you to where you want to go? It might not. Honestly, it might make your boss defensive, they might say excuse me figure it out. So the first thing that I want to figure out is what is my goal here? What are you looking to do? So if your goal is to get an extended timeline to complete this project, the first thing that I would say is I would say thank you for giving me this project, I'm really excited to work on it. I'm establishing that I'm a team player, and I'm ready to go all in. It's important to me that this is done right? It's important to me that we were able to hit the company objectives that you've laid out. And they want to ensure that I can give my best to this project. You're establishing shared values, hey, we are on the same team, right? Not only my team player, but we're on the same team, I want to help you hit the goals that you've set out to accomplish. Based on what you've outlined. I don't think this is enough time to complete the project. What I suggest, so you're saying hey, you're raising, you're still raising the same problem that you raised in the first option, but you're you've tested it by talking about how you guys are on the same team.

Based on what you've told me, I suggest that I remove this other project from my plate so I can focus solely on this in order to complete it in the allotted time. So you're saying hey, this is important to me, I want to do it. And here's what I'm going to do to make it happen. I'm going to take something else off my plate so you got to find somebody else to do that. Right? Establishing that, yes, I'm gonna make this happen. But if this is the timeline, you want it done, something else has to go. Or maybe you say, it's really important to me to do this, right? I think if we add four extra weeks on the project, we're still going to have the same results. And the same satisfaction, you know, hitting your company goals are customer satisfaction, whatever it is, but we're going to get the job done properly. And that's really important to me. Is it? Okay, would you agree that we can extend the project deadline to x date, can we agree to have this due date instead? Now, both options, you're saying the same thing, but one is abrupt. It's Curt, and it's not providing solutions, some of the best advice I've ever been given is always bring solutions. So it's one thing to point out that you have a problem. It's another thing to bring solutions to the table. So your goal should not be just to point out that, hey, this is a problem. But to also bring solutions, which is what we did in the second option, I want to give you another example, I was talking to a friend this weekend. And she's a black woman. And she told me that she just got a performance review. She's never gotten a bad performance review ever. And one of her teammates said that she's hard to work with. And she was really frustrated, because this particular teammate has cursed at her on multiple occasions has been really aggressive and unprofessional and inappropriate. And she doesn't believe objectively speaking, but she's hard to work with. And quite honestly, I believe her, I think she's experiencing racism, which absolutely sucks. So she's got options here, right?

The first option is to say, hey, this employee is being unfair to me, and I want a new performance review. Right, or I want to get this cast, I want to get this taken off of my record, I want to make sure that this doesn't impede my ability to get a raise in the future. That's option

one, you just come at it head on, and you just say this isn't Okay, and I want it gone. Or option two, you can say, Hey, I really appreciate feedback from my team. It's important to me to be a team player, I want to make sure that the team in the team is able to understand me and work well with me. With that said, I recently got a performance review from ex employee. And it's really confusing to me. Can you help me I can? Can we set up a time to identify what specific instances made me hard to work with? Can you help me identify what specifically this is in reference to so that we can find a resolution? I'm not admitting to faults that I'm hard to work with, I'm saying, show me the proof. Right, show me the proof, this was really jarring to receive this feedback. I haven't received this feedback in any other way. And I want to make sure we can all move forward as a team. So you're making it about the greater good. And hey, I am not going to say that there are not times to say this is not okay, we need to find a solution that is okay to it is safe to speak up, it is important to speak up. Even if you don't get the desirable outcome that you want. What I want to equip you with is the tool so that when you speak up, you gain respect. You provide solutions to problems and you help people see just how valuable you are. So when it comes to Should I speak up or not, I want to say something I don't want to come off as a bitch, or nobody else is saying something I absolutely need to.

The first thing I want you to remember is someone needs to speak up, it's important to speak up, you're speaking up not just for yourself, but for the next woman. And I hope that you remember that even if it has negative consequences. For you initially, it is important to speak up. So number one, it's important to speak up for the next one. And number two, there is a way to speak up and make sure your voice is heard. And we create solutions. The absolute best way to make sure that you're not only heard but there's progress is to come to the table prepared with a plan prepared with options with different ways this can go to help everybody get to their goal. So I hope that helps and gives you permission and some freedom to speak up. The best thing you can do is practice start speaking up early and often. And don't be afraid to come off blunt and bold. There's no harm in that speaking up doesn't have morality it is not bitchy or bad or greedy to speak up and admirable and respectful to be quiet. In fact, I believe the reverse is true. And I believe that even if it's not received well, your voice matters and it's important to speak up. So I hope this gives you a confidence to go into your workplace speak up not just for yourself but for others. Remember that affirmation is safe for me to speak up.

Suneera Madhani: Thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoy the show. Follow us @ceoschool on Instagram for show notes, inspiration and exclusive behind the scenes that you won't find anywhere else. We also have an absolutely incredible resource for you. It's the seven lessons we learned building million dollar businesses. These are complete game changers and we want to give it to you absolutely free. All you have to do is leave a review of the podcast, why you love the show, screenshot the review and email it to [Hello@ceoschoolpodcast.com](mailto>Hello@ceoschoolpodcast.com) and we'll send it your way