



Lowenstein Sandler's Women's Initiative Network Podcast: Real Talk

Episode 34: Microaggressions: Are they a macro issue?

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Amanda Cipriano: Welcome to the Lowenstein Sandler Podcast Series: The Women's Initiative Network, Real Talk. I'm Amanda Cipriano, an associate attorney and member of the Women's Initiative Network at Lowenstein Sandler. Before we begin, please take a moment to subscribe to our podcast series at [lowenstein.com/podcasts](https://www.lowenstein.com/podcasts), or find us on iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, Google Podcasts, and SoundCloud. Now let's take a listen.

Rachel Dikovics: Welcome to the Women's Initiative Network Real Talk. I'm Rachel Dikovics, an associate in Lowenstein Sandler's White Collar Criminal Defense Practice Group.

Megan Monson: Hi, I am Megan Monson. I'm partner in Lowenstein Sandler's Executive Compensation, Employment and Benefits Practice Group.

Nicole Fulfree: I'm Nicole Fulfree and I'm a partner in Lowenstein's, Bankruptcy and Restructuring department.

Julia Sanabria: And I'm Julia Sanabria, a partner in Lowenstein's Real Estate Group.

Megan Monson: In today's episode of Real Talk, we are going to focus on a topic that we hear talked about frequently, microaggressions, and in particular, what are some common examples? How does this impact professional women and importantly, in WIN fashion, what are some tips with dealing with it? To set the stage, a microaggression is a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude towards a member of a marginalized group. It is important to identify microaggressions and be armed with a way to respond that is appropriate given the context or situation.

This is an important issue to discuss not only because it impacts women's overall well-being, but according to a study by McKinsey & Company and leanin.org on women in the workplace, women who experience microaggressions at work are 4.2 times more likely to feel burned out, 3.3 times more likely to consider leaving their company and 3.8 times more likely to feel that they don't have an equal opportunity to advance. So, for law firms and other companies who are concerned with the retention of talented women, this is something that should be definitely on their radar. Let's jump right in. What are some examples of microaggressions that women tend to face in the workplace?

Nicole Fulfree:

So I think one example, and this is a category I think is overtly marginalized comments. And so I think comments that are objectifying to women. And so one example that I can share from my practice is, I was just getting ready to take a deposition. I think I was a fourth or fifth year, so I was young in my practice to be taking a deposition. I was nervous and I was trying to really prove myself that I could do it. And I was doing a co-deposition with one of our male partners and he started asking the questions first and the deponent interrupted him and said, "When is the pretty lady lawyer going to ask me questions?"

And while I will not lie, I had a moment of being flattered, a little hair flip, it just deflated me a little bit because I was already thinking about the fact that I really wanted to prove myself as legitimate professionally and that I could do a really good job on the deposition and for someone to make that comment, it just reduced my legitimacy I feel like, or that's at least how I felt. And it wasn't a good feeling, and I didn't really have a good comeback or something to say at that point. But I do remember one thing that was helpful was another woman attorney who was about my age was sitting across the table and she had sent me an email and said, "Pretty lady lawyer, what year are we in?" And she was my adversary. So I thought that was a really nice thing for her to do that made me feel better in the moment and built me back up. But yeah, I think objectifying comments like that can really affect your wellbeing because it really hurt my ego in the moment, to be honest.

Julia Sanabria:

I think another example that I've seen is just generally assuming that the women, whether it's on a deal or in a practice group, are going to take on more than their fair share of administrative roles, whether that's making reservations for a group lunch or planning a party. And that's not to say that there's no women who want to do that work, but I found generally, the instinct is to assign it to those women and also to minimize the importance of it. If it's important enough to be asking someone to do it and you need it, whether it's for recruiting or for morale or whatever it is, you're not only assigning it to the women, but then really treating it like admin work and it's not compensated, and it takes time. So I think there's a division of labor that we generally need to just take a hard look at and try and move away from and ask everyone, let people volunteer for things.

And I think something I've realized over the years as someone who often did find themselves planning the social events and things like that, and frankly, I enjoyed it. I don't mean to suggest that I didn't, but it's different when you're opting in rather than being voluntold that you're going to do it. So I think it's really important for someone to be monitoring that and saying, "We've had five events and they've all been planned by female associates. Maybe it's time to ask a male associate to do it," and to insist on it. And I think that's how particularly male attorneys at a firm can step in. Try and take a look at it and not enough to just say like, "Oh, we're so happy. It's so nice of you, it's such a good job." Really distribute the work in a fair way because you're taking up time that that woman would be using to hone her skills as a lawyer to develop her business, whatever it is. I just think that that work is so disproportionately allocated to women and so under proportionately appreciated once it's actually done.

Megan Monson: And I think that's a great point and maybe one way to combat that is, that type of work really should be assigned based on seniority unless it is something that people are opting in to participate or raising their hand to do.

Rachel Dikovics: And I think sometimes, women feel compelled to raise their hand to do that kind of thing. I know my practice group recently had a really fun social event and it was really fun because, I and two other women associates planned it, and it went really great. And I think back to other events and it's almost always women planning. I don't think I remember a single not formal firm event that I've attended that was not planned by a woman. And I think women often feel like, well, nobody else is volunteering to do it, so I know how to do this, I'll just do it, and won't be too much of a commitment. But I think it's really easy, as Julia said, to get pigeonholed into the person who's responsible for those things when it does add extra time to your day. And I think it's especially important if your male colleagues are not ever stepping up to do that.

Nicole Fulfree: Yeah. I think one other piece that it's not a substantive work issue, but what you guys are talking about reminds me of it. It makes me think about it in my own group and I think about some of the personal life accomplishments or events that people in my group have experienced lately. Just yesterday we had a baby shower for one of the women in my group and a couple of weeks ago, one of the partners in my group turned 70 and nothing was really said by any of the male partners or associates about either of those two events or even more generally, nothing is ever said by the male attorneys on those personal types of events. And the woman attorneys end up planning it.

And I try to stay away from talking in stereotypes, but I think it's just generally because women happen to be more thoughtful about those personal type of things and then they take it on. And I think that's okay because like you said, it's a voluntary thing, but I think organizations need to take notice that that kind of organizing takes time and that it actually adds a lot of warmth to your group. And I think a lot of people really appreciate that touch. And it's something that I think is undervalued by a lot of organizations.

Julia Sanabria: I think that's really fair. And I think there's a reason a lot of times why women are the ones who are being more thoughtful about this kind of thing. I think there's an expectation that they are. I think sometimes, when things like that get missed, it's very quick for someone to say to the female in the group like, "Oh, why didn't you remind us that it was so-and-so's birthday?" And not to make this about personal life, but I think that happens to women in their personal lives too, right? It's like-

Nicole Fulfree: That was my first thought.

Julia Sanabria: Somebody forgets to get the mother-in-law a gift, and all of a sudden, it's, "Well, why didn't you get anything?"

Nicole Fulfree: "Why didn't you tell me when my mom's birthday is."

Julia Sanabria: Exactly. So I think it just spills over and it's something that we really should be much more mindful of when it's certainly in our houses, but particularly in the law firm and in work environment.

Rachel Dikovics: I think there are also instances of singling out women in a way that is intended to be polite and positive and chivalrous that can sometimes backfire by just making the woman feel very other, compared to the rest of the people in the group. I'm sure all of us have been in calls or meetings where somebody's cursing or saying something and then apologizes to the women on the call or men joking about how they didn't look presentable for the meeting and then saying the woman on the line looked really nice. And these are things that I think are meant to be polite and maybe polite in a per se sense. But the effect isn't really to make the woman feel good, it's to make her feel like she doesn't belong. And I don't think that's intentional, but I think it happens really frequently because it just puts at the forefront that you're not one of the guys and your presence changes the way we're going to behave.

Nicole Fulfree: "I feel comfortable joking with all of you guys, but let me be clear, I wasn't joking about you because you're not part of my group. I don't include you in my joke."

Rachel Dikovics: Right, exactly.

Julia Sanabria: I think a helpful way for people to think about how not to do those things is how would you respond in that situation? So I think about the cursing one a lot because I am not at work as much as I can help it, but have a terrible mouth and I curse all the time, no matter where I am. So when someone says, "Oh, I'm so sorry, Julia, I didn't mean to say the F word," or whatever it was, what would you say in response to that? Like, oh, thanks so much. I'm really offended. I didn't know what to say next. I've never heard that word before. So if you're the person making those comments, if you take a minute and think firey room and someone said it to me and it's suddenly all eyes are on you, which is probably the last thing you want, what would your response be? And if something doesn't come to you super quickly, maybe you shouldn't be making that comment.

Nicole Fulfree: And I actually have had that exact comment made to me on a call where someone cursed and then looked at me and directly apologize. And after having that said to me a couple times, I came up with just saying, "I was born and raised in New Jersey. There's nothing you can say that will be new to me." And then everyone laughs and then it's like, "okay, now you're part of it," but if you don't have that immediate comeback, it can feel really marginalizing.

Megan Monson: Yeah. And I think as Rachel said, that might not be the intent, but that could be the effect of it. And so when you're in a professional setting, whether you're either negotiating a deal or presenting in front of a judge, those type of things could be really jarring and could have impact on bringing your best game face to whatever you're doing.

Nicole Fulfree: Hopefully, you're not cursing on the record.

Megan Monson: That's true. More so I think on the conversations behind closed doors.

Nicole Fulfree: Another category, I think that's probably one of the most common that I see is assumptions about women based on stereotypes. And I've seen this happen and also, I've had women attorneys preemptively come to me with concerns that this will happen because they are pregnant, or they have young kids. And I've had female associates approach me with the news of their pregnancy, which is super exciting, but often, one of the next things out of their mouth is, I want to keep this under wraps for a little while because I don't want anyone to treat me differently because of this news. As far as traveling opportunities or attending conferences, I think a lot of more senior men will traditionally see a pregnancy as something that should be protected, which is a positive intent, but sometimes, they can hold you back from opportunities if they think they're protecting you.

I've actually had this happen to me personally, not at a work event, but for an organization that I was involved, and they said, "We were going to include you in this, but we figured since you're just coming back from maternity leave that you probably didn't need another thing on your plate." Which frankly, I actually didn't want to do the task that they were talking about, so it was fine, but they should have let me decide if I wanted to be a part of it or not. And I think they think they're being helpful by saying, let me take something off your plate. But that's not the right reaction. The right reaction is, I recognize that you may or may not want to do this because of your news that you just shared with me, but you can decide how you want to do it. And I think that's the important takeaway from that situation.

Rachel Dikovics: I totally agree. I think the fact may be, in some circumstances, that you don't want to do whatever's being offered to you related to travel or taking on additional work or whatever it is, but I think it's a similar feeling that you might get if you had friends doing something and you weren't invited. You at least want the opportunity to decide and say yes or no, yourself. And I think when you're being offered something like that, it's really helpful for the person who's making the offer to clearly express that you shouldn't feel obligated to do it as long as that is actually the case so that you feel like you actually have an opportunity to say yes or no according to what you actually want to do.

Julia Sanabria: And I think that really highlights the overarching problem with microaggressions is that there is no one answer. There is a woman who may come back from work and say, "I want as much work as possible. I'm going to run up to partnership and I want every deal you can give me." And there may be another woman who comes back and says, "You know what? I want to come back part-time and ease my way back in. I want to try and figure it out and play it by ear," whatever it may be. But the answer to all of it is the same. There's one person who knows the answer and it's the individual woman you're talking about. So, I think that's how you should think about it. Am I making an assumption about how this person will react even if you're doing it, which often is the case, with good-hearted intentions. You're thinking, oh, well maybe this is just too much at this moment and it very well may be, but the practice we should be getting into is the accepting of the no, not the assuming of the no.

And that's where I feel like the number of times I've been asked, well, do you think this woman's going to want to do this? Do you think this woman's going to want to do that? And my answer's always the same. I can tell you what I want to do. And there's only one person who can tell you what that woman wants to. It just comes back, I think, to how we started this all which is just these very vast generalizations that there's a monolith of thought on how women approach work, and that's just not the case.

Megan Monson: So, we've talked about a lot of different types of examples of microaggressions that women encounter. Do you have any insight into what perpetuates these microaggressions from continuing to occur in the legal profession?

Nicole Fulfree: I think the main one from my perspective, and anytime that I've experienced a microaggression, this has probably been the source of it or majority of them, is the power dynamic. And I think it happens in your law firm between senior partner and junior associate or I think particularly, where there's a client involved and there's that power dynamic with the client's always right. And so, where there's that type of power dynamic and it's the person who's in power making the microaggression, it can be really difficult to stop them in their tracks in a way that doesn't harm your organization or maybe restrict your chances of winning the pitch if it's a potential client or you don't want to make the client upset. And so, I think power dynamic is a huge issue in why microaggressions are perpetuated.

Julia Sanabria: I agree with that. I also think ego is an overwhelmingly present issue in any of these conversations, and I think that really ties back to intent versus impact, I think because so many times there is no ill intent associated with this, when you approach someone or respond to it and point out that it may have been received differently than it was intended, I think there's this almost stealing up of, well, that's not how I meant it. And we're like, "We didn't assume you meant it that way."

But to be fair, I think that is something else that really needs to be talked about, is how to approach it because it's not helpful if you say something to me and my response makes you feel like you need to go on the defensive, not like you need to understand why I feel the way I feel. So I think if you can put ego aside and we can operate under the assumption that we all think we're not doing it on purpose, then we can figure out how to act differently. But as soon as you're in that defensive position, it's really hard to come back from it. I think by nature, lawyers are risk averse, have a big ego and tend to be defensive.

Nicole Fulfree: And I think it's like a cycle because that may also be a reason why women are less likely to raise an issue when they see it, whether they're the recipient of the comment or they're observing a comment. It's tough to be that person that says, "Hey, that's not right." And I think there's a fear, or at least in some situations, I've had a fear that speaking up about it will further marginalize me and... I'm not part of the group and I'm going to call you out and why you're wrong. But is that going to be better or worse for me? And I think that's a concern, and it's like, I think it can be a cycle because of that reason.

Megan Monson: I think another important thing I've noticed can be the generational differences because especially with some of the microaggressions that are seemingly unintentional and likely, they're not expecting it to have a negative repercussion or negative feel to it, it's just a different time. Those things are more commonplace and more expected, and so what right, wrong or otherwise, it's just, that's part of people's persona. And so that I think, tends to be a way that I've seen them come out often in particular with opposing councils who are just much more tenured than me and who have been practicing a lot longer.

Rachel Dikovics: I have a friend who is about the same seniority level as me and is a woman, and to compound it, happens to be diverse. And she had a situation where she went to court on behalf of a partner, she was working with to cover a status hearing or something relatively simple. And the other counsel there was all 50+ white men, probably ++. And I want to preface this by saying, this is not like a blanket statement. There's some of the most supportive and most empowering attorneys that I've met are men who fall into that category. So these other counsel were talking about something like where their wives go grocery shopping and then they turn to her and say, "Where do you do the grocery shopping for your family?" And she was just like, "I'm here in court with you. Why are you asking me this?"

And it was just such an uncomfortable situation and as already the most junior person in the room, the only woman in the room, it's just not something that sets you up to feel confident to then go speak to the judge about your case on behalf of your client. And I talked to her right before this episode to make sure I could share the story. And she said, "Oh, I have something else from yesterday. I just joined a call on behalf of the firm and said, 'I work with so-and-so partner,' and counsel from another firm." Then introduced her as a paralegal and that because she hadn't specified that was just the assumption. And I think that probably goes to show women who have these experiences frequently, I think diverse women have them on a completely compounded level.

Nicole Fulfree: On the generational differences point, I think those types of differences can also be a reason why everyone can say like, "Oh, well yeah, they said that," but you just shake it off because they're older and they don't get it and they're from different times, but it doesn't make it any less harmful to the people who are receiving the comments. So, I can think of one example where I was maybe a second-year associate on the call with a client, a couple male partners from my side, and then our adversary was a woman attorney, and our client was maybe 94.

And after we got off the call, after our adversary hung up, he said to the group, which I don't know if he knew included me because it was before the time of Zoom, but he said, "Don't they have a guy that we can talk to on their side?" And my male partners, or the male partners at the time looked at me and they just, they didn't know what to say and they acknowledged the fact that that wasn't a right thing to say, but they didn't say anything about it and I certainly didn't say anything about it as a second year and I think after the call, they just said he's a really old guy and that's the reason why people give for saying it's okay sometimes, but it doesn't really make it okay.

Megan Monson: So, shifting gears a little bit, do you think the new hybrid work style that a lot of law firms and professional companies are utilizing for many people has been beneficial or harmful with respect to microaggressions?

Julia Sanabria: I think in some ways, it's been harmful. I'm hesitant to say that only because I know there's been a lot of positives and a lot of people feel like they have more flexibility and things like that. I will say personally, I'm someone who does not like working from home, I never have. I do have two young children, but it just doesn't work for me. The number of people who have said to me, "Oh, this must be so great for you, you must love working from home." And I'm like, "No, I really don't." And you can tell they almost don't believe me, or they think I'm trying to hide something and a lot of reasons why I prefer it. But there is this assumption, particularly when you have companies wanting people to come back to work. So for the assumption to be that the women don't want to is again, stacking the odds against us in a way that I think, it's just not just unfair, but inaccurate.

Megan Monson: And I think it goes back to the point you made earlier, Julia, that everyone's personal circumstances are going to be different and how a situation impacts them or a comment, it's just different based on their personal situation. And so for some people, it might be good, for some people, it might not be, but not making assumptions of how it impacts them and how they're feeling about that.

Julia Sanabria: Absolutely.

Nicole Fulfree: I think the flip side of that can be that I think during the pandemic you got a snapshot into people's home lives. And I think I've seen at least that I think it made men a little bit more comfortable to talk about the things that were going on in their home life. I know my husband's not an attorney, but I overhear his Zoom call sometimes when my nanny will walk by behind him with the kids, bringing them up for a nap, and then people will ask about the kids and my husband will talk about them. And I think if they weren't actually seeing my nanny walk by with the kids, they might not have asked him, and he might not have spoken about the kids. And I think it just opens up people being a little bit more comfortable with talking about their home lives, which I think is a positive thing overall.

Megan Monson: So I know what we've touched on briefly throughout our discussion, some ways to handle responding to microaggressions, but do you have any specific tips that we haven't already touched on that you want to convey to the audience? And how does your response vary, if at all, if you're the recipient versus notice it happening to somebody else?

Rachel Dikovics: I think this is a really fact sensitive situation because there's so many variables that are at play. I think if you are an observer of this happening and you're also the most senior person in the room, it's probably incumbent on you to do something, whether it's to make some kind of joke, to break the tension and to try to make the person who was the recipient of the comment feel more comfortable or to say, depending on who the commenter is, to respond to them and put them in their place in one way or another depending on who they are, and make it clear that their comments was inappropriate. Or

to, again, depending on who's in the room, whether that's a physical room or virtual, say something to the recipient after, to let them know that you recognize that this happened, you know it was inappropriate, you're sorry that it happened, and for whatever reason that you didn't feel comfortable saying something at the time. I think it would probably be good to explain yourself.

But yeah, I think it really depends on the situation. I feel like a lot of times, these things don't happen when you're amongst peers. And so whether it's with opposing counsel or clients or people who work in the same place as you but are much more senior to you, I at least, don't really hear about people in the same year as you making comments like this. So, I think it depends on the situation, but in some situations, I think it's incumbent on particular people in the room to say something. If you're the most junior person in the room and you don't know anybody, it's probably not you. But if you're not, then it might be.

Nicole Fulfree:

And I just want to make the point, and people may disagree with me, but I think a threshold question is, how did the recipient receive the comment? Which goes to your point about time, place, and manner, because I know that there's things that some people who are my peers or are people that I know respect me, if there's a mutual level of respect there. And they would say something to me, and it would be completely fine with me, and I would not be offended, and I would not want someone to step in on my behalf to say something.

But there's other times, depending on who the person is, if there isn't necessarily a known level of mutual respect and they said the same thing, I would not be comfortable with it. And so, I think, I don't want the takeaway from this episode to be that whenever even the slightest comment is made that you have to jump in and say something. I think an important threshold question is, what is the relationship between the people and was this okay or was this not? And was the recipient uncomfortable in any way before you make the decision to jump in?

Julia Sanabria:

I agree with that, generally. The only thing I would add to it is I think an important piece to consider is who else is in the room?

So I agree because a lot of people that I joke around with, and I'm sure were those comments to come out, I would not be the proudest. But that being said, there are sometimes more junior people in the room or people in marginalized groups in the room, and they may see an interaction between you and someone else, and you may be fine with it, which is totally fine as far as your relationship goes. But then there's two things happening. One, they may not know you as well, so they may not understand the dynamic between you and the other person, and they may just think this is acceptable.

And then the second piece I would say is that they may be learning that it's okay to do that to others. So, you might have someone who's feeling like, oh, I should really be tolerating this because I see it being tolerated. And then there's other people who, as everything we talk about with this profession, right? It's an apprenticeship, it's mentorship. If you see someone senior doing it, maybe it should be addressed, but maybe the way to address it is, "Hey,

just so you know, we're really good friends and that's not how I would've said it otherwise." Or there's a way to highlight it without embarrassing the person or making them feel like they have to change the dynamics in their relationship. And there may be times when it's fine with everyone who's in the room, but I think there's a couple people that need to be considered when you think about things like that.

Nicole Fulfree: That's a really good point. I totally agree.

Megan Monson: So we've talked about a few examples of microaggressions that we've encountered, but as part of real talk and keeping it real, do you have any real life examples of responding to this microaggressions and how it was received by the speaker or others as some parting words of wisdom for our listeners?

Nicole Fulfree: I can share an example where I was the recipient of a comment that made me uncomfortable and someone else who was an observer did a really good job of handling it. And so, to set the stage, it was a pitch to a potential client that I was attending. And I wasn't a partner at the time. I was up for partner, so I was under a lot of pressure. I really wanted to prove myself to this partner because I hadn't worked with him before, and I wanted to make sure I did really good job. And as soon as we got on the line, the potential client said, "Hey, Nicole, did anybody ever tell you you look like so-and-so," and gave me a celebrity lookalike. And like Julie said before, it was like all eyes were on me. And at the time, I was just really focusing on the substance of what I was about to say, and I could not think of any... I just didn't know what to say. And it made me feel just really in the spotlight.

And the male partner who was on the call with me jumped in and said, "Hey, it's funny. I go on a ton of Zoom calls, and I never get any comments about my celebrity lookalikes." And it was a really good way to break the ice and take the attention off me, and I really appreciated that. So, I think the joking way to address a microaggression can be really effective sometimes.

Julia Sanabria: So, I have an example that is not really my response to it, but it's actually how the person who did the microaggression ended up responding to it just because I think for me, it was really important and something I've carried with me. But there was a time when I was doing an in-person negotiation. None of us had met or even been on the phone before. And so, we got into the room and it was all the clients, it was opposing counsel, and it was me and a male associate, and I was a partner at the time. And so, we're going through the issues list, we're debating, going back and forth. I'm very clearly leading the meeting from my side. The associate is taking notes, the client is deferring to me anytime an issue comes up. And finally, we get to the end and there was a particularly thorny issue, and the male partner on the other side turns to my male associate and says, "Well, so-and-so what do you think?"

And I was taken aback and gasped, and I lost it a little bit and wasn't sure had to regain my footing. And in one instance, the client who was a man actually said, "I'm sorry, we actually asked Julia those questions." So, he corrected it. And then I answered the question and moved on. And at the end they said, "Well, the lawyers have to wrap up some of the legal language, so let's leave them in the room for a little bit and the clients left." And I was like,

"Ugh, now I have to be in the room with this guy and I don't want any part of this, and I just want to get out of here." And the man turned to me and said, "I owe you an apology, and I'm really sorry. I should have seen what was going on. The client was clearly deferring to you. You clearly know what you're doing. You were giving the answers, and I assumed that this person was in charge because they were the man."

And I was like, "You know what? Thank you so much. I really appreciate that." We continued our figuring out the legal language and we left. And as I was walking back to my office, I stopped and sent him an email because I thought it was really important. He was 50+-. So, I thought it was really important to acknowledge what he did and how it made me feel in the apology, not in the initial act. And so, I sent him a note and I said, "That kind of thing happens to me a lot. This is the first time someone has pulled me aside, openly apologized for it, sincerely, and said why they made the assumptions they did and owned it. And really meant a lot to me, and I hope that you're proud of yourself. That's the right way to do it."

And he wrote back and said, "I really appreciate it, and it was great working with you. I don't think my daughter will be as forgiving when I tell her what happened today." And we struck up a friendship from there. And my point in that is one, that the male client absolutely had my back and directed the questions towards me. But there's a way to graciously come back from it. It is not a death sentence. It is not, you're the worst person in the world. It's you know what? I messed up. We all mess up. Just apologize for it, own it, and do better. So, I think our responses are really important, but taking a moment, thinking about it and correcting yourself, I think is incredibly valuable. And it means a lot to the person to whom you apologized.

Nicole Fulfree: I love that example. A really good one.

Rachel Dikovics: I have a lighthearted one from my pre-law life. In the few years I worked between college and law school, I worked for actually two 50 plus plus men who were both actually really wonderful people. But one funny story. My boss was meeting with somebody and getting coffee was not part of my day-to-day duties at all. And I had never been asked to get coffee once. And this was somebody he was meeting for the first time, and I brought them into his office and my boss turned and said, "Rachel, could you get us some coffee?" And I was so taken aback by it that I laugh because I thought he was kidding. And then I realized he wasn't kidding. And I was like, "I don't get coffee." I just walked away. And I didn't really think about it a lot at the time. And then later, I was, oh, maybe I shouldn't have said that. But it's just what I said at the time. And I was never asked to get coffee again.

Julia Sanabria: I was going to say, I bet he never asked you for coffee again.

Megan Monson: And there's going to be different ways how you approach it or the person making the comment depending upon the situation, the relationship. And I think all we can do is keep having these types of discussions, keep making people aware and we all do better.

Rachel Dikovics: Thanks for joining us for another episode of the Women's Initiative Network Real Talk. We'll see you next time.

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