

FIERCE FREEDOM AWAITS

with Dr. Yashika Dooley

Episode 4 – Negotiation and Clear Conversations with Dr. Erica Howe – Part 2

Welcome to the Fierce Freedom Awaits podcast, episode number 4. This week is part two of our two-part series with Dr. Erica Howe. In last week's show we talked all about our emotional basement and this week we're jumping right in where we left off talking about the steps you need to take when you're going to go into a conversation on negotiation with someone. And you want to make sure that neither you nor the other person are operating from your emotional basement. You want to make sure that you are having a discussion, a conversation, and a vision and focus that serves you. Here we go, right to the show!

Erica: Alright, so you're ready?

Yashika: Here we go.

Erica: Okay. So, the first thing that I want you to do is make small talk. You walk into the room to negotiate, and I want you to make small talk. Now, this sounds probably a little bit ridiculous to most people. Um, so, uh, if you're coming in to a negotiation, you could talk about hobbies or last vacation or, "Hey, how are your kids doing? I hear somebody just applied for college," uh, whatever it is. The act of small talk reminds this other person that you are a human being, that you are a reasonable, rational person with common interests.

Um, there's, there's actually a great book called *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, um, by, uh, Robert, uh, Cialdini. Uh, great, uh, great book. It's really about how we influence other people, and certainly, that could be used, um, in a negative, as well as a positive way, but I want to talk about it in a positive way in this situation.

When we like someone else just in general, we are more likely to be influenced and persuaded by them, and also, we're more likely to come to a resolution quickly. So, you're reminding that other person like, "Hey, I'm, I'm likable. Uh, I'm normal. I'm, I'm friendly." Remember we have a relationship beyond this conflict, um, and we have interests that we share beyond this.

Yashika: Yeah. That, you know, that's hard.

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: I think in the moment, one, you're busy, you got a gazillion things going on, you're trying to resolve this, so you can move on to the next fire.

Erica: Right. Yes.

Yashika: And so, the idea of coming in to have chitchat, small talk, which I, I totally get it, but you're like, "Let's just take care of this in the next five minutes, so we can do the next thing," you know? And so, I'm like, "Okay. Stop. How are your kids? How's it going?" I'm going to have to be involved.

Erica: Yes, and you want to do it ... This has to be genuine.

Yashika: Yes, of course.

Erica: So, you don't want it come off, you know, I mean, don't do it if you can't do it in a genuine way. But this really is about reminding them, "Hey, like, we have a relationship beyond the issue that we're dealing with today, and I care about you and, and I want you to care about me, too," and really kind of saying like, "This conflict is really only a part of who we are as two people getting together."

Yashika: That makes sense.

Erica: Yeah. The next is then you're going to ask for their story. So, one other temptation that we really have, uh, in a negotiation or conflict is you just start by, "Let me tell you what I think of the situation. Let me tell you what my issue is," right?

Yashika: Yes.

Erica: Oh, (laughs) which I ... This is ... I, I only say this because I have fallen victim to this myself.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: So, here, you're going to ask for their story. And one, you're going to be collecting information about how do you see the situation, um, what's your set of information or set of data or facts, what's been presented to you versus to me. Um, but then also, you're going to be looking for, to see if they're in their emotional basement. And it's going to be the same, you know, the same symptoms that we would all have ourselves, right?

So, somebody starts raising their voice a little bit, they kind of slam their, their hand on the table, you know, all of that. Those are great clues, "Oh, okay. You're, you're upset right now. Okay. You're in your emotional basement. All right." So, then as you do that, as you ask for their story, you're going to ... The first goal is to stay silent because, of course, what do we want to do? We want to jump in and clar- like tell them, "No, no, no. That's not right." The way you see it is not actually the way it is, right?

Yashika: Of course.

Erica: Of course, because you see it differently, and of course, your way is right, my way is right. (laughs) The situation here, you really want to just stay silent, and you're gaining as much information as you can. So, the only time you're going to speak up is to clarify like, "So, if I understand this correctly," or to basically ask questions to kind of fill in gaps that you don't understand.

Yashika: Okay.

Erica: But you just gotta let them talk. You let ... And trust me, someone in their emotional basement is going to feel very strongly that they want to share their side of the story, right? So, the second part of that is you gotta stay calm. The classic situation is when someone else goes to their emotional basement, they want to take you along with them. They want to be like, "Hey, come see my couch and my curtains that I just put in," right? That is not ... You say, "No. Thank you. I'll see them later. I'm good. I'm going to stay up here on the ground floor."

So, you have to be very calm, um, and remind yourself that this is a friend or this is a reasonable, rational person. You're going to stay curious about this. Someone's using maybe some strong language, some heated words. Um, this is a time where you're going to say to yourself, uh, don't say it out loud, you just say, "Hmm. What could lead this reasonable, rational person to think this?" Because, of course, nobody comes to the table thinking that, you know, their argument is unreasonable, right?

Yashika: Right.

Erica: So, there's something behind that that has led them to think that way. What, what is that? What has led them down that path? And that's what you're going to be digging for? And those are the questions you're going to be asking, "So, tell me more about that. Tell me, you know, help me understand better." And you're going to kind of be digging through that a little bit.

And then the other thing, you gotta stay patient. So, there are times where people will present their data to you, and as they're doing that, as they're presenting their argument, they'll actually in front of you realize that there might be another way to see it. Have you ever, have you ever had that happen?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Had somebody like kind of like, "Oh. Well, I mean, I guess you could see it this other way, too, but ..." Right?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: So-

Yashika: But it's the but that gets you. (laughs)

Erica: It's the but. Exactly. Well, because they, people like to stay consistent, and that gets back to that, uh, book, um, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. People like consistency with their actions, with their habits and with their thoughts.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: So, you gotta realize when someone is actually presenting a new viewpoint for themselves, your thoughts move. You, you can interpret words at about 500 words a minute. Now, I'm speaking and you're speaking at about 125 words a minute. So, our thoughts move very quickly. But the trouble is our emotions, a strong emotion, the adrenalin and the cortisol associated with that, that can take up to 20 minutes to dissipate in our bodies.

Yashika: Oh, wow!

Erica: So, yeah. You ... So, you really, if you start to see somebody realizing that like, "Oh, there could be another way to see this," you gotta give them a little bit of time to calm down emotionally to then be able to accept that thought as another way of thinking. So, I'll, I'll give you an, I'll give you an example of this. This, this literally happened to me the other day.

Yashika: Okay. (laughs)

Erica: I, (laughs) I was driving to daycare to pick up my two boys. I had picked up my daughter. And this guy in front of me is just coming so slow. And my daughter is in the backseat. And I, I don't tend to do this, but I was so frustrated, we were going to be late, and I kind of yelled at him and I was like, "God! Buddy, come on! Move!" And next thing I know, I hear my daughter in the background and she says, "What's wrong?" And I said, "Well, this guy, he's just, he's not moving." Like, "I gotta go. We gotta get to daycare." And she says, "Well, maybe he's hurt or maybe he's sick, mommy."

Yashika: Aw.

Erica: "Oh, yeah. Okay." (laughs)

Yashika: That's heartbreaking. Oh, my goodness!

Erica: Yashika, you're not supposed to side with her. (laughs)

Yashika: That's what your kids do though.

Erica: I know. Totally. And here's the thing. She totally in that moment, uh, was right.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Uh, uh, like, and I, within a second, was on her page, and I was like, "You're, you're right. You're right, Izzy. He could be sick, and he could be hurt. That's a good point," but I was still so mad. (laughs)

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh, yeah.

Erica: And even though she was right, it took me a few more minutes to be able to really see it from her point of view that I don't know what's going on with this person, and I shouldn't be mad at them for driving slow. Yes, they may be distracted, but there could be a reason that I don't understand.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: But that's just a nice example of the way our thoughts, how quickly our thoughts can change versus our emotions. And then the other, the other thing to kind of keep in mind is you're asking for their story is you gotta stay thoughtful. So, many times, we have a portion of the information that's been presented to us, but you go and you meet with someone else and they share their data and you learn more. And so, you have to be willing to adjust your own views, too, as someone is sharing more of their information with you.

So, you'll start with that. You're really going to start to delve into asking for their story and trying to figure out where they're coming from and what is the information behind that. And then you're going to move to what's called a disarming statement. So, in a conflict, when someone's in their emotional basement, so this is not something that you need to do all the time, I want you to use a disarming statement.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: This is ... Get ready for it.

Yashika: Oh, my goodness!

Erica: Thank you or I'm sorry. Now, as women, I think many times we kind of bristle at that. Yeah.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Just because, you know, I'm sorry, that's something that can be, you know, kind of like a record on many, uh, many women's, um, monologues, where we say that all the time, right? And we don't want to apologize for things that we don't own.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: But that said, there are times where you ha- you should take some ownership of the situation, not always. So, and we do this a lot as clinicians, too, I will say. So, there are

times where you may find that, "Boy, some of the way this person is reacting is because they didn't have all of the data available, and maybe that was my fault or because the situation was interpreted differently than it should have been because I should have intervened sooner." There could be some aspect of this that is our responsibility that we need, we need to take ownership of. If that's the case, saying I'm sorry can be a very helpful statement for moving you back towards a productive dialogue.

Now, other times, you may say, "Gosh! I don't have anything to be sorry for. They're on their own. What they're thinking is, is not right, and I'm going to help them along with that, but I don't want to say I'm sorry."

Yashika: Right.

Erica: Well, so, this is where thank you can come into play, and thank you can be really powerful, too. So, sometimes you didn't have anything to do with the situation, but you have to and you want to acknowledge that, "Boy, you as this person who's really upset right now, you put yourself out there, you shared your story with me." It's okay to acknowledge that, and you say, "Thank you for sharing that with me. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to find a solution to this together. Thank you for being committed to addressing this issue with me." Uh, you know, "Thank you for being, uh, so honest in your thoughts about what the issue is."

Those are all statements that acknowledge that someone else is really doing something that's very difficult. And if there's any ownership that needs to be taken, that's the time when you would, that you would acknowledge that as well. So, then-

Yashika: That's good.

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: Yeah. I like that.

Erica: So, then you're going to move into what's called a clarifying statement. This is when you start to kind of try to readjust the viewpoint that the other person may have that you may feel is a little bit incorrect, um, or nee- just needs to be kind of fine-tuned a little bit. Uh, so, this is what's basically a don't statement, and then a do. So, this can sound like, you know, "Gosh! Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts on, uh, the manuscript and how frustrated you were with, uh, not getting it, it on time. Um, I don't want you to think that I don't care about meeting that deadline on time with you. I simply wanted to make sure that we were submitting a manuscript that was the highest quality that we could, uh, in that moment." So, you kind of hear that don't and then do statement.

Yashika: Yeah. Yeah. I know.

Erica: What you, what you, what maybe was misinterpreted by that other person, and then how you want that to be corrected in their mind moving forward. And then the last part of that is to remind them of the bigger picture. So, kind of like we talked about in that first step was make some small talk. That was reminding them that you have a relationship beyond this argument. And so, reminding them of, coming back and reminding them of that. Um, you know, it could be like, you know, "We have worked on so many projects together and I know that we're collaborating on three other, uh, big projects. And so, I want to make sure that we get this right, so that we can continue having some great collaborations moving forward."

So, reminding them that, "Boy, this conflict is not the entirety of our relationship together, um, and I want to continue to have a good relationship with you," that helps that other person reframe what they're sitting in front of them in a kind of a bigger light or a kind of 50,000-foot view.

Yashika: Yeah. That's helpful. Wow! That's, that's a lot. (laughs)

Erica: (laughs) It is a lot. It is a lot.

Yashika: We're, we're going to have to write all of that down. We're going to have a PDF in the show notes for that 'cause I think that, that, that's a, that's some really great information. Um, but just having some time to kind of go back through it is, is actually helpful.

Erica: Sure.

Yashika: That's powerful.

Erica: Absolutely.

Yashika: So, this other concept that you talk about now, I'm, uh, and I love this title, how to make friends with an asshole. I feel like, "Oh, yeah! I, I need this. (laughs) 'Cause I've been in the basement with this person for I don't know how long now." So, what am I going to do? What is the concept?

Erica: So, we talked earlier about, uh, that book, uh, The Psychology of Persuasion. And the strategies here are really closely tied to some of the concepts in that book. It just deals with, um, likeability and commonality, um, and influencing others to kind of come around to, uh, your point of view or also, um, just to, you know, building a better relationship with them.

So, um, the first thing you can do ... So, there's some kind of strategies for this, um, 'cause we, we all have that person in our lives, maybe in our work lives, maybe not, where, gosh, you just don't see eye-to-eye, you feel like you can't relate to them at all and they can't relate to you. And because of that, that can, that can be really challenging when you're having to interact with them on a daily basis, right?

Yashika: Yes.

Erica: So, um, one of the first things that I recommend doing is finding a friend of theirs and talking to them.

Yashika: Hmm.

Erica: Um, and this, this is basically a very kind of generalized conversation, where you start out just saying, you know, "Hey, um, you know, Jennifer and I are about to meet about the night shift schedule. I want to make sure that when we do that I don't burn any bridges or damage the relationship. Do you have any advice that could really help me make sure that our meeting goes well, and that things don't get off track?" So, you're just opening the door for any suggestions that this other person that knows that person well could have.

Now, there are certainly going to be times where that person will say like, "No. I don't know. Just, you know, just talk to him. They're fine, you know. It shouldn't be a big deal," and they don't give you a lot of, a lot of feedback. But there, there also be times where that person just kind of volunteers like, "Hey, you know, if you're going to approach them on this issue, they feel really touchy about it. Uh, it's a, it's a really important issue for them. If you're going to do it, here, here could be some tips or some strategies that could help you along the way."

So, sometimes that's a way to gain a little bit more knowledge about how to approach that person in a better way. Um, and then the se- the second tip that I have is to try to explore like any common ground that you may have with that other person. Um, you know, we kind of talked about small talk, and how simple it can be. It can be your last vacation, it can be, you know, hobbies that you've got, you know, the kids, pets that you've got, um, lots of different things like that.

There is usually something that we can find in common with someone else. I- it's very rare to not have anything at all in common with somebody else. That's a great way to kind of start off, um, having a conversation that is, lands on a positive note, um, over time. And then certainly, if they've done something that is worthy of commendation, compliment them on it. Uh, and in fact, compliment them publicly, like acknowledge them. People like to be acknowledged and complimented and recognized for their hard work.

I've got in the habit of trying to do anytime I hear of something that gives me the thought like, "Huh? That's pretty cool," or "Wow! Th- that sounds like that was hard work." This is like a, um, just been a yearlong goal for me to try then acknowledge them by either walking by their office and saying, "Hey, great job on that. Um, that sounds like that was really hard to do or, you know, took a lot of work," um, or, "Sounds like, you know, that was a big obstacle, but, but, you know, you overcame it. Great job," um, or to even acknowledge them like more publicly. Like, if we're in a meeting, uh, you know, to say, "Hey, you know, did you know Yashika did this really cool thing. She just

published this manuscript. Like, I just, I think we should take a minute." I, I feel like we as a society and a culture and certainly, a profession, we don't do enough of that.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: And, you know, that's part of feeling valued, um, you know, in a group. So, compliment them if you see them doing something that's really, really valuable. And then, uh, one other thought that, uh, I have on this is to try to create a different set of expectations. There are times where we've had some negative interactions with that person maybe, and you know that you've got an upcoming, uh, project that you're going to work on together, and you may need to kind of reframe that relationship to help that other person see it in, in a better light, uh, or even a new light.

So, this is a time where you just stop by their office and you say, "Hey, you know, I know, you know, our relationship has been strained at times in the past, but I want to let you know that I want that to change and, specifically, I know that we're going to be working on this project together, and I'm, I'm really looking forward to that, and I'm, I welcome your insights. Um, I, I think that even though we've gotten off track before, my door is always open. I want you to know that, and I want you to be able to reach out to me. If you feel like things aren't moving as smoothly in the future for us as, as they could be." So, sometimes just opening the door to an honest conversation can really help someone else kind of air some of their grievances and then set it aside.

Yashika: That's good.

Erica: And then a couple of the last, uh, a couple of other ideas that I have is just borrow their brain. So, uh, again, it kind of gets back to feeling valued by other people and acknowledged by them. You know, if you've got someone who is a fantastic, uh, clinician that's, you know, e- everybody knows them to be, you know, super smart and really an expert in their field, and you have, you know, a, a complex patient, run it pass them and say, "Hey, you know, I'd love to borrow your brain for a minute. Can you tell me what you think about this?"

You know, when you brainstorm with someone else on a specific problem that you're both trying to solve, studies have shown that having buy-in from both sides commits both people to the solution better, um, and really builds a relationship over time. So, there's a real importance to that brainstorming session beyond simply coming to a solution. Uh, so, that can be really valuable.

And then the last, you know, we talked about this before, but, uh, try to assume something different. So, sometimes we assume like, "They don't like us and they don't like us because ..." but what if you try to see that situation in a different light? Maybe that it's not that that person doesn't like you. They're distracted by a personal issue or even a major life event that, you know, has been devastating to them and they can't be focusing on the relationship with you right now. And that's why they seem distant or they've seemed annoyed with you. Maybe it really has nothing to do with you.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: Really focusing on that and realizing that, "There gotta be something I don't know about at all right now."

Yashika: That's deep and, and it's true. It's hard to put yourself in that other person's place 'cause in the moment-

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: ... you're only thinking about you.

Erica: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Yashika: Um, but those are good steps. Um, so, you've, you've mentioned this book a couple of times, *The Psychology of Persuasion*. So, how did you initially come across this book and, you know, what's, what's, what are some of the draws for you for that book?

Erica: Oh, yeah. You know, so, one of my passions is just reading books about psychology, and I'm sort of fascinated by how, how people think and how our thinking influences our actions, especially our assumptions.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: So, I, I stumbled across this book a couple of years ago, and it's one that I just keep kind of referring back to over and over again, um, just because I feel like, you know, when it comes to influencing, um, I feel like likability and showing genuine concern for other people and, and showing that we're all connected, um, can really influence people's positive opinions of you. But I feel like so much, especially clinically, so much of our lives is spent ... We're all in silos, right?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: We're all kind of going through our clinical day, and you step out of it for a minute, and maybe you don't have a best interaction with someone else. And then suddenly, we're convinced that, you know, "That's an adversary. That's not somebody who's on my side." But I feel like, boy, the more that we can really realize that we all share so much, especially being, you know, physicians together, being clinicians together, being women together, we're often struggling with the same issues.

Um, and, and that can really kind of change your thinking about, about how you interact with people and, and really, you know, we can start to influence each other in a really positive way, um, if we can kind of get past some of that.

Yashika: That's good. So, you've talked a little bit, um, about like the likability and the commonalities, um, and clearly, they, those are key in that book. So, how have you

really utilized this, I guess in your own career, in your life or how have you put this into action?

Erica: Oh, my gosh! So much. (laughs) I have so far to go. So, I, I've had the opportunity to use it a lot. (laughs) No. Um, you know, I'll, I'll, I'll tell you a story here. I, uh, just when it comes to commonality and, and likability and talking about that.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: Um, I, so, I, I mentioned before I was much more of a competer in my early years, especially as a clinician. And I was, I had just given the, the conflict management talk actually and I just come back on to the wards. And it's my second day on the wards, and my senior resident came up to me to start rounds, and he said, you know, "Can we just, can we start with Dr. or Mr. Smith. Um, we just ... He gave me an earful this morning. He was yelling at me for like 45 minutes. And I just feel like we should just start with him just to kind of, you know, get it over with 'cause he's really upset right now." And my first reaction was that typical competer style kind of guttural like, "Err. Don't, don't give my senior resident a hard time."

Yashika: Right.

Erica: But (laughs) I had just given this talk, and I just told other people to be reflective and take a step back and I thought, "Wait, wait. Okay. Let me try to do what, you know, practice what I preach here." So, I said, "Okay. Hold on. I, you know, I'm trying to, to be more accommodating and trying to use that, and make that more of a strength. So, I'm going to, I'm going to try to set aside what my senior has told me, and I'm going to go in, fresh start. I've never met this person before, and let's see if I can, you know, if I can build a bit of a relationship with him."

So, I, I walked in to the room and I said, you know, introduced myself, you know, "This is my role. I'm overseeing your care. You know, I hear you're pretty upset. Can you tell me more about that? Can you tell me what's been going on?" I tried to use all of my techniques that I teach everyone else, right? (laughs) And, "I, I'm so sorry that's happened to you so far," you know, all of it.

So, he, you know, as expected, you know, he kind of laid it to me and he said, you know, "Gosh! You know, I've been in the emergency room for 14 hours, and I haven't received any pain medicine. I haven't received anything to eat. Um, I have been awake all night. I'm exhausted. And, oh, by the way," you know, he had a foot infection, "um, nobody's given me a pillow and I've asked five times for a pillow for my foot."

Yashika: Oh, man. Yeah.

Erica: I mean, and now, my ... The competer in me would have gone in there in that situation and said, "You can't, you know, you can't treat my senior like that, and you needed to, you know, respect us, and da-da-da-da," but the fact that I was able to take a step back,

you know, I, I was able to talk to him, you know, and say, "I totally understand that. You know what? A couple of weeks ago, my son was sick, and I was in the emergency room for 12 hours, and it was awful."

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: "I can totally relate to what you're saying. And let me tell you, I can definitely get you a diet right now. I can work on your pain a little bit and, by the way, we're getting you a pillow immediately," right?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: And so, sometimes just hearing someone else's frustration and being able to relate to it and share maybe a similar story of your own and like, "I get you, you know? Like, uh, we've all been in that situation, and I'm going to, I'm going to see how I can help." So, using some of those same tools that, that I teach all the time actually was really valuable, and I will tell you, um, his interactions with us as a group and a team changed completely at that point.

Yashika: That's great.

Erica: And it was, it was a really, actually, it was a wonderful rest of, um, uh, time with him despite, you know, kind of the challenges that he was having with the infection. He was, he was much kinder to us and, and we were kinder, you know, in response. And honestly, I think that he got, uh, you know, probably more efficient care because we didn't have those negative interactions with each other moving forward.

So, I, I've thankfully been able to teach this many times, and so, it's solidified, uh, pretty well in my brain now. So, I can't say that it's 100% 'cause I do still have those three small kids, but, um, I'm, I'm able to use it more and more lately. (laughs)

Yashika: Well, and I think that's just really true. I mean, there are so many times where patients come in and they are irritated and, you know, I feel like I'm the last person to walk in the door.

Erica: Right.

Yashika: But you have to remember that who knows what they've dealt with before.

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: Like the night before, maybe they didn't get any sleep, they were in pain, they're ... Who knows? But then, you know, traffic, it's horrible weather, somebody beeped at them, they, they couldn't get a parking space. At our hospital, you know, they're-

Erica: Yes. That, too. That, too.

Yashika: ... they're running a little low. Somebody at the front desk tapped in, you know, somebody messed up their appointment, and so, by the time they get to me, they are, they're pissed.

Erica: Right.

Yashika: You know, and I'm just like ... And so, you are kind of, like your immediate thing is to go like, "Don't growl at me. I'm growling back at you," you know? You have to take that back and be like, "Okay. It's, it's ..." you know, and just to give them that second. And I have found when I, when I take a breath and I ask them what's going on, and give them even like a couple of minutes just to kind of let it out-

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: ... then you kind of move forward in a much more productive way 'cause otherwise, I'm like, "This appointment here is going nowhere fast."

Erica: (laughs) Well, you bring up a good point, though. Like, if you oftentimes, you know, that's why we al- why I say start by asking what their story is, "Tell me what's going on."

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: And we're taught to do this as clinicians, anyway, right?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: You know, throwing that out there, a lot of times, yeah, you're going to hear some anger, and you may hear strong language, you know?

Yashika: Yes.

Erica: You may hear strong opinions, but it's hard for people to keep up those strong emotions over a prolonged period of time. Many times, getting that information out, venting it is enough to get them on that track to see it in a new way or saying, you know, "Hey, I hear you." Uh, many times, people just want to be heard. They want to be seen. They want to know that you get it.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: And, and many times, it's something as simple as, you know, a pillow on your foot. Oh, my gosh! You know, like, we can do that, uh, you know?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Um, so, uh, sometimes it's, it's, it's a really simple thing, and you just don't know, and if you don't know, you can't fix it.

Yashika: That's true. So, I know, like, once we're out of that emotional basement, it's like, "Okay. Now, what?"

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: How do we start to kind of share our opinions about whatever this conflict is and what's going on?

Erica: Yes. Yes. You're a- Well, so, you bring up an excellent point. So, yeah. We haven't shared our side of the story yet, right?

Yashika: "My turn. I'm want to talk."

Erica: (laughs) Exactly. So, you know, certainly, d- when you're dealing with someone in their emotional basement, this is not a time to share your information because you're just trying to work on them-

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: ... and getting them to feel comfortable, tell you what their thoughts are, tell you where they got their data from and move forward from there, get rid of some of those really strong emotions. So, but once you're, you're out of that, that's when you can start to share your information. This is when you start to say, "Okay. Here's how I see things."

Now, the first thing that you want to do is share your facts, share your data. So, maybe the start of this conflict all was with, you know, with, was with an email. We'll start by referring to the email. The email itself, that's the facts, right?

Yashika: Right.

Erica: Many times, what do we do, though? We just go straight to our conclusions. We say, "Well, I totally see it different, and I see it different because you're wrong." (laughs) So-

Yashika: Of course.

Erica: Of course. So, those are our conclusions based on the facts. Now, the trouble is that conclusions have assumptions built in just naturally. Um, at some point, you've had to assume something or another. And that's where strong emotions can, can play in both for you and for that other person again.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: So, you start with the facts first because objective data, just in general, tends to have less emotion attached to it. You know, if you say, "We've seen a 43% increase in our patient volumes." Okay. I mean, that's just fact, right?

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: It's hard to be super upset about that, um, versus, "I think that we need to hire three new nocturnists, and in the meantime, have everyone else do eight more nights a month." Whoa! Oh, that's a conclusion. I feel strongly about that, but I, uh, you know, the fact that you, you know, the facts that you share with me, the objective data of 43%, that I don't feel as strongly about. So, you always start with facts first.

Um, and then you try to start with positive before negative 'cause you want to, you know, you don't want to ever argue on things you already agree on, um, and there are many times, positives facts that go with the negative. Then you, you throw out your conclusion. You say, "And based on these facts, this is what I've concluded. Um, this is, this is the assumptions that I have made." You're going to watch that other person that go towards their basement again when you do that, and you're going to, you may have to take a step back and kind of go back into that basement work for a minute.

And then you're going to say, "Hey, here's my shared goals. You know, based on the 43% nighttime increase in patient volumes and my thoughts that we need to have everybody work more nights until we can hire nocturnists, um, you know, I, my overarching goal is that I want to make sure our patients are safe and that nobody feels so overworked that they need to leave our institution, you know. Uh, we don't want to have high turnover."

And so, you know, reminding that other person like, "Here are the overarching shared goals. That's what I'm trying to get at. Um, so, we may be able to do that by hiring more nocturnists or by increasing our, our night schedule. There may be other ways to do it." So, that kind of sets a goal in front of everyone. Um, and then you, you state your problem, "This is my issue, um, is that I don't know how to meet this. Uh, you know, I don't know how to get three more nocturnists in here in the next three months," um, or, "I do, and here's how I propose doing it." Um, so, you share your problem, and then offer a solution if you've got one. And then you start to kind of separate where you guys agree and disagree.

The ground floor work is really where you're sharing your opinions and your facts, you're starting your views on everything, and then reminding them, "Hey, here's, here's our shared goal together. Here's my problem, and here's my possible solution."

Yashika: Okay. That's good. That's good.

Erica: You ready to move to balcony?

Yashika: Going to the balcony. Here we go.

Erica: Okay. Okay. So, so, they've shared their opinion, then you've shared yours. Now, you're going to move to what I call the balcony work. Um, and there are five A's to the balcony work. This is really where you're trying to come to a solution together. So, we talked a

little bit earlier about buy-in and when two people can brainstorm, uh, and find a solution together, they have more buy-in on that solution, and more buy-in means that when they present it to a larger group, that they're more invested in that as a solution, and more likely to try to influence other people to agree with it as well.

So, that can be really valuable if you are, for example, you know, the chair of one committee and someone else is the chair of another committee, and you guys are coming together, and then going to have to go back to your separate committees and present this information or this solution.

So, the balcony work, the five A's, uh, the first is to ask for their solution based on what you just proposed. "Okay. So, this was my solution that we hire three more nocturnists. What do you think about that? What are your thoughts on a possible solution?" Then you're going to acknowledge their solution. Now, you may not agree with the solution. In fact, you may strongly disagree with the solution, but that's okay, but you're going to acknowledge that they've put something out there.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: So, you're trying to take small steps to move towards a common goal. So, "Hey, thank you for that. I, I really, uh, I think you bring up a good point there." You may not agree with it entirely, but find the commonality where you can. So, then you're going to agree where you can, and then you're going to add to that solution with some more of your own solution. And then the last you're going to do and actually, this is one of the most important things I think is that although these are a lot of steps back and forth-

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: ... when you're doing that balcony work, at the end of that, you're going to have come to some agreed upon solution. It may not be 100%. Uh, you may have solved a portion of the problem and need to come back later, and negotiate the rest. That's very common for, um, an issue to have to be negotiated over many different meetings or many different conversations.

But the last thing that you want to do is act on it. So, what does that mean? So, many times, you'll have a negotiation with someone else, and then, "Whew! That took so much time, so much energy. I'm exhausted."

Yashika: Drink.

Erica: Drink. Exactly. "Let's go get a glass of wine. I'm going to relax," but before you do that, you go back to your office or even in that meeting at the end of it.

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: You type up what was agreed upon and with that other person.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: And you both sign it. And now, that sounds maybe like, "Oh, that's too much. That's ridiculous." No. One of the biggest challenges is to not document what you have agreed upon and then two weeks, two months go by, and you're trying to remember exactly what was agreed upon and maybe you disagree again or you have to go back to the negotiating table and renegotiate what you already negotiated once.

Yashika: Ooh. Yeah.

Erica: You should never have to repeat that work, right? So, this, this saves you on time, and it also sets a precedent for future, uh, conflicts and future negotiations. So, it's very important to document that, send it to the other person, and make sure they send it back saying that they agree, okay?

Yashika: That's good. So, now, on that particular thing, 'cause I, I have run into this.

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: So, do you think that, like, I find, I feel like we walk out of the room and we're, we're all in agreeance, you know?

Erica: Yeah.

Yashika: So, I go back and I will type something up or send an email saying, "Hey, so happy we agreed on this. I'm going to do X, Y and Z."

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: And they're do X, Y and Z. And then all of a sudden, they're sending an email back or something happens where they're like, "That's not what happened," you know?

Erica: Absolutely.

Yashika: Where it's like you're not on the same page, you know? Like, "Err! What?"

Erica: "Didn't we just talk about this?"

Yashika: "Hold up. Hold up."

Erica: "Weren't you in that room?" Right. So-

Yashika: "What?" So, I mean, do I do it right there?

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: We should write it together or I mean, how do you do that?

Erica: Absolutely. Yes. So, if you suspect, if maybe you've had prior negotiations with this person, and you suspect it's going to go that way, then that's a time to type it up in that moment-

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: ... and to look it over together, "Okay. Before we leave today, here's what I understood to be true that this was your to-do list, this was my to-do list, and this is what we've agreed upon together," and then set deadlines moving forward. So, "Okay. For your to-do list, you're going to, you're going to finish that in the next two weeks, and then we're going to come back together to meet again to talk about the next step. And here's my to-do list that I'm going to finish in the next two weeks, and then I'll come together and we'll talk about." So, document it, and then set deadlines moving forward and action plans based on that, but yeah, then just don't leave the room until it's documented and everybody agrees on that.

Yashika: That's good 'cause I feel like a lot of issues happen right around-

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: ... the time you walk out of that room and somebody sends that first email.

Erica: Yes. (laughs) Absolutely.

Yashika: So, that's good. That, that's a good one 'cause I don't feel like I do that enough, and I think it's because I'm drained.

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: Like everybody is just ready to go, "Okay. It's over. Let's, let's move on," and-

Erica: Absolutely. You know, it's funny 'cause I even, I give this, I give a similar talk on the difficult learner-

Yashika: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erica: ... and, you know, if you're or ne- giving negative feedback. If you're going to give some negative feedback at the end of that conversation, whatever was agreed upon, you know, "These are the challenges. These were the things that weren't met, and this is what, you know, the plan for improvement is," you know, document that, and send it, send it to that other person. Um, and, and sometimes, you know, when it comes to learning, you may be needing to send it to their program director or clerk chief director or whatever.

Um, and then a plan for, "Here's how we're going to follow up on this and make sure that, you know, you know, you get more feedback moving forward, so that the ball doesn't get dropped here. I gave you this feedback, but, okay, you're going to try to improve, and now, I'm going to meet with you again in a week, and we're going to talk again about how things are going." So, I think that is absolutely crucial, uh, in any sort of difficult conversation to document it, and to make sure that the other person agrees on that documentation.

Yashika: That's good. So, we have gone over a lot. I mean, I mean, this has been mind-blowing. It's so good, so good.

Erica: Oh, thank you.

Yashika: So, if someone is listening, okay, let's get some big takeaways here. I mean-

Erica: Okay. Okay.

Yashika: ... we're going to, we're going to document all of the stuff in the show notes 'cause I think-

Erica: Yes.

Yashika: ... it's great, but like, what are the big things, if nothing else, that they should be remembering?

Erica: Absolutely. Okay. Number one, if you walk away with nothing else, remember this, okay? We never negotiate in our emotional basement.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: You, you walk away, you say, "Thank you," you know, "I hear you're upset. I want to talk about this more. Um, let's set up a time for us to talk. Now is not a good time for me." Um, j- you had just have to end that conversation if you're in your emotional basement until you can get out of it, and you can ask those questions first. There's a lot that you can do to do that, but that is not something to do that in the middle of a negotiation. That's a time to end the negotiation and the conflict. Come back later when you're calmer and you're thinking more clearly.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Um, number two is anytime you're in a conflict, I want you to ask yourself, "What is the story that I'm telling myself about this?" So, so often, there is some story that we're telling ourselves, and you have to reflect on that to realize that there may be another way of seeing this. Uh, I, I always like to kind of follow that up with like, ask yourself what if. Give yourself three what if's. "Okay. So, what are three other scenarios that could explain what's happening here that I didn't think of before?" And it just can help

us understand that maybe this isn't all about us, "Maybe the person is acting out because there's something else going on in their lives that I have no idea about, and I am interpreting that bad behavior as something that should be reflective, reflective of me."

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: Um, uh, and then the last one is remember your underlying goal at all times. So, sometimes when I go into a conflict or a negotiation, I'll actually write at the top of my paper, you know, like, "Goal XYZ," (laughs) just so that I can be reminded that, "Okay. The goal is not to make this other person feel bad. Maybe they made me feel bad. Maybe they made me angry. Maybe they made me really frustrated, but that's not my goal. My goal is not to get them back for that. My goal is to get more protected time for my teaching. My goal is to get the raise that I wanted. My goal is ..." What is your goal? And focus on that.

Yashika: Right.

Erica: The less you can let somebody else drive into their, into your emotional basement or theirs, you can refocus them and yourself on getting your goal met, getting your needs met and be successful in the negotiation.

Yashika: That's good. That's really good.

Erica: Thank you.

Yashika: So, um, any final thoughts that you want to share here?

Erica: Oh, there, there's so much.

Yashika: So many. So much.

Erica: (laughs) Just a few.

Yashika: That's why they all need to come to your retreat 'cause there's so much more.

Erica: I know, I know. I agree. (laughs)

Yashika: That's right. There you go.

Erica: You know, there's so much to be gained from a successful negotiation, um, even more so that achieving an outcome that works in your favor. You know, we think about like, boy, getting that need met, getting that goal met, but you know, you can set a precedent for future negotiations. You can save time in the future because you've already negotiated something similar and you can refer back to that and say, "Well, boy,

you know, last year when we negotiated X, we did it like that. Why don't we treat Y the same way?"

Um, it can build a relationship with another person. So, any two people that go through a challenge or an obstacle together, um, uh, tend to feel strong, uh, uh, attachments and connections with each other moving forward. Um, and then the last thing that I actually think is crucial, especially to all those other, uh, women physicians out there, you may be having someone else who sits at that negotiating table with you, who's not in the negotiation, um, or who is hearing about that negotiation, uh, from other people, and you are silently inspiring and motivating them to take on a conflict of their own.

Yashika: Yeah.

Erica: And I just cannot tell you how often years later I have heard that from other faculty like, "That time that you, you took that on, that really inspired me." And I'm thinking, "Oh, my gosh! Like that was three years ago. What are you talking about?" You don't know who you are silently inspiring. So, you need to recognize that taking on some of these challenging issues and being really brave with that, uh, can really be helpful not just to you, but to the women who are following in your footsteps.

I think, I think learning some of these skills like conflict management and negotiation, they are crucial to making us all better people, and helping us just overcome the daily challenges in our lives, uh, that, but we just often don't take enough time for ourselves to give ourselves permission to focus on our wellbeing for a minute, and just adjust course if we need to, and make sure that we're living the life that not just that we're, we're meant to live, but that really, we want to live, we dream to live.

So, if we don't give ourselves that permission to reflect and recharge every once in a while, I think it's a really damaging thing long term. Uh, I really hope that all these overwhelmed, overworked, uh, women physicians, uh, like I have been at times myself, um, out there will just take a minute for themselves, whether it's by coming to the Women Physicians Wellness Conference or not, um, even just schedule in some time for yourself each day. Uh, just that alone I think can do wonders for helping us get back on track, uh, just professionally and personally, and help us make sure that we're living the life that not just we plan on, but that we really dream of.

Yashika: That is so good. I love that. You don't know who you are silently inspiring. That's powerful.

Erica: Yes. Thank you.

Yashika: It really makes me think in the moment when I'm about to go crazy, but it's what I think 'cause there are, there are ... I mean, even in your own home, there, eyes are watching. Everybody, you know?

Erica: Oh, yes.

Yashika: And so, you do have to sometimes just take that moment and say, you know, "Is this how I want to show up? Is this what I want to be, how people perceive me or, or see me?"

Erica: Exactly. "Who am I going to be regardless of this situation?"

Yashika: Yes. That's good.

Erica: Exactly.

Yashika: Yeah. So, if someone wants to find out more about your work, your courses, um, your retreats, uh, how can they do?

Erica: Of course. Yes. So, um, there is themedicaleducator.com is kind of my main website. There is a link on themedicaleducator.com to the Women Physicians Wellness Conference, but you can certainly use, uh, the, the URL of womenphysicianswellness.com to get there as well. That's physicians with an S. So, more than one, uh, 'cause more than one will be attending. (laughs)

Yashika: Yes. Absolutely.

Erica: And then, um, I'm on Twitter [@HoweInAHurry](https://twitter.com/HoweInAHurry) because I literally, uh, created that hash or that handle, uh, in a hurry. Uh, as I was about to like go on stage to give a talk, somebody said, "What's your Twitter, Twitter handle?" I was like, "What?" "What's your Twitter handle?" "Okay. Uh ..." and yeah, that's what I came up with. So-

Yashika: That's good. That's good. I'll remember that one.

Erica: Yes. Thank you. And then The Medical Educator's, uh, Twitter handle, Twitter handle is TheMedEd, and the conference is WPWConf.

Yashika: Okay. Sounds good. And we will have all of that in our show notes. So, if you missed any of it, we will have all of that information right there. Thank you so much again for talking to us. You have taught us an amazing amount of work, and I look forward to joining you at that conference.

Thanks for joining us! I hope you have gotten some clarity on negotiation styles and finding a strategy that helps you to communicate more effectively. I am all about helping women remove thoughts and beliefs that just are not serving them and oftentimes our belief that we can't have these difficult conversations prevents us from moving forward.

I invite you to head on over to the website FierceFreedomAwaits.com, click on the show notes and download all the resources so that you can learn the negotiation styles, the tips, the tricks, and get a list of all the ways that you can begin to have these difficult conversations.

Thanks again and I'll talk to you soon!