

Northwest-LERA-2022

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SPEAKERS

Chris Casillas, Emily Martin, Matt Greer

C Chris Casillas 00:09

The annual Northwest LERA conference is coming soon to a virtual platform near you. And we are excited to offer our first bonus episode of the PERColator podcast, highlighting the work of the Negotiation Project at this year's conference. As you prepare for this year's conference, which will be held on April 21st and 22nd, we encourage you to take a listen to this bonus podcast episode. In it, we discuss the two presentations offered by the Negotiation Project this year and invite you to join us as we ramp up for this marquee event, highlighting all the latest happenings in the world of labor relations in the great Pacific Northwest.

M Matt Greer 00:56

All right. Hello, everyone. Welcome to the PERColator podcast new episode. Hi, Chris. Hi, Emily, how are you doing?

E Emily Martin 01:04


Doing great, Matt. It's a Friday that we're recording on. So those are always the best days.

M Matt Greer 01:08

Yeah, and a sunny, sunny Friday at that.

C Chris Casillas 01:11

Yeah, I agree. Doing well. Good to good to be with both of you again.



M**Matt Greer 01:15**

Good to see you both. So I thought today, we would spend a few minutes and do a little bit of a preview for the Northwest LERA conference and a few of the things that Negotiation Project teams working on, in a couple sessions. And the conference in general, just as a full disclosure, I am on the planning committee for the Northwest LERA conference, so this is kind of a double duty in terms of putting a plug in for that. But we have some really exciting things and looking forward to it. So I guess I want to start off by putting in there's we're having a session that we are calling the "Brief But Spectacular" session, we're going to invite a bunch of people who have a quick seven minutes tale to tell, labor relations related tale, you get seven minutes and 20 slides to share something that's of interest, a lesson learned, some wisdom that you've gathered, maybe recently in your labor relations role, you'll get a chance to share that with the with a group of people at the Northwest LERA Conference, which gives you a great audience of a variety of people from all backgrounds, union, employer neutrals, and others. So if you're interested, feel free to go to the you can email us at negotiation@perc.wa.gov. And we can put a link in our show notes for that. But definitely reach out to us, we'd love to have you on board, if you're interested in something that you'd want to share with that. So want to put a plug in for the "Brief But Spectacular" session. In addition to that, we have two other Negotiation Project sessions, and we wanted to kind of touch base on those and kind of give you a preview of that, too. The first one we want to talk about and I'm gonna turn it over to Chris to tell us more about it. But it's called, if you're going if you're going to our registration website, which we'll put a link to that in our show notes as well. But it's on the first day of the conference on April 21 at 1:15, and it's called, "We Need to Talk: Tackling Tough Topics at the Bargaining Table." And we're going to talk about how you kind of address those tough, tough issues at the bargaining table. But it's going to be through a bit of the lens of a certain book called, "Difficult Conversations, How to Discuss What Matters Most." And in full disclosure, I have not yet read the book, even though I'm one of the session presenters. But good news, Chris has and Emily, if you want to confess anything, you can as well, or we could just put on Chris and let him educate us. But tell us Chris why why do we, what do you folks want to pay attention to that book? What do you, what do you, what do you think is worthwhile from it that we should be thinking about?

C**Chris Casillas 03:44**

Yeah, thanks, Matt. Well, you know, just to give a little background and in terms of how I came to the book, and as we started talking about putting together some sessions for LERA, you know, I had this book on my shelf for a little while. And I think I kind of casually read through it at one point a few years ago. And thought it was thought it was a neat, interesting book. But recently, I had a group that I was working with in a labor-management committee process, and I was doing some training with them. And one of the, one of the topics I talked about in their training and as as I converse with this group, about some of the kind of dynamics that they were experiencing and the breakdowns that they were feeling, they were they were frustrated with their labor-management committee process, because it seemed like a good idea, and they were kind of sticking to the plan of meeting every month or every couple months. But it just didn't feel really productive and it didn't feel like it was you know, solving some problems and allowing the parties to come together. And one of the slides that I talked about in this training was kind of this reorientation of moving away from a more kind of debate style frame of mind that it's easy for us to kind of lapse into. And many of us, especially those of us who've gone to law school, or just kind of liked that debate set up, you know, can kind of naturally fall into when we're, feel like we're in a bit of conflict with another party, and, you know, we want to kind of highlight our main points and, you know, argue our position and kind of use this space

as an opportunity for that. And we talked about in the training, how, you know, trying to shift to a more discussion type format or framework, where you're, the point of that is to kind of really learn what's what's going on with the other party, what's important to them, you know, what they're experiencing, and, and work through that with them. Even if you don't necessarily kind of agree with what they're saying, or have the same perspective, you know, the idea there is that, you know, it's their perspective, it's what they're experiencing. And you're here in this kind of labor-management setting, trying to kind of better understand those things and working together. And as I was going through that, that the group started, you know, all these light bulbs started kind of clicking on for this group, and people really reacted to that strongly. And thinking, you know, that was kind of the maybe not necessarily the linchpin of the problem for this group, but it was really contributing to some of the issues, because what they were doing is they just all get in a Labor-Management Committee, they'd have like, 10 topics they wanted to talk about, and then each side would just kind of volley charges, you know, across the table at the other side, and it just didn't feel good. And so this, this was like a way to really kind of experience that differently. And so that kind of brought me back this a long, long winded story of like, bringing me back to this book, "Difficult Conversations," because that's really, one of the premises, or ideas of the book is shifting away from that more debate style framework and moving to what they talk about kind of these learning conversations, that's really kind of the key part of the book. And I think, one one of the themes that we really want to explore at this LERA session. So anyway, I don't that's a that's a long, long way of kind of getting getting to kind of why the book, I think is important and, and why we're going to talk about it.

M

Matt Greer 07:26

Yeah, great. I'm looking forward to it, you sold me, I'm gonna, I'm gonna get the book and read it before the before the session, so I can engage in it more deep way. I did want to put out there though, that I don't think you have to read that book to attend that session, I think it's going to we're going to gear this session towards where we can talk about some of the concepts in a way that if you don't get a chance to read the book, or a good chance to look at it, I think we'll still be able to, you'll still be able to engage in that session effectively. So. So yeah. So Emily, any thoughts that you want to share?

E

Emily Martin 07:56

Yeah, so I bought the book. And, and, you know, I think actually, this is my second copy. I think I have read this book a long time ago. And it was an orange cover. But when I got online, and I bought a used copy, and I ended up buying one with a purple cover, which is like a 10th anniversary edition. So for people who are shopping for books, or looking in the library for a book, and they see an orange cover, or a purple cover, and one is cheap, and the other is expensive. Does it matter which one they pick, Chris, do you care? I'm hoping the answer is no.

C

Chris Casillas 08:34

Buy by the cheap book, or go to your public library and check it out. You know, it's not something you you necessarily, you know, need to own but yeah, no, get it get it whatever way you can. And as Matt said to, you know, to participate, especially in our LERA conversation about this, you know, I don't think it's, it would be great if you read it, or parts of it, but it's not

necessary. I think a lot of this, you know, the the difficult conversations they're talking about in the book are, are beyond the world of labor relations and contract negotiations, a lot of it is just kind of, you know, you've got a conflict with your, your spouse, and you have to kind of work through that, you know, here are some techniques and, and a lot of that is applicable to our world of labor relations, but many of the stories and the approaches will be relatable and understandable to anyone who is just alive and experiences things as we all do in different relational settings where we have those tense moments, those those points of conflict where we have to work through some tense, tense conversations. And that's really what the the idea of the book is about. So, yeah.

M

Matt Greer 09:49

Great. I'm looking forward to it.

E

Emily Martin 09:50

So it strikes me that that this podcast is probably going to be released in about a little bit of time. But if it happens to be released before March 22 I wanted to do a shout out for our monthly zooms. The three of us have been hosting monthly, monthly chats at noon, on Zoom. And we have a topic and we sit around and talk about it. And I think we're talking about it this month. Is that true? Is this what we have on the agenda for March 22.

M

Matt Greer 10:16

Still developing that and those of you on the mailing list, I'm sure we'll get some more information about what that conversation will look like, if you get this before that time. But, yeah.

E

Emily Martin 10:24

But if you're not on our mailing list, and you want to join the conversation, jump on our mailing list, we'll send you the link, if you if you are not able to make us make it on the 22nd. But I want to join us at a different month, jump on our mailing list, and we'll send you the link we get together once a month and geek out together. So it would be, it'd be great to see you sometime if you if you'd like to join us ever live.

C

Chris Casillas 10:44

Yeah. And I think that will be a great chance for us to kind of jump into a few of the concepts in greater detail with with all of you. And just think about kind of how that resonates with you how it sits with you. And maybe we'll kind of think through together as a group some some challenging conversations that we've all been involved in and maybe thinking about, you know how some of those conversations maybe kind of got off off on the wrong foot and maybe how some of these ideas might have allowed us to kind of recenter and move in a more positive direction.

E

Emily Martin 11:22

So folks who want to join us at LERA... Matt, do you know the dates of the labor conference?

M

Matt Greer 11:27

I do. It's April 21st, and 22nd 2022. And it's virtual. So you can attend from the comfort of your home or office. And because it's virtual, it's fairly inexpensive. I think we're, the registration fee is only \$65 for two days. And you know, for those of you who are lawyers, you get CLE credit. And there's also I think SHRM and other credits as well. So I am excited because this year, we have a little more of interactive features where last year, it was hard that we didn't have a whole lot of tools in place for attendees to communicate directly with each other. But this year, we have a lot of different opportunities where you can chat directly to each other and do little mini meetings, if you have folks in there that you wanted to touch base with. So looking forward to that elements that kind of missed out a little bit last year in the first attempt to do a virtual session. So we're really excited about it. And I did want to do a quick plug, because I know the Negotiation Project has another session on the second day as well. I think we're gonna do another follow up episode of going more in depth on that. But those of you're curious, and you're trying to follow the Negotiation Project topics on the second day, April 22, at 1:15, "Removing Barriers to New Ideas in Bargaining." So that's gonna be looking at another book called "The Human Element." And I think Chris will do a follow up episode where he will talk a little more about that in more detail as well. And then that one, so just a quick heads up on that.

C

Chris Casillas 12:46

Yep, I look forward to that conversation as well. We'll be also kind of tackling another book that's really not directly in the negotiation space, per se, but I think has a lot of really important lessons for our world as well. So that should be fun as well.

E

Emily Martin 13:01

I'm looking forward to LERA because I feel like it's always been our annual or annual event where we get to see everybody we get to see all the different kinds of people, all the people we work with for all the different kinds of cases that we work on often, and we all show up in the same space. And last year, we got to hang out virtually, this year we get to hang out virtually. And because it's virtual, even if you're outside of Washington State, it's something that people can participate in and join in on.

M

Matt Greer 13:26

Or the Northwest, we always get less people from Oregon and now Alaska and Montana, but you can come and join us from anywhere in the entire world even, so, yeah. All are welcome. So I think that ends our plug for LERA. Well, we'll put the registration link in the show notes as

well. But you can freely find that in a variety of sources, including the PERC website, so, but yeah, definitely look forward to seeing you there.



Chris Casillas 13:49

We'll see you there.