

# Episode #206 A Very Different World

## Laura Haycock

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**Susan:** Well, today I am really delighted to be joined by Laura Haycock on Life Beyond the Numbers. Laura, you're so welcome.

**Laura:** Oh, I'm really, really thrilled to be here, Susan. Thank you so much for inviting me.

**Susan:** It's my pleasure. And maybe just a little bit of context, because we both published books with the same publisher in the last 12 months or so, and yours is quite recent, and that's one of the reasons that we're here today is to talk about your book. But I also had the privilege of being at your book launch, which even inspired me more to have this conversation. So firstly, congratulations on M-Power a meno action plan for organizations. [00:02:00]

**Laura:** Brilliant. Thank you so much. Yeah, it's been an exciting ride, as you will know from having been through it yourself. So it was great to celebrate the launch in May and see all that work, turn into something physical and real.

**Susan:** And have people buy it my and talk about it.

**Laura:** Leave it

**Susan:** I know. And read it and actually gain from it.

And I said a meow action plan, because I'm used to saying meno instead of menopause. But let's just say it's a menopause action plan. And for listeners that may just be tuning in, what I want to say at the beginning of this conversation is this is not a conversation just for women or just for women going through the menopause.

And I think that is a theme that comes so strongly through your book. In fact, I feel like it's a book, Laura, that is beyond the menopause too. I think it's an important book for organizational culture and how we treat one [00:03:00]



another at work that goes beyond this issue or this thing that we have to deal with, but also covers it so well.

**Laura:** Yeah, I think you are right. I think that the principles that. Live beneath it can be applied to a whole range of workplace issues. You're absolutely right. I have a passion about the subject of menopause, but my backgrounds in, leadership and culture, organizational development, diversity and inclusion, and I'm drawing on all of that wealth of experience. So yes, for sure you'll definitely recognize themes in terms of what it takes for an organization to be effective and how we help every individual within an organization be the best they can be.

**Susan:** And I definitely think that comes out and I, I applaud that because you're dealing with something that is, is central to so many people's lives, but also work, I impacts [00:04:00] everyone so I really like that they're complimentary and not just focused simply on that.

**Laura:** That's right. Yes. I mean, I think there are good reasons to focus specifically on menopause in this case. You know, there's things that, you know, that are particularly challenging around that. for sure it draws on learning that can be applied elsewhere and, and have worked really hard to make sure that this is, a book anybody would feel comfortable reading.

Yes, I am a woman of a certain age. Yes, I have been through experiences of my own, and that has fueled me along the way, but the learning is for everyone. And so the intention behind the book was to make it super pragmatic. this is about why this makes sense for business and what businesses can do about it.

**Susan:** and that definitely flows through. So congratulations on that. Thank you. And like you say, I mean, I'm a woman of a certain age with certain experience as well, [00:05:00] and I think that gives life to it too. and you open the book, Laura by highlighting that you knew very little about menopause. And even as a psychologist, as you've said.

I'd imagine though many of us can relate to that, and I think it echoes a little bit that often what's invisible, what's happening inside of us that people cannot see. Forget the hot flushes for a moment. Yeah. Is often ignored in an organization or within organizations by people of course. That happens until



the cost becomes too high. And that's something I think you've drawn attention to.

**Laura:** Yes. I think we are in a changing context where we can't actually ignore menopause anymore. And so that's forcing a change and I think we are all witnessing a very rapid change around this [00:06:00] subject. when I first become aware that I was experiencing perimenopause, or at least put a name to what I had been experiencing for years without knowing what was going on.

It was a very different world. That was just 10 to 15 years ago, where I hadn't faced clue what was going on. My doctor didn't know what was going on. There's no way I could raise it at work and expect anybody else there to understand. I didn't know, what to ask for, what support to ask for or what could help.

So it was a very different world and that world's changing. but there's still scope for more that we can do more to make sure that everybody's able to access the right support and information.

**Susan:** I mean. In one way, it's neither here nor there, but in another way, I also think where we've come from is important.

Like why has it been so taboo for so long? Yeah.

**Laura:** Yeah. well, there are many reasons and a lot of it's just. Generally it's [00:07:00] taboo in society. Part of that's just embarrassment. it is touching on things that are very personal, like the most personal things about you and your body and you know, that's changing.

I mean, I'm the generation. I can remember clearly when the first. TV adverts came on for period products and feeling excruciatingly embarrassed by that. So, that's a part of it. there's also issues of shame. I know when I realized what was going on. There's a lot of shame involved in losing your fertility and how you might be perceived and what that means, the significance of that.

there's a huge amount of ignorance as we've touched on. We didn't really know what it was. Previous generations might say, oh, well, me. I didn't



experience that. But they may not have realized that a lot of the illnesses and issues they were experiencing were menopause related, which we are becoming more aware of now.

And then there's discrimination around gendered ageism, a [00:08:00] tendency in society to denigrate older women, and see them as sort of crazy and, Of less worth in society.

So there's lots of general things, but then in the workplace, specifically, the workplace is to being designed really to optimize performance in men. It's a male system and so that means it's inevitably somewhat blind to female issues, which just tend to be seen as external to work. so that's a big issue. and. Long running sort of sensitivities about how much are women impacted by hormones? Is that something they can own up to? Is that something they should keep quiet?

I know that some people might feel that, talking about how they're personally impacted by hormones might, in a sense, be a betrayal of feminism because somehow you are admitting to a [00:09:00] weakness that we worked really hard to diminish. and so it can become quite risky to mention it.

there's just many, many things. that all sort of coagulate if you like, into keeping us quiet about it

**Susan:** completely and. I've been watching, mad Men recently on tv and it's about an advertising agency based in the sixties in the US Madison Avenue.

And what's fascinating is how. People behaved in the workplace and we're talking about, 60 years ago which isn't all that long ago, really in the evolution of the world and I guess what's surprising perhaps as we go through our work life is how much things have to evolve because we don't have the background and the context.

So in 10 years time, for example, let's hope women aren't having these conversations about why it needs [00:10:00] to be important. Mm-hmm. And perhaps. There just weren't women in the workplace No. Up into fifties and sixties or forties or like you say, the association between the different underlying symptoms wasn't made.



**Laura:** No, no, I think that's absolutely right. This is a completely new phenomenon. Our generation are really the first generation where there's an expectation. It is an opportunity, but it's also an expectation that you work all through your adulthood,

and it's a new phenomenon that we're seeing at work. And when we think back, maybe only just a hundred years, that's a snapshot of time in evolution. But everything's changed for the way women work over that period.

And, our great, great. Grandmothers, maybe our great-grandmothers maybe weren't expected to work at all. Our grandmothers perhaps were expected to work until they married and then [00:11:00] quit. Our mothers maybe were expected to work until they started having children, but then stepped back

and now we're reaching this menopausal age. If you overlay that with, with changing demographics a hundred years ago, the average life expectancy for a woman in the UK was a mid fifties. So menopause was something that happened right at the very end of your life.

Now we typically live till we are in our early eighties, so about half our life might be affected by menopause and a third of our working life. That's a radical change over a short space of time in history, which means we're having to do a lot of learning and adapting to that.

**Susan:** I think that's really interesting, that evolution as well, when I think about it like.

There was a point, I guess, in history, recent history where there was a recognition that you needed to keep women in the workplace [00:12:00] beyond pregnancy, and that's where all that change came about, which I don't have any recollection of because everything was in place before I went into the workforce.

And I guess now it's the next evolution of the female

**Laura:** cycle. That's right. That's right. And it's an inevitable change, you know, and they're all, there are these sort of pressures that come from different



sides. So from women themselves, they want to keep working for fulfillment, but they also need to keep working financially.

we are now not expected to retire till we're 67, And, many women have to be financially, self-sufficient. So it's essential that you are still earning and maximizing your potential at work. there's also pressure from government. we know that it's better for the economy.

The economy needs women to be economically active and, That enables national growth and productivity and all those things that are really important. but there's also drivers from [00:13:00] organizations themselves because they know that if they're missing out on older female talent, then they're actually shooting themselves in the foot in terms of fulfilling their strategic objectives.

they can't just discard a significant proportion of their workforce as being less important than everyone else.

**Susan:** you were talking about how it's a third of our working life, and as you were speaking there, I was thinking it's probably actually more like half for a lot of women because Yeah.

I was in my late thirties, early forties when my symptoms started first. Mm-hmm. And. I hadn't been in the workforce like maybe I'd been in 15 years. I still had most of my working life ahead of me, really at that point, hopefully all going well. So it's actually a really critical thing for organizations to take.

Yeah.

**Laura:** And I think [00:14:00] it's caught everybody out by surprise in a way, which seems ridiculous. But because this is a new phenomenon, we weren't able to plan for it as individuals or as organizations. a lot of my friends will have had, I had my children a bit earlier on, a lot of my friends would've had children say in their, mid to late thirties and then gone thinking they'd be returning to work at sort of full flight after that, but then being surprised by going straight into the challenges of menopause. So, you know, we are, we are on a steep learning curve with this. so it's not surprising organizations are not optimized with this in mind and that there's so much work that can still be done.





**Susan:** that's almost a relief in a way. Yeah. It's not like a conspiracy. this is evolving. And I like what you say about women are not in themselves the issue. So how do we keep that in mind in organizations? Because I [00:15:00] think it is very easy to turn around and say, well, that's just Laura and what's happening to her, or that's just Susan and how she behaves.

Mm-hmm. how do we keep that front of mind? Yeah.

**Laura:** I guess, you know, the evidence is there that things are stacked up against women as the. Get from their mid forties onwards, and we are now more and more recognizing what's being called, the menopause penalty. so something that's been recognized in the past is the mother penalty, you know, that time out for childbirth and childcare can.

Put your career on a slower track, but actually, there's as much, if not more evidence that things kind of nose dive a bit for women from their early forties, that you can't just account for in terms of caring responsibility. And what that means in practice is that we see women are either leaving their careers [00:16:00] altogether, something like 10% of women will decide to quit their career because of menopause symptoms. many more will opt for part-time working, maybe not maximizing their earning potential in hours as a result. those that do still. Carry on working might find that, they're not working at their optimum, that they're not either being given the chance for promotion or taking up a chance for promotion and, wellbeing is suffering.

we see a rise. And sickness, absence and so on. So there's some really hard measurable data that shows that something's going on and those things that are going on aren't just impacting women. They're impacting the organizations they work for. they're organizing their productivity, their potential to grow their profitability, their ability to,

maximize service levels or reaching out to an older female market. there's [00:17:00] many, many reasons why we might need those older women in the workforce to be fully engaged and productive. And so there are some very hard, measurable outcomes that should be waking us up to this being important.



**Susan:** And I think one of the things, uh, you say this early on in your book is that, many of the women who read this, who the older women may not see themselves as older, and that's certainly the case for me. I mean, I don't categorize no myself as an older woman in inverted commas. And how does that impact our ability to continue to be our best selves as well?

**Laura:** I'm glad you flagged that because I did decide to use the term older woman in the book. And actually it was one of the things that there was a bit of pushback on from my beta readers, and I had to give it some thought. And in retrospect, I might have softened it and.

talk more about midlife women, but I think the reality is in a workplace, I, you know, [00:18:00] worked before in consultancy firms, I've always sort of worked in consultancy. I was one of the older people in the team, and an older woman, and particularly as a consultant, was older. In that respect, the older woman consultant.

So, so there is something about, yeah, you might not be old, but relative to the spirit of the organization and how you're perceived and where you fit, you can nevertheless be starting to tip into that older camp with a whole raft of issues that come with that.

**Susan:** Totally. And I think the perception is such a fantastic word.

And I think for anyone listening to this, it's often how you're perceived in the workplace that really has an influence. And if we're perceiving. Women at their prime. Yeah. As older women, then that's our loss.

**Laura:** Yes. And there's something very strange [00:19:00] about being older and a woman that doesn't happen when you are older and a man.

There's something in our perceptions of people's capability and potential and impact that there's a massive gender divide. So older men will be perceived as being more experienced, more capable, more wise, more amazing in every way. More attractive, even potentially. But if you are older and a woman, sadly, things don't stack up in quite the same way.





And we tend to be, perceived as less capable, having less potential. Being sort of less attractive, which we know has knock on effect for people's perceptions of other qualities as well.

**Susan:** And of course, who's holding these perspectives. That's part of the, because I think we, yeah, you know, that's the interesting thing.

If you think of the workplace or the workforce maybe being made up 50 50, perhaps it's [00:20:00] not quite 50 50, but are we responsible as well as women to voice this? Absolutely.

**Laura:** Absolutely. And I remember to my shame from earlier on in my career, sharing some of those perceptions and attitudes of

those people in the team that I perceived as the older women, when I was younger. this is not about pointing fingers at men. It's, it's, we, we all share responsibility for perpetuating, um, negative stereotypes and not challenging those. But, I am really pleased to see how that is changing, and we are just seeing more and more, People in the media, who've created a really wonderful platform around this. Helping us recognize the very real positive qualities that come as women age. it's not just a kind of, consolation prize, but a genuine celebration of the, the fantastic energy [00:21:00] and strength and adaptability that, that women who've been through all of these challenges can emerge with when they come out the other side.

**Susan:** So if I'm a manager or a leader, Laura, in an organization now wondering how to navigate this, not knowing whether people are going through menopause. Perhaps I'm female, not knowing myself. Or also men have women at home. Yes. menopause goes way beyond the confines of the office.

**Laura:** Oh, totally.

Totally. And I've had such a positive reception to this whole, the whole concept of this book, not just from women, but from all the men I've spoken to too, because everyone I think does recognize how important it is and, um, even if you are. Someone who's not been through it yourself, and many women are not, don't feel that they've been [00:22:00] negatively affected by menopause.



There's huge, individual variation, but whether you've been through it or not, I think everybody shares the same appreciation that this is a significant societal and organizational issue, which it pays for us to take action on.

**Susan:** Completely, and where do I start? So if I buy your book, for example, or I don't want to buy your book, but I want to know what to do.

I mean, obviously I recommend you read the book, but what's the way to navigate this

**Laura:** Yeah, so it's a complex problem. I mean, we've touched on a lot of the things that make it difficult for women to keep working as they age. and so there's not a simple solution. I think that's just the reality of it.

And, I'm a big advocate of systems thinking. Trying to work across the complexity of a problem. I [00:23:00] think part of where there's been a backlash against diversity and inclusions programs in the past has been where they've emphasized what would've been an overly simplistic solution where actually a more systemic solution is required.

So that sounds all a bit scary and unachievable, but what I've sort of aimed to do in the book is a framework that. Then breaks that down, into the different systemic elements that leaders can be thinking about. and maybe one of the first things around that is, having purpose around menopause.

understanding the reasons for taking action and making sure that everybody's on board with that. And then it's this openness, you know, breaking down the taboo. And I think there's been amazing work done over the last 10 years or so by various organizations and breaking down taboo, getting people comfortable talking about it.

And I remember in the past when I [00:24:00] first started going through it, I didn't feel I could mention it at work. And I'm certain that would be different now I'm absolutely certain, and that's, that's an important starting point. as a leader, you need to be, you know, opening up those conversations, getting comfortable about it, talking about it regularly so it feels normal, but also at an organizational level, shining the light on the issue by gathering data.



gathering insights on what women in your organization are experiencing and what support they feel they need, um, rather than imposing, a solution on them. And then there's all sorts of actions around giving women more power and control over how they work so that they can shape work in a way that suits them, actions that rebuild confidence that's been eroded through all this, the negatives that we've touched on, building up a really powerful community of support.

we know that [00:25:00] human beings are tribal animals. We do better when we're one of many. we do have to work hard to create community support so that to combat that feeling of isolation that many women can feel if they think they're going through that all on their own. Also looking at practical things, at a very practical, physical level.

what's your office environment like? What are your uniform policies like? so there's, some practical elements too. And then weaving that all together into a way that makes sense for everyone. And obviously every organization's different. some large, more sophisticated corporates might be able to

look at that whole picture and pick off bits of it and weave it all together. A smaller organization might obviously have a more limited budget and need to think, okay, what's realistic for us, given what we can afford. But one thing's for sure, I'd be very surprised if there's an organization where this doesn't make sense to do something.

And from [00:26:00] within that framework, picking something that's going to shift the dial for you on menopause.

**Susan:** Absolutely. And I think one of the things that probably came across most powerfully in your writing in this book was menopause isn't one thing. Yeah. And there's no normal menopause. There is no one size fits all.

And having a menopause policy it may not be suitable for everyone either. And I guess that's where the keeping the dialogue open is so important, isn't it? Yeah. And I, I think from my own perspective, I suppose experience, like what is your experience of menopause? And it's not that everyone needs to be able to talk about it or whatever, but if I say I need time off.



Mm-hmm. Will you believe me? You allow me that. And [00:27:00] if people have been working with you for quite some time, can you honor them that? Yeah.

**Laura:** Yeah. That's it. And I think you are absolutely right. It starts with that dialogue. there's. An element of trust in it for sure. and I've had some honest conversations with friends who are in the HR world, who talk about the challenges maybe sometimes of where, They don't feel that it would be the right thing just to say yes to every request. and I get that, I think from a legal perspective and, full disclosure, I'm not a lawyer, but there is, quite a lot of the explanation of the law in the book. but um, the onus is on the employer to consider these things.

So when somebody makes that request and they flag that menopause is an issue for them and that they have, a request that they think will help, I think you would be getting into hot water as an employer. If you just [00:28:00] dismiss it out of hand without giving it proper consideration, you need to be looking at what that request is and then considering whether that would be a reasonable request to grant,

Because there is that potential for it to become, liable for a claim in a tribunal courts if you haven't given it the proper due consideration.

**Susan:** Hmm. And, trust is such an important word, isn't it, Laura? Both ways. as a, as a woman navigating this, you want to trust that your employer is going to take you seriously as much as.

Yeah. If I'm a leader, I want to make sure that I can trust people and it's not always the easiest relationship to maintain, I guess.

**Laura:** No, no, I think that's right. I think that's right. And we probably should be honest that there's gonna be a situation where, where it doesn't feel safe to disclose,

And I think that [00:29:00] also is down to individual women and their situation to make that judgment that is this something that it's safe for me to disclose and ask for support on? many women won't feel that, and they will just quietly step back and quietly leave. And sadly, Organizations are quietly letting them



walk away and go without really doing what they can to open that dialogue up again and explore, what would help this woman to keep showing up, to keep performing, to keep progressing and thriving.

**Susan:** And I guess the other side of it is there's a responsibility perhaps as a manager or a leader, that if you notice someone's work. Isn't up to what it has been.

**Laura:** Mm.

**Susan:** And you're not sure why. Yeah. First of all, you can't assume it's menopause. Yeah. But also how do you open that conversation in a way that that invites disclosure.

Yeah. Or helps [00:30:00] direct the woman towards that who may not be conscious themselves.

**Laura:** That's right because very often we are sort of caught by surprise. You know, menopause can happen when you are in your thirties. And I think one of the things that that we've all learned in recent years is we think of menopause as something that happens, at the average age is 51.

So we think, okay, I don't need to worry about, it's till Lamb 51. Well, you might not reach menopause at 51, which is the point at which you won't have had a period for a full 12 months. However, it's perimenopause the run up to that point. That's typically the most chaotic and difficult, but you know, who knew?

So, yeah, so women themselves might not know what's going on or if asked might sort of push that away and not be ready to own that themselves. So it is a sensitive area, but I think the more dialogue there is within organizations around menopause, the easier it is for women to open that up [00:31:00]

**Susan:** completely and.

you mentioned a word like, well, purpose for you and fulfilling to continue to have a fulfilling life. I think if we've got that in our horizon mm-hmm. Then



aiming towards that always helps you to open up and to question, how am I falling short of that, or what's missing.

**Laura:** Totally, totally. And,

One of the risks of this, of writing a book like this is that you have to explore all the challenges. And so that can feel quite overwhelming 'cause there's like a long list of challenges. however, there are really positive messages to emphasize too, and for, most women, they will emerge out the other side of this period of um.

Their menopause transition feeling better than ever. it might only last a few months. It might last a few years. For some, it might last 10 years. it depends [00:32:00] on the individual, but there is a life on the other side. and so, emphasizing, what are we aiming for,

We want women to have their talent fully optimized through menopause and beyond not to see them quietly giving up and walking away with all that untapped potential just left there on the table, unsatisfied and unused. We don't want that. we want women to participate as much as they desire to perform to the best of their ability to keep progressing and with that earning what is their due, to set themselves up for a good lifestyle and retirement just the same as everyone else.

and. To feel amazing to thrive, through all of that, and it's a big ask, but there is a positive to aim for. And, within the book, and the, empowered [00:33:00] framework that I put together at the heart of it is our sort of psychological models of empowerment. And what gives us that rocket fuel to be our best?

And it's about control and having the ability to flex work the way you want. It's about feeling capable and feeling clear about your ability to adapt. as women, we have to go basically meta size into new versions of ourselves, but we are fully capable of doing so, and we need to celebrate that and grab onto that.

And it's about that connection, that human connection and feeling, support, feeling your tribe around you. who get it, who understand who've got your back. those are the things. That are absolutely critical for us being our best, and that they are things that are totally achievable if we change them.





And organizations that don't invest in those [00:34:00] things can actually worsen the experience of menopause. But organizations that do take action and put those things in place for women, we'll see women, much more likely to. Be their best and continue being their best at work. And to emerge it out the other side of menopause, still there, going into those senior roles, achieving brilliant things for your organization.

**Susan:** Yeah, absolutely. and I think what's interesting is you talk about men's hormones as well, so you don't just focus on, women having hormonal issues because men can have hormonal issues too. Yeah.

**Laura:** And I think humans are, humans are hormonal, hormones are in absolutely essential part of our physical makeup.

**Susan:** Exactly. We said this at the beginning, I think, and you brought this in right at the beginning, that it's not really. It is seen as a sign of weakness almost. And there's one sentence, I wanna read it out 'cause there's a beautiful [00:35:00] sentence in your book. and I've written this, one of my favorite sentences, hormones work in concert as a complex chemical soup, washing around our bodies in a constant ebb and flow.

And that's not just women, that's, yeah, everyone.

**Laura:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And somewhere along the line, we've associated hormones as something feminine and weak and mysterious and strange, and. Yes. women's bodies are fantastically complex. That's why we are so amazing. our bodies would not be able to do the incredible things they do without that.

And that's fantastic. and in spite of it, we are still. achieving brilliant things. in science, in business, in politics, in sport, women do amazing things, [00:36:00] not because hormones are not important, but with that complexity of our hormonal life, we are still achieving amazing things.

And, I don't think we can separate the two.

**Susan:** No. And I remember when I was going through my own perimenopause, a lot of people talk to me about insulin and how if you were,



needing your insulin replaced, no one would take any notice of that. And I think it is really interesting how these.

Hormones that we do have interact in different ways for everyone as well. Yeah. Because not everyone loses estrogen quickly. You know there's all of these different Yeah. Ways it manifests and, and drawing attention to the fact that men have hormones too is quite a powerful leveling playing field.

Yeah.

**Laura:** Yeah. I've got. huge respect for, Dr. [00:37:00] Louise Newson and all the work she's done. And that was like, you know, through all of the COVID years and beyond, many a walk was spent listening to her podcast and learning so much. Um, and I think one of the. Things that's really kind of emerged, which is so helpful from that, is how, we think of estrogen as progesterone, as female hormones and testosterone as male hormones.

And actually all humans have all of those hormones maybe in a different balance to one another, but they are important for our overall health. And so. we just have a tendency as humans to oversimplify everything and just say, right, you are this and you are that. And that's not how it is.

That's not reality. It's way more complex than that.

**Susan:** Yeah, and as you were talking about hormones there earlier, it, it also reminded me of emotions, how we dismissed that part of us, again, invisible as something that's too complex, doesn't belong in a workplace. Get it out. And actually what we're seeing now is [00:38:00] by bringing some of this in, like, I mean, I think it takes compassion as well as business acumen to write a book like you've written and.

Without one of those ingredients, the book wouldn't be Yeah. As powerful.

**Laura:** Yes. Yeah. It's trying to sort of get that balance and, men also have a hormonal decline. it's not quite as dramatic and chaotic as a woman's, but it is gradual and it is significant.



And the issues of aging and the work. Place are applicable to everyone. we've now got, I think there were the figures where 50% of workers in the UK are over the age of 50 and 25% of workers in the UK will have a health condition that is impacting their work before they reach retirement.

that's men and women combined. so the issues of aging and of how organizations optimize [00:39:00] talent as people age is applicable to everyone. Obviously in this book I've. Have chosen to specifically focus on menopausal women because it's this new phenomenon that we're seeing in the workplace.

But actually the lessons could be applied across the board. and I know of men who've had, you know, hormonal issues maybe as a result of treatment, for example, from prostate cancer. And so that can trigger all sorts of actually quite similar symptoms and challenges in the workplace. So for sure, you can.

I think broaden it out and, I think that's helpful in order to kind of engage everybody's interest. This is not just a female issue that we put in a box. And if even if it was just in a female issue, we're talking about half, potentially half your workforce or more. I mean, if it's education or the healthcare sector, I dunno what is it, 60, 70, 80% of the workforce.

So, this is not a minority issue, but even so, I think it's important [00:40:00] to remember the applicability to, to all people as they age at work.

**Susan:** Absolutely. And while there are still people, plenty of people who might find this uncomfortable because people find all sorts of things at work uncomfortable.

Yeah. And they'll just put this in with difficult. There's something that you said that your dad says, and I think maybe it's worth repeating for people here or saying for people, your dad's wisdom, if it feels uncomfortable, it means it's worth doing. So for people who out there after this conversation who still feel like they might get it wrong.

**Laura:** Yeah. What



**Susan:** do they do, Laura?

**Laura:** Yeah. By the book. Yeah,

**Susan:** absolutely.

**Laura:** the book's a book of two halves. The first half is all about why this is an issue, how the world is changing, what is menopause? How does it affect women at work? It's, it is the science behind it. The facts and the figures [00:41:00] presented, in a really dispassionate way that I hope everybody reading it will.

Feel is accessible, but really sort of helps them get it. the second half of the book is the framework, which builds on all my experience from psychology and OD and all of that. Wonderful stuff. it's the M-Power framework and that translates all of that complexity into a series of actions, things you can do on the ground that there's research backing for us to know that they make a difference.

And then what I've also done. Is, shared within their organizational case studies. I've spoken to a number of organizations who've already been doing amazing work in this area and picking out elements of what they're doing to show how it illustrates what I've put together in this framework.

so that. We'll give people some clarity and confidence. And then there's also, there's plenty of [00:42:00] tools in there too about, what do you say when you have those awkward conversations at a leadership level? What should I be looking for and measuring to monitor progress on this. there's lots and lots of practical detail like that, so you can use it as a toolbox really.

**Susan:** Absolutely. And of course it's published by Practical Inspiration Publishing. And Alison is all for practical Yeah, implementable things. And it's definitely in your book, Laura, you also have your own business brew people. Yes. So if people want to find out more about you, 'cause we've come to the end, if people want to find out more.

Where can we direct them?



**Laura:** Yeah. look me up on LinkedIn. I'm pretty active On there or on my, company website. [www.ru.people.co.uk](http://www.ru.people.co.uk). My work spans all aspects of leadership and inclusion. so helping organizations get the best out of what are [00:43:00] inevitably diverse workforces, how do we make sure everybody's able to show up and perform and be their best?

and so menopause is a feature obviously that fits within that.

**Susan:** Totally. Laura, thank you so much for, well, for writing the book, which again, I echo what I said earlier, that I think it's an important book for anyone in an organization, you will encounter menopause in your organization. Be prepared and, Yeah. And thank you for the conversation today.

**Laura:** Oh, thank you. It's been great. quite sort of exciting.

**Susan:** You need to get out more, Laura.

**Laura:** Really, really great. So thank you so much, Susan.

**Susan:** Oh, you're so welcome.

Thank you for joining me today on life, beyond the numbers. If something in this episode resonated with you, I'd love to hear your thoughts. And if you've enjoyed this conversation, Please take a moment to leave a review. It helps others like us. I discover this podcast and join in our conversation. Until next time. Keep exploring the human side of work life.

