

It's **Time**

to Talk

*long
overdue*

about

Race

at Work

and

EVERY LEADER'S GUIDE
TO MAKING PROGRESS ON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Kelly McDonald

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KELLY McDONALD

WILEY

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*To Liliana Ramírez, for all the brilliant insights from your brilliant mind.
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And to George.*

Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better.

—Maya Angelou

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Acknowledgments

I started writing this book in September 2020 and finished it in early January 2021. It was a dark time to take on this subject: Life and business were disrupted immeasurably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nationwide unrest, protests, riots, and violence seemed a part of daily life.

I am an optimist at heart—not in a rainbows and unicorns unrealistic way, but I do believe in hope. As the grind of the pandemic and faltering economy wore on, I found my nerves frayed and saw the same in others. I needed an anchor, a way of staying focused on knowing what I can control and what I can't, and a way of remaining hopeful when hope seemed like more of a concept than an actual feeling. I decided to anchor myself to the word *resilience*. Every day, I see resilient people, moving forward against difficult odds, facing their fears and obstacles, overcoming setbacks, and extending generosity to others. It's easy to be generous when times are good. What is deeply moving to me is seeing generosity when times are challenging.

Everyone had their own struggles, their own problems, and their own burdens in 2020, yet so many people helped me with this book. I needed their help.

I am a White woman, and I was writing a book about race and how to talk about it at work. I don't have the personal experiences and insights that people of color and other minority groups have. I needed different perspectives to illustrate a complete picture of the challenges of talking about race at work. In the beginning of this book project, I told a few people in my circle what I was doing and why. Their responses were immediate, generous, and, for some, very time intensive. From "I know someone you should talk to" or "I have an example you might be able to use" to simply "What can I do to help?" their eagerness to assist and their contributions blew me away. They contributed stories, insights, and experiences because they believe what I believe: *We grow stronger when we confront our problems rather than ignore them.* If we talk about our problems, we can solve them or, at a minimum, make inroads on solutions. And when we work with people who are not like us, we become smarter—and better. I believe this with all my heart, and I am inspired that so many others feel the same.

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