**Michele Rigby Assad Speech Topics**

***Unconscious Bias: How to Knock Down the Walls***

I'm used to assumptions. I've dealt with them my entire life. It is hard for people to merge the two seemingly different versions of me: an outgoing and kind person who cares very much about others-with the counterterrorism and Middle East expert. Most human beings are conditioned to associate a leader with someone who wields power in a more forceful manner. Those with sunny dispositions are often relegated to the second tier or the back row. This cognitive dissonance is a product of an *Unconscious bias* that sets our expectations of people's strengths, weaknesses, personality and interests. Our assumptions are based on a lifetime's worth of input, so this happens without our cognizance. We are not aware that this process is occurring.

In the workplace, *subconscious bias* affects internal processes such as hiring, promotions, leadership development, training decisions, and project management. In terms of operations, *subconscious bias*affects our marketing and sales strategies, product design, prioritization of projects, and so much more.

Learn the first steps to knocking down the walls to *unconscious bias* and creating a culture of strong leaders:

* acknowledge that we can do a better job
* dig deeper and get to know others better
* ask more questions
* determine whether *unconscious bias* has affected the way you've done business and identify one way to start rectifying that

***How Leveraging War-Zone Tactics in the Workplace Can Help Overcome Stereotypes***

Michele uses her experience as a female in the male-dominated intelligence sector to show how your unique personality and perspective are key to being a stand-out in the workplace. Despite being told that she could not carry out successful counterterrorism operations because she would never be accepted as a female by the terrorist sources she would have to work with, Michele turned this assumption on its head. She explains how she triumphed by turning her perceived disadvantages to her advantage in the debriefing room, acquiring intelligence others could not.

Key Takeaways:

* Understand why diversity is critical to creativity and success
* Develop strategies for disrupting the status quo and reframing other’s perception of your capabilities
* Discover how your “disadvantages” can actually enable you to shine in the workplace

### ***How to "Break Cover" and Break Through the Financial Chaos***

In today’s changing global economy it is not surprising that people feel a sense of instability. Every day there’s concerning news about what is happening in the stock market. Similarly, there’s a high level of on-going fear with terrorism that strikes to the core of our world. As an undercover CIA operative Michele shares her experiences, challenges and techniques of overcoming obstacles even through difficult and dangerous situations. She will walk through the parallels of the life of a spy and being a financial advisor.

**WHAT DEALING WITH TERRORISTS TAUGHT ME ABOUT BUSINESS**

***In this program you will learn:***

* How to build rapport using intelligence profiling secrets
* How to read body language to learn how others are experiencing you or the environment
* Learn to leverage a technique called “framing” to avoid confrontation and find ways to exploit areas of commonality

**MY ADVANTAGE AS A WOMAN IN THE CIA**

***In this program you will learn:***

* Use in-the-field techniques to turn challenging situations around so that you leave conversations in a positive way
* Leverage women’s intuition to gain an “unfair” advantage in high-stakes negotiations
* Ninja strategies to engage women and minorities in important conversations for collaboration and growth

**GOING UNDERCOVER: FINDING YOUR PURPOSE IN A DANGEROUS WORLD**

***In this program you will learn:***

* Secrets for escaping an attack or surviving an ambush that you can apply to pushing out of your comfort zone
* How “going to war” teaches you to manage fear and elevates your game to elite levels
* The role of faith in dealing with terrorists — and overcoming in life