

Dark cockpit

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

cockpit, book, aviation, people, pilot, flight, fly, communication, aircraft, feedback, octavian, communicate, email, captain, team, moment, message, immediately, listeners, person

SPEAKERS

Emil Dobrovolschi, Octavian Pentiş, Susan Heaton-Wright

Susan Heaton-Wright 00:00

Welcome to the superstar communicator podcast. My name is Susan Heaton-Wright, a leading impact speaking and communications expert. My aim is to show you how to make an impact. So you will be heard or listened to and respected for career success. Listen weekly to the podcast and go to our website, www.superstarcommunicator.com. Hello, everybody, this is Susan Heaton-Wright. From superstar communicator. Thank you very much for tuning in today, we have a fantastic episode, and I know that you are really, really going to get a lot out of this. I certainly got a lot out of the interview. But before we talk about this interview, I wanted to share with you one or two things about superstar communicator. You know, as well as I do, that superstar communicator is all about you, everybody, empowering everybody to present the best version of themselves in all business conversations, whether that is that you're doing public speaking, or pitching or presenting or meeting. This could be online, it could be face to face. But I am passionate about ensuring that you all show up and are the best version of yourself when you are speaking and having conversations in business situations. I work with people who are on their individual presentation skills or career development, or alternatively, with teams, whether that is that as a team, they're working on presentation skills, working on a particular pitch, or develop they're developing their interpersonal skills so that they can work more efficiently as a team. Please feel free to arrange a call either the person who is involved in organising training and professional development, I will leave a link for you to book a call. I'd love to have a chat with you, and we can discuss different options that will work for you. And individually, if you want to develop your communication skills, why not join us for the monthly lunche-and-learn which is always on the last Tuesday of the month. The way that you can find out about these is to register at www.superstarcommunicator.com/webinar-interest and you will be kept up to date with the latest topic that we're discussing. As I speak last month was how to say no with impact, and this month is how to listen with impact. Get your team along so that you can all acquire these skills.

Okay, so let's go back to the interview. I am absolutely delighted to have on the other end of the internet, both Emil Dobrovolschi and Octavian Pentiş, who have co written a book called Dark cockpit. And this is all about communicating, leading and being in control at all times, like an airline pilot. Now let me give you a secret. Emil is actually an airline pilot, and he has given loads of examples of how we need to be human. When we are communicating, when we are working as a team leader. He needs to reassure everybody who is on the plane that he is flying, that they are going to be safe. But equally, he

needs to make sure that his team work efficiently and they can talk to him if need be. And he gives an example of that: one of the challenges of the way that his industry works is that quite often, you will have a team where people have not met each other beforehand, and he might not have worked with members of the team. There will be people at all different levels of their professional development and yet he has to build a team quite quickly. And Octavian is a leadership coach and so he's able to bring in a leadership perspective. I found this particular interview absolutely fascinating because not only have I led a team of musicians over a number of years with my other business Viva! Live Music, as an opera singer and a classical singer, they call you the leading lady. In other words, there are situations where everybody looks to you for reassurance, and for the lead. And I absolutely understand where Emil is coming from because sometimes we have to reassure as a leader, but sit back and listen to this incredible interview.

Emil Dobrovolschi 05:51

Yeah, I'm in my uniform. I'm, I'm in my uniform, as I'm a captain flying for the Romanian national carrier Thuram, and I've been an instructor for the last 18 years, holding the privilege of European Aviation Safety Agency. And I've been doing this my whole life. So I'm a professional pilot, and I talk to people. That's why I'm here.

Susan Heaton-Wright 06:16

Oh, brilliant. So welcome, everybody. I am absolutely delighted to have two gentlemen, as my guests on the superstar communicator, podcast, you will get why I was so keen to have them on the podcast, you are going to get so much out of this podcast, we have a meal who is a captain, he is a pilot for the remaining airlines, and has been for a number of years, and Octavian who is a communications expert, a little bit like me, and a trainer. So welcome both of you.

Octavian Pentiş 07:04

Thank you very much for the invitation. And hello to everybody who's listening

Susan Heaton-Wright 07:08

to be here? Oh, it's absolutely wonderful. And they have jointly written the book called Dark cockpit. And essentially, well, I'm going to let them discuss this. Why did you write this book?

Octavian Pentiş 07:28

You want to start a meal or shall I

Emil Dobrovolschi 07:30

know I will let you take a please.

Octavian Pentiş 07:34

There is a huge treasure of know how in aviation, not only about how to actually fly an aeroplane from the engines perspective and aerodynamics, but also from the perspective of communication, and managing crisis and being in control and leading others just for information. Before COVID hit, there were there were around 200,000 flights per day commercial flights per day, the peak was on I think June 19, on 2019, where there are 250,000 commercial flights per day. Now you can imagine how

many things need to go right need to properly function to make everything possible. And if we talk about communication, imagine the huge amounts of communication that takes place between the tower and the cockpit inside the cockpit between the copilot and the captain. And then the planning and then the leadership. So there's a treasure of know how and we wanted to make this know how available not just to pilots, but to everybody who's not piloting a plane but were piloting their own careers or piloting a project, a team of some kind, because there's it's super useful what, what was there and we wanted to make it available to a larger scale.

Susan Heaton-Wright 08:53

Brilliant,

Emil Dobrovolschi 08:54

the books history began, like seven years ago, eight years ago, when I was I started talking in front of other people then my pilots or other people out of my industry, my airline industry. And we met both Octavian and me and we started working together. And little by little we came up to this conclusion that we have to write a book. Actually, he told me once Emil, your amazing stories, they are sending bridges through other industries that you should write a book. And I think for a second I said look, okay, by the way, Octavian is a well known author in Romania, and not just in Romania. He has a very good he has a very reputation as an author. So I said, look, let's Why not write it together? So we start writing this book based on my stories, and Octavian has a very good eye on thinking on seeing things that other people they don't see. Let me give an example. He told me once he said, Look, you realise that you have a new team every day. Yeah, in a large company, you can fly with a crew and maybe for a year, we'll never fly with them again. So we have to present in front of them as not just as a boss, everybody knows who you are because you have four stripes. But in top of that, you have to, to present as a leader in front of them, to help you in case of emergency and or just simply to finish your flight. And he said, look, you imagine that you are a new leader in front of your new team every day. And if you think like this, yeah, it's amazing, isn't it. And we do something well, to come up with a new team every day with a new leader every day, who express communicates, and saw things together.

Octavian Pentiş 10:46

And that, by the way, became a title in the book, a new team every day inside the book is structured on three parts. The first part is on communication. The second one is on leadership. And the third part is on how can you be more in control? How can you prepare and what to do when crisis hits. And in the second part, we're talking about leadership, one of the chapters called a new team every day, and in that we talk about five things that you do that you can do to quickly gain trust and keep trust, yeah, and to set the standards at a very high level so that you can perform together with the other ones.

Susan Heaton-Wright 11:18

You know, it's really interesting, you talk about leadership. I know in the next year, the book market will be flooded with Olympians who, how to win a gold medal and how to lead a team and how to win a business. And yet that is so far away from certainly my life. Yet this book is so relatable.

Octavian Pentiş 11:47

Yeah,

Emil Dobrovolschi 11:48

yeah, actually, we didn't wanted to write a book to show people how to do things. If they don't do like us, they will fail. Okay, so that we are just giving examples. Based on my experience, I have more than 13,000 hours as a as a pilot, and I have more than 6000 hours in the fly simulators, training and checking people. So based on this experience, experience, we just show a way to do things well, a way to communicate, because everything starts with a communication in a cockpit, when you start an SOP, when you start an action, first, first of all, is a standard call or is a call, this is a trigger a trigger for the action. So the pilots are communicating well, because otherwise, they are there being a possibility to fly. Actually, we have a very, it's a sad word that aviation history was written in blood. And for us, the Communication is paramount is a paramount importance. So for us, it's very important. And we know that and imagine the surrounding imagine the ambiantal surroundings of a pilot, we are sitting in a dark cockpit, not seeing each other to validate with our gestures or with our body language to validate the message, and we are looking forward, we have headsets on our ears, you hear lots of communication through the air between other pilots and air traffic controllers, and we have inter communication, you have lots of noises, and you have to pass the set the moment a message, which will be sent directly and it's without the I will say it's perfect sent and it's received.

Susan Heaton-Wright 13:36

Now, that was one thing that I was going to ask you about because obviously, the language of aviation is English and with respect both of you speak English as your non-native tongue. How are you able to make the English language an international language so that everybody that was is within the industry is able to communicate effectively, and to avoid any danger?

Emil Dobrovolschi 14:05

First of all, we said we are saying that in the cockpit, the common language is SOP is standard operating procedure. This is the common language to

Octavian Pentiş 14:18

be written which happens to be in English, by the way.

Emil Dobrovolschi 14:23

Oh, yeah. So it's very, it's very difficult because in a cockpit, you can have different persons from different cultures from different backgrounds with different education. So it's a matter of SOP to put them together on the same page all the time, the same corporate language is a second, let's say concern in a cockpit, because we have to simplify the the English language we have a standard phraseology. But in fact the standard phraseology and the standard calls we have them in the SOP. They are not Jose, they will not cover the whole situations. So sometimes you have to pass other way the message in sometimes you will let them pilot just pass the messenger in their own language if they are both Romanians, if they're both French, or if they're both, I don't know Italians. But most importantly, and to keep in mind that the the new team every day, composed by different people with different background and education and yeah, English, it's not so much as a concern, because you have limited amount of, let's say standoff for zoology to send a message between pilots.

Octavian Pentis 15:41

If I may add here something very, very practical that our listeners can take right away. And if they use it already, that's wonderful. It's important that people understand the same things to the same words. In aviation, there was a lot of research and study and practice. So when somebody says 100 knots, the other one says check or when one one says speed, in business or in organisations, people use words like it's urgent, this is urgent, would you deal with it? This is urgent. Now, they may both understand English and what urgent means. But in fact, for some people, urgent means I drop everything else. And I work on what you've asked me right now. But in for other people urgent mean means a "Okay, so more or less today, the latest tomorrow, I should get it done for you". So what is one thing that we can do whenever we have new people coming on board or work with the national team? Let's define some terms like what is urgent? What does success mean? We're going to have a we have to have a successful launch. Okay, let's be more specific. What do you mean by that beyond the grammar itself? But what is success? We want to be at 100 or 110? Or let's have a great party for our customers. Okay, what does it mean? Because for some people, a great party might mean something for other people, it might mean others. So the sooner people clarify what we mean by this, and by I want to have a peaceful evening, says she or he? What does it mean, we have to clarify, of course, the more people know each other, the easier it is for them to Yes, I know what you mean, when you say when peaceful, okay, I'm going to go fishing, I'm going to let you stay home by and that's and that's fine. Or, in other families, the meaning might be different or in in some companies when it's urgent, they only use urgent, when it means drop everything else and focus on this now. So the sooner we make we take the efforts to clarify the words and the meanings with everyone we work with, the better it is for them. For instance, a customer might say to us, I was unhappy with the other supplier. So I'm thinking about changing it and we're looking at you. Okay, what does it mean, they were unhappy with the previous, we must not assume that it was quality or the that it was priced or what we have to ask. So the more we ask, the more we make sure that we understand what the other person means, the easier it will be for us to be the preferred supplier that our customer is looking for.

Susan Heaton-Wright 18:14

It's interesting, because one of the questions I was going to ask you was related to how every industry has its own jargon, or technical terms. And in a way you've you've answered that. But how, within the aviation industry, how do you almost reframe some of your terminology so that people like me, can understand it?

Emil Dobrovolschi 18:45

So first of all, through our examples in the book, we are basically all my speeches are meant to send the bridges between aviation and other industries. So every time I have an audience and I know who I'm talking with, yeah, I'm, I'm calibrating my message. And I have all the time I have stories. Imagine I have stories in 13,000 hours, I have lots of stories in aviation. And I flew all over the world, I flew a different situation, I feel for a company I flew for, I was a test pilot. I was flying the presidential and governmental flights in my country and not just in my country. So I have lots of stories, they can send a message. Of course, for us in the cockpit when somebody says something means something for us the pilots, but it has a very good understanding for others. Let's say, let me say let me tell you a short story. If I made a cockpit and I'm doing something in a very crowded environment, approaching landing in Heathrow, let's say there are lots of aircraft in the same time in the same airspace, and you have a

limited period of time to communicate With a traffic controller, you have limited time to do obey or to follow the orders or to reduce speed or to descend a fee to the aircraft, you have to prepare for landing. And your, you know, two aircraft in front of you three other after you. So if you do a mistake, you'll just be put aside, you know, in a standby or something, and you will consume fuel, so it's a huge pressure on us. In that moment, if my copilot he or she might be unexperienced Abinitio, with 250 hours, if I hear them yelling almost at me, landing gear down, I realise in a second, that actually, I was called twice before to for the action. And I was so focused on my actions, or I was trying to, to cope with other my workflow, I had a huge amount of work on my shoulder. And I didn't hear yet. So this feedback of rice raising their voice and asking me to lower the gear, I will simply thank them, because in other places, if somebody which is who yells at the superior, or to the boss of the leader, I'm not sure this will work, but in my job, I will simply thank them, thank them. Because they helped me with this feedback. They found a way that maybe they said once we the lower voice or gear down, I didn't hear it because it was a another conversation conversation in my head sat in that moment, or maybe I didn't hear them, maybe hear they say again, low landing gear down, when they say landing gear down, and I realised that they, I missed two other calls, I will lower the gear and instead of punishing them, look, come on. We know you are who you're talking with. I'm your boss, I'm your captain, I'm more experienced than you know, I simply thank then after landing, we have no time there. So often, they say thank you very much for your Yeah, way to file to find a way to send a message for me to lower the gear. You know, accepting feedback makes my project my flight better. Actually, it's I know it's not intuitive, because we if you accept feedback or criticism for other people in your team, even though they are inferior to your position, this will make you better. This will give you a way to step back, you know, to have a good better overview. It was easier what were a workload actually,

Susan Heaton-Wright 22:22

what I sorry, Octavian, you gave me I just

Octavian Pentis 22:25

Let me just add what was fascinating for me to discover in aviation while working with Emil all these years and everything is how everything in aviation is focused on getting any problem solved and on the future. It's not on feelings, It's not on. That's why what Emil is saying is I'm not taking it personally. Why are you shocked? Who are you to tell? It's like it's it has to do with lending here. We have two lending here, now. By contrast, in many cases in life, something is being said, and we add a lot of nuances to it. What do you mean, and who are you? And why did he say why did he say that to me like that? What is he? What is he trying to say? I'm not good at, hey, just differentiate between what was being said, and what is just possible scenarios in my head in aviation, because they're very busy and things need to get down. Right needs to get done right every single time. They don't worry about all these things. And it's they're focused on solving problems. And if I may quickly add one more here about coming in, when what whatever communication is addressed to passengers is very carefully phrased. So again, if our meeting over a coffee with some friends, that's fine. But if you're designing some phrasing, for customers in an email, in the message, in packaging, it has to be carefully phrased. For instance, one thing that will bring about it in the unlikely event of an emergency, right? That's the phrasing that's being used about masks. And they don't say: "well, just in case we crash, there's a massive drop", because if they said that, it would be panic throughout the but no, in the event of an, in the unlikely so they that in the unlikely event of an emergency mask was come down, put yours first and everything right? Or is it

for your safety and security? Flight attendants will do whatever they're so they're carefully phrased. And this is an invitation for every one of our listeners who is involved in phrasing messages to customers, to new employees, to whoever to suppliers, even if you're sending an email or whatever, be sure to reread it. Yeah. And be sure to make Be sure to phrase it nicely so that even if the receiver will have the scenario, or habit that we said does not happen in aviation, even then they don't go too far away from what you were trying to say.

Susan Heaton-Wright 24:52

That's so interesting. It's I don't know if you know that my background before I was an opera singer, and backstage! Ah I suspect there are similarities that people shout at each other because there's something coming down. And, you know, it can be dangerous. And afterwards everybody hugs everybody else, because we know that in the moment that person was thinking of you. Yeah. And thinking of your your best needs. But I love the fact that your attitude is not being a leader that's full of ego. Yeah, thinking of the bigger picture, and you tell the story of that a new person that was very, very inexperienced in the team that you hadn't worked with. But they were very inexperienced all together. And they came up and said to you, look, the lights are flickering, the back of the of the plane. Yeah. And somebody that was perhaps less or more experienced, might not have been as happy to talk to you. Yeah. And I thought that that was really good that you didn't think, oh, this this is a junior, why on earth, are they wasting my time, but that they valued your contribution? And it happened to be a game changer? Yes.

Octavian Pentiş 26:20

Yeah. So a lot in a lot has to do with communicating in the right way. And sometimes it's not super sophisticated things. But the simple things done well, for instance, feedback. Yes. If if the tower says to the cockpit, maintain heading to six, zero, for instance, the captain responds right away or the copilot, whoever's in charge off communication, repeating the message, just to make sure that we tell you, we understood, we're fine. Imagine what would it look like, imagine if this was a movie where some action movies and one of the action heroes there, and there seems to be some trouble with the aeroplane and the tower tells the plane maintain heading to six, zero, and there would be no feedback from the captain. We would immediately think that something's wrong there because you can't imagine that happening in reality there's always feedback. Again, by contrast, in reality, sometimes people communicate something and don't ask for feedback, or we receive a message and we just say, Okay, but what does okay mean?

Susan Heaton-Wright 27:30

Does everybody know what they've got to do? And they go into go, Yeah, any questions? No, no, see

Octavian Pentiş 27:36

you next Friday, or whatever. But who knows what will happen from now to next Friday, because we did not take enough time to, to check everything. And what you what our listeners will discover in the book, if they by the by the way, for our listeners go to www.darkcockpitbook.com they can read a chapter for free chapter five, a new team every day, by the way.

Susan Heaton-Wright 27:58

That's Chapter listeners, I will make sure that I put the all of the links in the the notes so that you'll be able to access that and also by the book.

Emil Dobrovolschi 28:10

Thank you. The most difficult thing in a team is to let people know that they can give you feedback as a leader. This is because there are lots of constraints, okay, their educational constraints, you're coming from different parts of the world. Maybe in your family education is with the head of the family being a big figure and everybody has are subordinate to that, or other others. Other scenarios like this educational scenarios, but in a team when our people are so different. The most difficult thing is to let them know that they give you feedback. And this starts with a briefing they start with the first moment you meet them. This starts with your action because willingly or not the when you're Captain, you are in front of them as a leader and you're an example for them. So every time I'm doing a flight, I take it very responsible. I take it very serious. I'm the first there and repairing it before the flight so I know what to say I know how to present the flight details to them. I asked everybody else short questions to know that on the same page with me, I let them know that the flight is important for me as any other flight that the passengers are important to me. Doesn't matter the weather doesn't matter the small defects of the aircraft doesn't matter how many we are now because sometimes we are over numbering in a crew sometimes we are just minimum cabin crew or a minimum cockpit crew. So doesn't matter how many we are going to that metal tube with wings and seats and engines and systems and hydraulics and so forth. Doesn't matter if you have to the our mission our, our project is to fly the passengers from point A to point B, in a safe manner and comfortable, this is what we do. And as exactly I got David said, we are looking for the future, we are going to solve things. So things between us, of course, we are humans, but in the cockpit in the cabin, the communication should be personal. So if somebody sends me any feedback or criticism, I'm I'm immediately, my antennas are no immediately alert, because there's something wrong in my, in my, in my aircraft. And somehow it's, it's good for us because we are formed this way. Imagine this metal tube of flying at 11 kilometres in the air 39,000 feet, you cannot stop there, you cannot hold to the parking brake and solve the things like human do or what whatever that means, you know. So we have to figure out a way to let everybody knows that you are in the team, they are important for you, each one of them. The youngest, the most inexperienced, one in the back of the aircraft is important to you. That's you. So that's how you solve things. Because if that person there to give you the feedback, it's a successful flight for sure.

Susan Heaton-Wright 31:13

Oh, that's a brilliant answer. Now, I am aware that there is is a chapter really on fear. Because I don't know about you, but I would certainly be fearful in certain situations in an aeroplane as a passenger, but as a leader, and as the captain, how do you manage your fear?

Emil Dobrovolschi 31:45

Look, first of all, I'm human. So of course, I get afraid sometimes, because sometimes the only time actually when I went afraid was when my daughter was a passenger with me, she was nine at the time, my eldest daughter, she was back in, in the passenger cabin. And we went through some thunderstorm areas. So it was a little bit of moderate turbulence or so. So that that's my only time because I wonder what she was doing in the back, you know, maybe she gets a frame, maybe she's alone, because she was alone. No. So this is the only moment I get a little bit afraid otherwise, when people look at you,

because, of course, sometimes you have to pass through some areas of turbulence. And if you go, avoiding weather, all the aircraft in that area will go through that small corridor you are in. So all the sudden, you are in a perfect the smooth cockpit, and in 10 seconds or 10 minutes, you are in a crowded area, everybody shouting, and you cannot speak on the radio. And the weather is the same for you, everybody. And everybody looks at me at that moment, I cannot be afraid I can't, I cannot allow myself to be afraid that moment because I'm the last resort. You know. So this is one hand. On the second hand, when you see people getting afraid, you're more, you anticipate more because of your experience, I'm anticipating things more every pilot in an aeroplane, his mind is at least at least 10 minutes or 80 miles ahead of the aircraft. Right at least, if not more. Literally, literally, you're in the flight and you're drinking your coffee. It's perfect smooth flight. And your mind is always like this, okay, I have Alps, on my left, I have a minimum or the altitude there on the right on any aircraft. What if what if my engine will stop one engine stopped? What if both engine stops, this is what the pilot will think all the time chatting with the other pilot looking at your instruments, but this is in the background. If they're not doing this, something bad will happen. So for me, it's comfortable when I have to anticipate and people they look at me waiting for an answer. So I'm not giving the best answers all the time. But anticipating and having more experience will give me a more relaxed when I when I am able to think well to build my decision. Well, you know, we

Susan Heaton-Wright 34:19

can go oh, sorry,

Octavian Pentis 34:20

is very, very speaking of fear, there might be people out there who are maybe afraid to fly and have feedback from readers that after reading the book, that fear of flight as if not disappeared, that at least it has diminished. Because in the book, they discover the huge amount of preparation that go before behind every single flight. And we talk about how pilots are trained. And we talk about how many exams they need to take, and about the certifications. And Emil is an accomplished pilot and also an examiner. Every pilot, twice a year they go into the flight simulators. And they have to perform certain tasks if they fail. They're not allowed to fly. They prepare well, they don't fail so people are telling us all we read the book and now I'm even confident that those two people that are who are there in the cockpit, they know what to do and the the whole technicians and everybody in the airport, they also know what to do. And we talked about, we learned about how you communicate and how a plane is built and how. So we want it to open the doors to open to open the curtains, put it better, and take readers behind the scenes that will be to see the huge amount. Because when you look at the sky, it's nice. And it's not that complicated from point A to point B, there's every success, which is a flight has a lot of work behind it. And that's true in aviation, and it has to be true in our lives, whatever, whatever we're doing.

Susan Heaton-Wright 35:49

It's interesting, you're saying that because your credibility comes partly from your experience, your training, and the way that you are able to reassure people that they trust you. And as we speak, there is a big case in the United States of somebody who was faking it until they made it, which was one of these mantras in the early 20th century, 21st century, you know, if you the way that you make it is to

fake it, first of all, but we know possibly because we're a little bit older, that you've got to put the work in.

Emil Dobrovolschi 36:33

Yeah. Look, every time I'm behind the crew in my full flight simulator, examining them, I have instructor operating seat with two touchscreens and other controls. So I can control their through flight simulator giving them the exactly all the feelings they have in a real aircraft in five to 10 minutes, they are so into the flight, that if I if they crash or something, the aircraft the simulator has a crash inhibit button. So if they crash, God forbid, in the full flight simulator, they fail, but they will not die. But if this happens, they are so emotion and stress that we cannot continue immediately you have to wait for another 10 minutes or so. So this is a every time I'm sitting there, because they're so focused in, in their job in their mission to succeed. I can see their character sometimes, you know, because they're so focused their talent vision in a way to perform well. So we can see how they are as a human, you know, as a person. Some of them are selfish. Some of them or maybe maybe they are weak or in some some ways you can see these because they they lose all the armour we have all the inhibition we have when we are in real life in between our colleagues or in the family. We have some armour or some inhibition, we hide ourselves. But they're they're so concentrating doing well, that you can see how they really are. So it's really so say for me, as an experienced examiner. It's very hard to fake it. In the simulator. Yeah, rather.

Susan Heaton-Wright 38:26

listeners don't use aren't you reassured by that? Yeah.

Octavian Pentiş 38:34

They should be. Because even if they see, maybe they're waiting in the gate, and they see the crew coming, and they might see a very young co-pilot. If they see the young co-pilot coming to the plane, they have three, that young co-pilot, man or woman or is super prepared and trained and willing to be there. This is not like a normal day job somewhere processing paper, "I don't feel like it. I'm gonna leave it and I'm losing". Oh, no, no, no. If they're not the test or so because the stakes are high. Yeah, absolutely. You're carrying 200 souls with them, or 100 or 400. And then companies even can go bankrupt because of one accident if it shows that they did not take the proper precautions from all perspectives. So the stakes are very, very high. So companies make sure that whoever's piloting and CO piloting they're good, they're equipped, they're willing to be there. They're well paid, they're well rested. They sign a tonne of papers, they go to tech, they go through tests. So it's, yeah, it's not a job like just an ordinary other job.

Susan Heaton-Wright 39:47

And you, you know, there's so much emphasis on the preparation not exclusively, the training that you have, but the day to day preparation. It's like performance.

Emil Dobrovolschi 40:05

It's been said that in aviation, we when an incident occur or accident, there are many, many reasons up to 50-70 reasons or coincidences that we call in the book to for an accident to happen. And my solution to that is that the question is, well, how many good questions has happened when you have a good

flight, maybe the same amount, isn't it? If you put them on a paper, the way you leave your home, the way you are rested, the way you live your home, your mood in a way to the aircraft, the way you communicate and in your relation with your colleagues on the ground, the way you do your briefing, the way the prepared flight, everything this these are good coincidences, you know, every small caution that will address them the proper time in the proper moment, you know, not let them do not let them pile on top of each other. No, no, it's just a caution light, you don't have to immediately address it. Yeah, that's right. But what happened if you have more than two or three or four? What happened? If you are distracted? What will happen if something when goes wrong? Or from the sudden you have this amount and this amount? And this amount? Why? Why not address them in? The proper time? So this is my answer to, let's say, to those who ask me, How do you prepare for a flight? How can you it's hard hazardous? How can you be sure he will not crash or something? Because you know, it's not the flight are only for birds, you know, not for a big chunk of metals to fly with hundreds of miles per hour? Yeah, this is my answer. Preparing not just my training, not just my knowledge to keep all my skills to be the right moment, or a wide level, but also, day to day, the way I'm leaving home, the way I'm doing my job, you know, this is the way I my this is my answer for those who asked this.

Susan Heaton-Wright 42:16

So it's almost a way of life, isn't it? We talk about an athlete, for example, of life with their nutrition, the way that they trained the way that they read. It sounds as though there are similarities.

Octavian Pentis 42:32

There are many similarities. Yeah, there are many similarities. Yeah. Because it's it's it requires a certain level of discipline that you have to do every day. It's not like our on "Mondays I don't prepare because I prepare", No, every single day has to be approached in the right way. Told me that sometimes he was he had flights on Christmas Day, or he had flights on the birthday of one of his kids or he had flights when one of the kids was left home maybe a little sick. But he had to be on when his flying, his flying and I had to add pleasure to if I may give a 32nd example. I had the pleasure to be hit with him in in a flight simulator. And it was a different city we travelled we had fun with three more friends everything was fine we were telling jokes. The second we entered the simulator, I mean he became a different man he told us in the simulator is three step by three steps or maybe two metre by two metre a little room and everything. The second we enter he said okay, the emergency exits here which was the entrance was we just do so it was obvious that that's one of the guys in the room laughed and said, just the emergency exits here. Here's what we do. So while we're at the dinner, we are at dinner. While we're in the simulator, we take it seriously because that's the only way to properly do something.

Susan Heaton-Wright 43:58

Yeah, it's absolutely right. Now the book is called Dark cockpit you do have a story related to what dark cockpit is could you share?

Octavian Pentis 44:11

Yeah do actually let me start on another so when we began writing the book we did not begin with a title we said we'll worry later about the title let's focus on the content let's make sure it's valuable and so on. So we made a list of the subjects we want to cover, and by then I knew some expressions that we

wanted to use and things like that. And then towards the end of writing the book we came up with two possible titles: one was "This is your captain speaking" and the other one was "dark cockpit" which was an expression that appeared does appear in several times throughout the book. In the end we did not go with "this is your captain speaking" for two reasons one because we like cockpit more, but also because we did not want to come across as arrogant talking about communication, right? It could be interpreted like okay, you're "Shut up. Now you take notes because As the captain will tell you what to do", we will not do that because the whole tone of the book is friendly. It's Here's how it's done in aviation, here's why we suggest you do it. But in the end, it's here. So dark carpet is an expression from aviation has a little mystery behind it. And actually, it's a good thing right by the name if for those of us who have watched the movie, Lord of the Rings with the Dark Tower of sour on and other things, Oh, was it, but it's a good thing. And then I'll pass the mic to Emil to describe what it is, but it's an expression that is from aviation. And that fits nicely to all of us outside of aviation, it's kind of what we want to achieve. And Emil, we'll give more details, I think.

Emil Dobrovolschi 45:44

First of all, we didn't write the book for the pilots, or only for the pilots, we wrote the book for generic pilots for you. Because everybody's flying their career, everybody's flying their family, and they have they must have a cockpit somewhere a point or a place where they are conducting things. And cockpit is an aviation term, meaning that every lights, all the lights are extinguished. There's no emergency lights, which are red, and they are accompanied by a continuous repetitive chime. You heard it from them in a movie like "ding ding ding ding ding", that means there's an emergency, you have a red light blinking, and you have to immediately act on some systems, or you don't have a amberlite a caution light, which means it's a minor defect. You cannot, you can, he can delight. You know, there's no other lights like blue lights, meaning that there's deliberately set on like the ice in the aircraft, which means extra consumption. You cannot take it or give it to like this to stay like this for a long run. And all these relate to other people in aviation. Of course, you can have wildlife in your in your cockpit, meaning that your partner is on off, it was set to off or he's on off. But when you look on your overhead panel, you immediately see that there's a light there. So when you do things properly, when you run things smoothly, when everything goes perfect you're in dark carpet. Every time you have a light immediately saved because otherwise, everything is extinguished, you have already the lights that ambient the lights to let you see around you. But when you have a light in your cockpit, immediately you react and see the colour is a colour code, immediately you realise what the light is, but system goes wrong. So it's better to have a way to see it so quickly. Because it will give you give you the liberty of acting properly to let you think, you know, and on the opposition of a dark copy there's a Christmas cockpit as we call it, when you are you have in your in an environment where our the lights are lit. So you definitely cannot you cannot cope with this. It's a lot of stress. Of course your performance is diminished. Of course, your attention is very weak. You know, of course you are in tunnel vision for some items and you lose others you're not in control. So when you're in dark cockpit, you're in control.

Susan Heaton-Wright 48:24

I think that the analogy is superb. Now, before we finish the interview, I always ask my guests for three top tips related to communication. So it could be you know, my first tip is listening to everybody. I pass this over to you both.

Octavian Pentis 48:48

Super you want to get me on to start the Emil or Should I? Octavian please. Yeah. So number one, if you write something to someone, whether it's an email or a WhatsApp message or something, be sure to spend an extra 15 seconds or whatever it takes to reread it. And not just for spelling errors or whatever. But rereading with with the mind of the person that you're sending it to? If what are they likely to interpret that you didn't mean? So then if you need to add one extra paragraph, or to rephrase something, please do that. So before you send something, don't just say, Oh, I'm busy. I have 100 things to do. Yes, you'll have 101 thing to do. If they misunderstand something and they call you and you'll have to attend to that because they're angry or they did not get the message or whatever. So number one reread before you send it's for the sake of everybody, and we also like when we receive a message, we kind of like it more when it's neatly organised and so far. Number one, number two, clarify we get the person whenever you're unsure. Don't be afraid to ask "Excuse me. Are you saying Then or what is it", just make sure because it's better to spend a little extra time now then to spend more time late or to work on a direction that is wrong, and spend resources or other time. So these would be two tips. And number three, whenever it can be verbal, rather than written call somebody, especially to, if it's a delicate discussion or bad news, don't do it by mail, because again, who knows what mode might they might be in when they read it better to call them or even meet them in person, if you can meet them over zoom, it's or Google meets, whatever it is, it's very easy for everyone today, because then the communication is richer, you can see them, they can see you, you see their body language, and it's easier to navigate the communication.

Susan Heaton-Wright 50:45

Thank you very much. For those three, they're excellent tips. Thank you.

Emil Dobrovolschi 50:50

Thank you. So for me, first of all, will be the to accept the feedback. So the criticism, as somebody will call them. Accept the feedback, because this will give you the opportunity to see more, to perform better, and to take better decisions, if especially when you work in team in a group of persons. Secondly, is the communication in business matters should be personal. And focus on the future to solve things as a pilot, as pilot do. And third, be honest. Because when you're honest, and you speak frankly, and you're open, this will encourage people to to discuss more to communicate better. And this will only bond together better a team.

Susan Heaton-Wright 51:43

Oh, brilliant. I mean, you know, so much content just from those, those six points. Before we finish, can you tell the listeners a little bit about the book?

Octavian Pentis 51:59

Sure, the book is available on Amazon, in the UK worldwide www.amazon.com as a paperback version, or Kindle version. Soon, it'll also be available in audiobook version. But for the moment, it's these two, the book is a "how to" book right. So it's not a technical book for pilots. It's not one of those books that books that discusses endlessly the causes of the biggest tragedies in aviation. It's not a biography. So it's not meant to be a biography or a base for a screenplay with some Denzel Washington actor, or Tom Hanks doing anything. Not that we have a movie made after him. But that's

what the book it's a "how to" book it's practical. It has advice on almost every page, and it's meant to help people who want to go further and achieve more to go there faster and to do better, with good relationship and with a lower level of stress.

Susan Heaton-Wright 53:02

Brilliant. Do you want to add anything and Emil?

Emil Dobrovolschi 53:07

I will simply want my, our our listeners today to read at least the chapter which we put on the www.darkcockpitbook.com to get an idea about what the book is all about. Because when they realise how important to fly, or to leave in a dark cockpit, how important is to know your cockpit in that way. They will, they will love the book because the book it's "how to" kind of book but it's not giving, as I said previously, it's not something to look down on somebody to say, "look, we are doing this way and if you don't do this way, you will be wrong or you will crash". The book is very easy to read, and as I told so many times today, we accept feedback. We have our emails on the book. So we accept feedback. We are waiting for our readers feedbacks because maybe the book will become better.

Octavian Pentiş 54:12

Yeah. People are if anybody only from our everyone from our listeners today has questions of different kinds, or they're afraid to fly or for whatever the reason they want to get in touch with us. They can reach us in two places either on our corporate book.com There's a contact form. We see it we reply the next day the latest or there are welcome to find us on www.Linkedin.com/in/EmilDobrovolschi and myself www.linkedin.com/in/OctavianPentis were available there. Emil has it as his personal giveback effort to help people who are afraid to fly not be afraid to fly anymore. So if anybody is in that situation, we'd love to be in touch and help.

Susan Heaton-Wright 54:50

What fantastic human beings you both are. I have really enjoyed the interview with you the book. Honestly, I am really enjoying reading it. And listeners, I highly recommend it. I don't always highly recommend all of the books that are but this is quite special, and I know will be of huge value to all of you listeners. So thank you very, very much Octavian, and Emil for coming on to the SuperStar Communicator podcast.

Octavian Pentiş 55:28

Thank you very much, and all the best to everyone who's listening.

Emil Dobrovolschi 55:31

Thank you and be in Dark Cockpit!.

Susan Heaton-Wright 55:34

Yes, thank you. Well, I knew you would enjoy this interview. And I hope you've got loads from it. So as a result of this interview, what is the first thing you are going to do if you are leading a team? And if you are not leading a team at the moment, what are you going to do as self leadership, because there are plenty of things that you could start to do that they have shared with you today. So before we finish,

remember that you can join me once a month in the lunch and learns register at www.superstarcommunicator.com/webinar-interest I will make sure that I put the link in the notes for this particular podcast and there will also be a transcription from this particular interview. So if you decide you want to read it. So until next time, thanks for listening, take care. You have been listening to the superstar communicator podcast. Don't forget to subscribe and review the podcast on iTunes and on apps. Please contact us if you want to discuss any topic to suggest a topic for us to include or a guest who could come on to the podcast, go to www.superstarcommunicator.com