

## ***Disrupt Yourself Podcast*** ***Episode 22: Wendy Sachs***

*Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak and try to live all things disruption. My guest today is content strategist Wendy Sachs, author of the critically acclaimed book – which includes a shout out from Oprah – called [Fearless and Free](#). When Wendy lost her job in 2014, she discovered that her skills didn't seem to match what the market wanted. She wrote this book as a way to solve that problem.*

WS: I'm Wendy Sachs and I'm the author of [Fearless and Free: How Smart Women Pivot and Relaunch Their Careers](#). I'm also a brand and content and media strategist and I work with companies, um, VC backed companies. So I went to Northwestern and I was in Medill—that's the journalism school. And I really wanted to be an on-air TV reporter. Um, that's really...my dream was to be Jane Pauley on the Today Show. I'm going to be honest; I wanted to be Jane. I wanted that seat on the Today Show.

W: Good! A worthy goal.

WS: Yes. Yeah. That or Diane Sawyer so I saw myself either as like Jane: morning television or Diane: going, you know abroad and maybe, you know, dabbling as a foreign news correspondent. But I really wanted to be a reporter. I always loved telling stories; I loved interviewing. I loved hearing people's stories and turning them into something. To me that was very...that was my skillset even when I was in college. So I did do some on-air work when I was in college and then quickly realized that I wouldn't be able to pay my rent, because starting off in local TV was very, very challenging and you'd be living in the middle of nowhere, um, and I also fell in love, had a boyfriend. He was in DC and working in politics. So I got a job on Capitol Hill as a press secretary and I can assure you that I was the lowest paid and youngest press secretary on Capitol Hill in '92. 1993 was when I actually started.

W: Ok.

WS: I do...they actually published salaries—no one was making less money than I was. But I loved it and it was great experience and I did that for a couple of years and worked for two members of Congress. Then I moved to New York.

W: Why?

WS: Um, got married really young.

W: Okay.

WS: My husband wanted to move to New York too and I wanted to get into the news business, and again it was always sort of I loved politics; I loved news. I actually ran the Clinton for Northwestern campaign when I was in college and was doing other political things when I was in college too. So I moved to New York and I got a job at FOX; I was the investigative reporter on the new *A Current Affair* which was supposed to be a less-tabloid version and I ran around the country wearing, um, glasses and carrying a bag that had hidden cameras in it. And it was, by far, the most fun job I've ever had.

W: How did you get that job?

WS: I got that job because I ran into a friend from college on the street in New York City who said, "Hey, I know of someone and they're looking for someone for this show." It was...every job that I got is from some sort of serendipity. From some sort of interaction with a friend who knew of something; I followed up on it and I think every single job...that's how they all happened.

W: Well, and you had, you had the cred so...you'd gone to journalism school...

WS: Yes.

W: ...you'd been on Capitol Hill probably writing all the time...

WS: Yes.

W: ...and so all those skills that you had at that point in time together so when someone referred you, you could walk through the door.

WS: That's right. And from there I did [Dateline NBC](#). I met a friend at a dinner who was working at *Dateline* who knew they were looking to expand and I got a job as a booker at *Dateline NBC* back in its heyday. Um, then, you know, covered the O.J. Simpson trial...

W: Wow.

WS: ...that was my first big story at *Dateline*. I was there for four years and from there I saw that the whole dot.com world was bubbling up here in New York and I had friends who were at Doubleclick and AOL, and doing all of these things and I thought, "I need to get in on this; this is the future!" I was always sort of looking at what the future was, so in 2000 it was dot.com madness is what, you know...everyone wanted to get into the dot.com world and I had the opportunity to work for [Larry Ellison](#), of course...Oracle guy.

W: Yep.

WS: Who was creating this new internet computer company...this two hundred dollar internet box. And I became his media director. So that was my...I took my press secretary, Capitol Hill skills, now I'm in television and now I'm saying, "Oh, but I can do press again. I can do the other side of media again. Okay, I'll be your media director." The company wound up blowing up and I had a baby and at that time 9/11 happened and I was living in New York City and I really wanted to be covering the biggest story of what...of our generation and I was breastfeeding on the Upper West Side thinking, "Maybe I should go back to NBC; I know they are hiring people. They need everyone to be covering this story" and I agonized, like, "How do I get down to Ground Zero? I'm nursing all the time. What should I do?" I was collecting unemployment because the Larry Ellison company had blown up and that's what had led to me writing my first book, which was called [\*How She Really Does It: Secrets of Successful Stay at Work Moms\*](#) because I was going through that experience—I was struggling with how to have a big career and a family so that led me into writing that book and I had no idea that that book was going to push me into the whole work/life space. And at the time mom bloggers were starting to bubble up; that was like the new thing on the internet: you know, mom bloggers and brands with bloggers and brand ambassadors. And I remember sitting with my first publisher and she said, "Well, you need to start a blog," and I said, "What's that?" I had no idea. And I didn't know that writing this book was going to lead me in that other direction of work/life. And then that book is why I got hired to be the editor-in-chief of Care.com. So, after Care.com I went out on my own. And I started doing a lot of different types of consulting: writing, branding, messaging, a whole combination of consulting. And, um, had a bunch of different clients and then got hired by Grey and that starts...

W: Right.

WS: ...the whole story.

W: Okay, and so that...and then just has led you to what you're doing now...

WS: Yes.

W: ...which is working with relatively early stage companies and helping them figure out how to build the brand of their founders... in order to create value for the overall company because we all know intangible is sometimes just as valuable as the tangible, like with Coke.

WS: Absolutely right.

W: One of the things I thought was really interesting—I want to read to you what you said in the introduction and ask you some questions about that. Um, you talked about having...the fact that you had your position eliminated and then once that happened and you were trying to figure out what to do next, you

realized that there was a mismatch between your skillset and experiences and what the job market was looking for. Specifically, you wrote, “I realized my personal career pivot...,” actually I’m going to have you read it.

WS: “I realized my personal career pivot was going to be harder than I expected. I needed to hone my story; I needed to repackage my narrative and sell my skillset. I needed to own my experience but reposition my pitch. I might even need to take a big pay cut and move backward before I can move forward again.”

W: What happened? Where were you...what were the circumstances around this experience that you had?

WS: Yeah, so I was working at Grey Advertising, which in itself was a little bit random; I’m not an advertising person, but interestingly Grey had been my client when I worked in PR and they were, um, creating a content studio which of course has been all of the rage, you know, all of these creative agencies were trying to figure out how to monetize this new content model and they brought me in to be the director of content. And it was a fulltime freelancing job; this wasn’t, you know, it was...I had business cards; they even had me on stage presenting in their annual big Grey show/conference that they do. So it was legit; I really was running their content studio as a freelancer, and I thought, “Oh, this is perfect because my background, my industry is news, it’s publishing, it’s editorial; um, there’s also PR and branding and marketing. But I saw that the future of journalism, of writing, of all this stuff that I’d been doing for so many years, it was really moving in this new content direction, so I grabbed onto this position even though it was freelance; it was a fulltime gig with a good title. And when they figured out—when Grey figured out that they couldn’t actually monetize this...because they’re used to \$20 million Super Bowl, you know, campaigns; they’re not used to how to, you know, put a price against, like, an Instagram post. Um, and they weren’t really sure what they were doing; they just thought, “Well we need to be in this space.” So, um, I was given a few months’ notice; they said “We’re not going to be able to keep you,” and so I started interviewing all around New York City—at what I call the bright and shiny media startups in New York City thinking, “Ah, this is where I need to be; this is where it’s happening. It’s social media; it’s, you know...this is the future and I need to get in.” I actually felt...maybe this is the sense that some women feel when they haven’t had a baby or they’re not...you know, they don’t have a partner yet and they hear the biological clock ticking. I had a, like, a career clock in my head ticking, thinking, “I’m over 40, you know, there’s only...I have a finite...the window is closing to get in on this.” I really had this sense of this timeline because everything was new. So you’re at this place in time where no one is really an expert in social or in content marketing or in any of these new terms that everyone’s using. And I was following really closely what was happening with certain companies and what the industry vernacular was so I could talk the talk. And it seemed like no one really knew what they

were doing, and they just kept having to iterate with the times and I thought, “Well, I can do that too. I just need someone to hire me. I need someone to say, ‘Oh yeah, she makes sense for us.’” But here’s the thing: I was over 40, you know; I was easily 10-15 years older than pretty much everyone else at these shops. And what I wrote in the book—it was 2014 when I lost my job at Grey Advertising—that six month window when I was interviewing, wherever I went it seemed that everyone who was interviewing me had graduated from college in 2009, which made them at the time 27 years old. And there I was, over 40, trying to shoehorn myself into these jobs. And they didn’t really know what to make of my experience. I had, you know, what I thought was really, um, incredible experience, you know. It was like I had done so many interesting things and yet they couldn’t figure out what to do with all of that. They were impressed, but they weren’t hiring me. So that’s really where...

W: This is really cool for someone else.

WS: Yeah.

W: Yeah.

WS: It was like, “But we just need someone who’s three years out of college who, you know, likes to spend time on Facebook, you know. So it was...they couldn’t...I couldn’t get...and I was trying to really put, you know, capture how my experience could really help these companies and help position them and help grow them and I had the gravitas and the experience, but it still wasn’t working and that’s when I turned to Silicon Valley. That’s, you know, I think it’s our north star. It’s what we...it’s where everything is happening today; it drives our culture, it drives our entertainment, it drives how we communicate, so I thought, “Well, I really love that concept out of that startup world about embracing failure and I can embrace failure because, God knows, I’ve failed a bunch of times, so let’s start with that.” And if there’s something that can help women in their careers with that whole disruptive environment but also that idea that you can fail and you can grow from that failure.

W: So you talk about in your book how you had to, to repackage your narrative. How did you repackage your narrative?

WS: Well I needed my elevator pitch. You know, I mean, I think that that’s what I really needed to do; um, I needed to define what it was that I was and what my superpowers were and what my skillset was in a very succinct, one sentence, one phrase, almost brand like way, rather than saying ‘I used to do this.’ And also getting rid of all that former stuff; it sounds very old. It sounds sort of ancient. And something that I really struggled with was how many things on my resume I should include. Because when I started my career out of college, I was a Capitol Hill press secretary. And for many, many, many years that was really impressive and that opened doors for me. And I, and I write in

my book, you know, that to me Capitol Hill was like the Google of the Gen X generation. It really was a career opener; it really, you know, was...it was highly respected. And what I found when I started interviewing during that 2014 period was while...it was actually looked at in a much more dismissive, actually pejorative way. "You worked on the Hill? We don't really like politics around here." Um, so even how I talked about what I had thought was so prestigious around the early part of my career, I needed now to reframe all of that, maybe not talk about it all.

W: Do you remember what your elevator pitch was at the time? Once you recrafted?

WS: Well, you know, I think my recrafted pitch is that I sit...my...I'm at the intersection of smart content and communications and truly I'm a storyteller. So the through-line for my career has been story-telling. And once I was able to say that I was able to capture a whole bunch of the jobs that I'd had and truly was authentic to what it is that I do well. But before that I think I said, "Well, I worked on the Hill and then I worked in television and then I worked in PR and then I worked for Larry Ellison and I have digital background and I've got a tech..." It was like thing after thing after thing after thing and people said, "Well what would you do here?" So what is it....

W: So what do you do?

WS: Yeah, so what do you do—who are you? I needed to tell them "I'm a content and brand strategist."

W: Yep. How long did it take you to figure out that you needed to...rebrand yourself?

WS: You know it was all coming out of one really depressing interview.

W: Oh, please tell us.

WS: So, during this period, um, in 2014, when I was interviewing with all these startups in New York City, I walked into one space which was like a PR meets social media mashup. Which was actually sort of the perfect place for me; it really did encompass everything that I did really well. And when I came into that meeting and it was like a typical startup space, um, had a sort of a We Work sort of a vibe to it, like the place where we're sitting now—which I love by the way. There was dogs walking up and down the aisles and coconut water and kale chips and sort of a makeshift conference room. And it was after that interview with, you know, I mean a clichéd, bearded millennial in his flannel. And when he couldn't quite understand what it was that I do; when I walked out of that office on Fifth Avenue, I thought, "I need to change the way that I talk about myself. This is the moment when something's not working." And it

was a job that I should have been able to easily move into, but they couldn't figure out why they should hire me. I wasn't doing a good job of telling them why.

W: So what's interesting is something I talk about in, in my work is this notion disrupting and how each of us is on a learning curve or an S shaped curve and that whenever you're jumping to a new job, um, or actually you want to jump to a new job; you want to pivot, um, in your parlance, is that you are asking to jump to a new curve but you're also asking the person who wants to hire you to jump to that curve with you.

WS: Yes.

W: So you have to de-risk it. And so what you...that moment that you had—that aha, epiphany sort of moment was, "I've got to de-risk this for them, because right now it just looks like a big risk." And they have...they don't want to jump to the curve because it just is too scary.

WS: That's right.

W: You said, "I'm going to make it not scary anymore for them to hire me."

WS: I think that's such a great way of phrasing it. I've never really thought about it that way.

W: you talked about repackaging your narrative. What was your next job and did you take pay cut and in what way was it a step back in your mind?

WS: So really...so interestingly, I wound up actually going to a PR agency. Um, I'd done a lot of PR and when I actually sat down...this...I started writing the book proposal when I was working at this PR agency. And I sat down with the hiring manager and she helped actually reinforce this concept of connecting the dots. When I sat down with her and told her all...you know, she saw this resume that, to me again, makes sense; there's a through-line of storytelling, but a bunch of different things from techs, to startups to PR, to the Hill, TV production. When I went...I started practicing on her and I went through my new narrative, my new brand and she said to me at that moment—and this is a woman who had been working at this PR agency; it's a very well-known New York City agency and she'd been there for something like 20 years or so—she said, "If you can tell that story about yourself, then I want to hire you so you can do this for all of our clients."

W: Wow.

WS: Yeah. So that's when I realized, "That's what it is—it's my story." And I came up with my...my through-line is storytelling. I have done these various things but at the essence I can do this really well.

W: Which by the way, I have to say in [\*Fearless and Free\*](#)—your book—you are a fantastic storyteller.

WS: Oh, thank you.

W: I mean I...

WS: Thank you.

W: ...just loved reading...I mean there were one or two people in the book that I've met or know and just to hear you tell their story, to have extracted their story from them; it was very powerful and delightful.

WS: Oh, thank you so much. You know, I do think that sort of bringing people to life makes it certainly more entertaining as a reader and helps illuminate who they are and what they've done.

W: Right. Right.

WS: So I'm glad that you...

W: So I can see why...

WS: ...like that.

W: ...companies are hiring you to do that for their founders. So, okay, so, did you take that job?

WS: I did take that job.

W: Okay.

WS: Um, and, you know, it was from the beginning, you know, it wasn't really the perfect fit for where I wanted to be. They were pretty traditional and I was feeling anxious about being in a faster, more agile environment—something that felt really current. So ultimately I ended up getting hired then to go to VOX Media which...and they were doing some more what I thought was innovative work, particularly in their content and brand space.

W: So, and did you take a pay cut too?

WS: I took a little bit of a pay cut, yeah.

W: Okay, I think that's important.

WS: Yes.

W: So, so let's talk about this. So again, thinking about the framework of disruption, you know, I often talk about you take a step back in order to grow...you take a step back in order to slingshot forward. So, as you took that step back in terms of going to a PR agency, which wasn't necessarily your first choice; you took a slight pay cut. What did you learn, apart from the fact that you were employed and it's always easier to get a job when you have a job, but what did you learn, what kind of retooling took place that allowed you to catapult or to slingshot into what you did next.

WS: Um, I was spending a lot of time doing my own homework on where I wanted to be. You know, I do...and I talk about this a lot, and I think that there's so much truth to this, that everything we need to learn today, unless, you know, the exception you're going to be a brain surgeon or an astronaut or something that really takes specialized skill, so much of what we're trying to do in our careers these days can be learned on YouTube, can be learned online, you can read up about it, you can be able to be fluent enough in that industry so even if you're not doing that job right now, you can make that transition. But back to what you said before, which is really going to stick with me, that you have to take the risk factor out for that hiring manager for, you know, the company that you're going to. You have to explain to them why you are...you're the perfect candidate for this position. So I spent time while I was at this PR agency and they were doing very traditional PR which is what I had done previously in my career, and I thought, "Oh no, what I'm really wanting to do is moving into this branded content and storytelling with brands," and they loved the fact that I could write and I dabbled a little bit there, but really what I wanted to do was blow that out. And so for the next job move I made sure that's where I was going. And I was really able to talk about that because I knew again; I'd been reading so much and could talk about what the industry was doing so I sounded like an expert even though I wasn't coming from that position.

W: [Is there any position that you've had in your life where you look back on it now, and you think, "Mm. I should have left sooner"?

WS: not really. I think I've made a bunch of jumps probably faster than most. It may look like, if you look at my resume that I can't hold a job. But, it's...I get antsy and so I think when I'm feeling not very inspired I'm...

W: Yeah.

WS: ...looking to figure out what I need to do next.

W: Well, so, really, in that way, you were definitely ahead of the curve because I think people do do that much more now and you were, in many ways, at the top of your learning curve. And what's interesting in my research is that you really can only stay in a role—the same role—for three to four years at most...

WS: Mm hmm.

W: ...before you know how to do it.

WS: Right.

W: Once you know how to do it, your brain is not firing those feel good endorphins, you get bored, and if you don't jump your plateau becomes a precipice. And so what's interesting for you—and I love the title of your book Fearless, and then also the double entendre obviously is Fear Less—is that you have in many ways been fearless in being willing to jump to the next curve.

WS: Yeah. I mean, I, I feel like my whole...one of the things I write about is getting comfortable in the uncomfortable.

W: Mm hmm.

WS: And one of the women I interviewed in my book, Meredith Sinclair, talks about that, and when I looked up that expression, she obviously did not invent it, and it's something that the Navy SEALs even takes to heart. And I love that. There's something really, um, invigorating...and yes you're synapses are firing a lot faster—to your point—you're not plateauing because you are uncomfortable. And that is the greatest place where growth can happen; when you have to figure it out. It's almost like the start of any new job. Um, there's a woman in my book who, who I've written about actually in both of my books, and she's right now—I can't mention her name because she's up for a new opportunity—and she's really, really anxious about it. You know, for a bunch of reasons, but even the newness of it—it's a very big job. But that's why I say you have to take it because you're feeling anxious about it. You're going to be amazing. We have to give ourselves permission to be uncomfortable...

W: Yeah.

WS: ...and to know that it's okay. And to also know that it's okay to not be perfect and to fail. I mean, obviously I don't want my friend to fail in this new position and I'm absolutely sure she won't. Um, but to know that a little bit of that nervousness, and to take that risk, that's where that growth is going to happen and that's where...

W: Absolutely.

WS: ...I think millennials are better at that than previous generations because they're all looking to, you know, make change and figure out new things and keep iterating themselves. Because the industry that we're in, our economy...

W: They have to.

WS: ...they have to. You have to keep staying...

W: They have to. Yeah, they have to. I mean, I think about millennials; most people will say they jump a lot. And you think, "Well, you know, millennials grew up in a very different era than we did because they grew up in the wake of 2001.' They grew up, you know, the word company-man or company-woman...you know, my dad worked for IBM my whole life...that didn't exist. And they've probably seen someone in their life lose a job and so, like you were saying earlier, "Company loyalty? What's that?"

WS: Right.

W: So a millennial came sort of saying "This is my world and so, yeah, I'm going to pivot because that's how I'm going to be successful." What are you reading right now, or listening to right now? And I'd like to hear something that...something written or spoken by a woman and then something written or spoken by a man that you think is interesting.

WS: Oh, good question. I'm reading the book *Lab Girl* right now. New York Times bestseller; it's just fascinating. It's fascinating to see a woman—not that this is so, you know, unusual—but a female scientist running her own lab in a very sort of male dominated industry.

W: Sounds interesting.

WS: Yeah. No, I think it's...I'm really, really into it right now.

W: Okay, and what by a man are you enjoying?

WS: Um, I have that Adam Grant, the new Adam Grant book. Um....

W: [Option B](#)?????

WS: Not [Option B](#).

W: Oh, oh—[Originals](#)

WS: [Originals](#). And I've actually shared it with my son who is quite the original. So I am a big fan of Adam Grant's and just find that all of his...and the

sociology behind who gets ahead and success and what it looks like and how disruptive it is and how it's people who don't fit the mold. First of all, it definitely fits my son who is a teenager....

W: I'm guessing your son is 16?

WS: My son is 16.

W: Okay, because you said you were breastfeeding in 2001

WS: Yes! Good, you're...yes, you're doing the math.

W: Doing the math.

WS: In...I mean, interestingly, my son is very much my inspiration also, because he runs a social media company right now. He's making...he's actually making more money than I am right now. As I...I'm hustling my book.

W: For real?

WS: For real. And here's a kid who learns everything from YouTube. I mean, he truly does.

W: What's the name of his company?

WS: It's called [Yarnel Marketing](#). Yarnel, by the way was named after the emcee at his bar mitzvah.

W: Okay, Y-A-R-N-E-L-L?

WS: I think one L. Yarnel Marketing. And he's pivoted; he's run social media accounts for startups and for all different types of companies. He has brands coming to him. He told me he has a sweet potato company reach out to him yesterday because he's now running an account called Foodie. And he buys different URLs and he keeps figuring out how to grow the audience. This morning he woke up and said to me, "Since I went to bed last night I have 100 new followers." He figured out by putting...posting certain videos at certain times of day he was going to increase his audience size. And he keeps figuring it out. Here's this...

W: So maybe you and your son should go into business together.

WS: We probably should because...

W: Clearly.

WS: ...he...and it just, it goes into again the mindset of, you know....

W: It goes into mindset, but I also think there's a really important lesson here, which is that, you know, we talk about modeling for our...for people...and...this isn't—I'm going to say something and then I'll kind of tie it back; I'm going to figure out how to tie it back—but Carl Jung said that, "The greatest influence on a child is the un-lived life of a parent." I also think that our children, they really do sort of inhabit a world that we helped create for them. And so, it sounds like your son is very precocious and very impressive but he grew up in a seedbed that you created for him. And so I think that's super exciting and when I'm making this joke about you going into business but I'm not actually...

WS: I think it's a brilliant idea.

W: ...entirely joking.

WS: Right.

W: I mean, it could be really fun.

WS: I think that's a brilliant idea. And he truly isn't afraid of anything. I mean, so that's again, yes, he has an entrepreneurial spirit, yes, he's super curious about and obsessed with technology and all things Apple and listens to all of these blogs and videos by...of, you know, Apple tech experts and C-Net videos and all this. But he's learning it all; he hasn't been trained. No one has taught him how to run a business. He has figured it out for himself. And it...I mean, it's...

W: He's a disruptor. Love it.

WS: He's a disruptor.

W: Love it. You know, the, the, the whole idea, or the theory of disruption is that the odds of success are 6x higher, the revenue opportunity 20x greater when you pursue a disruptive course. And one of the main ways you do that is you play where no one else is playing. And that's what he's done. W: And I love that you have actually modeled that for him.

WS: And I love that you're telling me that I've modeled that for him because nothing makes me happier than to feel like I might have been a piece of that.

W: What are you going to do to disrupt yourself in 2017? Or over the next twelve months.

WS: You know, I'm really going down this path of figuring out how to, um, monetize my skillset in different ways and I, you know, I've never had

experience with meeting with venture capitalists that way that I'm doing now. And, it was interesting...I was very much inspired by South by Southwest this year. And after talking to lots of people down there and meeting with lots of new people and, clearly, my book came out and feeling fearless, um, started setting up meetings with VC partners, which was a really new path for me. To really look for new opportunities, to...I loved how you were telling me, you know, 6x, you know, and revenue models and...success models and all that when you start really disrupting and owning a space; that's what I'm looking to do and that's where I am right now.

W: And you will; I have no doubt. And I think you're going to end up hiring your son, so...Wendy, thank you very much. This has been so fun. And remember her book is [\*Fearless and Free: How Smart Women Pivot and Relaunch Their Careers\*](#), but I would argue after reading it that it really isn't just for smart women; smart men are going to read this book too, because I think people...anybody who is looking to pivot or relaunch will find inspiration and some really good tactical advice in here. So thank you again.

WS: Oh, thank you so much.

*Going into the conversation with Wendy, I thought she would say her skills were obsolete, which wasn't true. Some were, but what was actually irrelevant or obsolete was how she talked about her skills – like having been a press secretary on Capitol Hill.*

*Every few years, are we taking another look at our own narrative – whether professionally or personally. Because whether you disrupt yourself or are disrupted, you're jumping to a new learning curve, trying to get a new job – you're asking the person who you want to hire you to also jump to a new curve. There is no way that they're going to jump unless you pack a parachute – one that de-risks for them the hiring of you.*

*I also thought that it was really interesting how when she left Grey Advertising, her next job wasn't the ideal job. It was a step back in terms of prestige, even pay, which isn't surprising. But what is surprising for me is that she took a step back in giving herself mental space. She had to earn a living, because she needed to put food on the table, but she allowed herself time to think, to plan, to prepare, so that she could slingshot into the next job.*

*And yes, you may have noticed I've definitely got a bee in my bonnet about she and her son collaborating. Remember how at the beginning of the conversation, she said that there were some things she didn't know how to do? But guess who does? Her 16-year-old son! In the branding she does of venture-backed CEOs, why not partner with a digital native – that just so happens to be her son?*