

Disrupt Yourself Podcast ***Episode 23: Lolly Daskal***

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak and live all things disruption. My guest today is Lolly Daskal - executive coach, and author of the book [The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness](#). In this episode, we take a look at the seven leadership archetypes she identifies in her book and how people lean on them for greatness. We also turn the coin of the archetype over and look at how these hold us back. It's both a fun and interesting conversation.

L: My name is Lolly Daskal and I'm a leadership coach and business consultant.

W: Welcome to the podcast! I'm so happy to have you!

L: Whitney, I'm so excited to be here.

W: You have just written a book called [The Leadership Gap](#) and the idea of this book is, if I understand it correctly, is that leaders stick with what they know, even after what they know has stopped working for them.

L: Right.

W: Tell us more.

L: So that is one of the three very important concepts in the book. So, what we...what I've realized and what I've come upon as being a coach for some of the most famous Fortune 500 CEOs—they have gotten to where there at by certain strengths that they've had, but what happens is, sometimes they want to take themselves to the next level and they find themselves stuck or they find themselves feeling...like a feeling like something isn't right. It's not stuck, but it's almost like a yearning or a longing and they don't know what it is. And most of the time it's that they rely on what has gotten to them, where they need to be, but now that they want to go to the next level, they don't know what to do.

W: Why do you think that happens and, and then the follow-on to that would be, is as a coach, what do you recommend they do?

L: Most of us rely on our skills. Most of us say, "How do I need to do something? I want to become something; tell me how to do it and then I will create it and I will make it happen." But they're missing a very important point - is that when we talk about business, when we talk about success, when we talk about leadership we're so busy having the conversation of tell me how, tell

me when, tell me where and even tell me why. But as a student of psychology and a student of philosophy, I know that that's not the most important question. The most important question is 'who.' Who are you going to be? Because if you know who you're going to be then the how, the what, the when, even the why starts to make sense. I always say, "Get your leadership right; get yourself right to get your business right." And that's what this book is about. The core of this book...someone said the other day is about the seven who's, but it's really about the seven archetypes. Who do you need to be to take yourself to the next level and in my language to take yourself to greatness.

W: Interesting. Alright. So let's...let's go straight into the archetypes in the book that you talk about. And, can you share with us what those archetypes are? And talk briefly through them. So, let's start there; why don't you just enumerate them so people can kind of have a container for the conversation that we're going to have.

L: Absolutely. And before I even dive into the archetypes; there's something interesting about these archetypes. Most people will talk about archetypes in leadership and in business books; I've seen that. But what's different about this book is I highlight that within each archetype is a polarity of character. This is the part, this leadership gap is the answer to all those people that say, "Why am I not getting to where I need to get? Why am I stuck? Why do I have this yearning?" So, as we dive into this, you might think that the leadership gap sounds harsh or might sound like this is not you; I just want you to have an open mind, because when we're stressed; when we're challenged, when we feel stuck we tend to go into those defaults of the leadership gap without even knowing it. So the leadership gap actually is a rethink model.

W: Okay.

L: The seven archetypes - [the Rebel, Explorer, Truth Teller, Hero, Inventor, Navigator and Knight](#).

W: Alright.

L: But, what's important here is not so much about the archetypes; it's about the virtue that comes with this archetype. So the Rebel is driven by confidence. In times of stress, has a leadership gap of the Impostor who has self-doubt.

W: Play it out for us because I think, I think especially when I think about disruption and oftentimes a disruptor is a person who's a rebel, because they're playing where no one else is playing, or no one has thought of playing. So, a lot of people who are listening to this conversation I think are going to say, "Okay, I kind of see myself as a rebel," so play this out for us what that looks like; what the archetype or the virtue and the confidence in the rebel is, but also how they can self-sabotage.

L: What a great question, because the rebel is a disruptor, so perfect, on point. So, the rebel is someone who wants to change the world, wants to make an impact on the world in a truly significant way. They are tired of the status quo. And most people say, “Well, you need to have confidence.” But people I think misunderstand what confidence is. Because I have found that confidence truly is—and this is the equation—competence plus capability will give you confidence. Because confidence is believing you’re able. But competence is knowing you’re able and when you know you’re able that’s where the disruptor happens; that’s when the rebel really happens.

W: So, the confidence is when you’re learning, as you accelerate into competence with that comes confidence. So you’re saying, “Don’t say I’m confident; get competent and then you’ll be confident.”

L: So on point. You said it more...that was very eloquent. Exactly. You have to get competent and you have to create competencies, right, to have those capabilities. Always be mastering more in order to get that confidence because the world is changing fast and to be a disruptor, to be a rebel, you have to keep up with the times. You can’t be a kind of person that says, “Oh these were my skills in 1980” and then wonder why in 2017 you’re not taking yourself to the next level.

W: Okay, so that’s got now...that’s gotten you to a certain level.

L: Absolutely.

W: But you’ve got a client and they’re saying “Lolly, I’m stagnating. What do I do?” and then you say to them...?

L: You’re leading from your leadership gap, because if you are stuck, you’ve allowed the gap of who you are in your leadership to take over. And that is the Impostor who has self-doubt. The Impostor comes from the [Impostor Syndrome](#); the drive of that is comparing ourselves to others. If you’re constantly looking over your shoulder and saying, “Look at her; look at him,” what happens is that you feel that you’re not measuring up and then you start feeling like a fraud and then you start feeling like an impostor and then you start feeling not as smart. And the truth is, research shows that 99.1% of high achieving individuals suffer from the Impostor Syndrome. It happens to all of us and I’m included also. There are times when I’m in certain situations where I feel like, “Oh, I don’t know if I can do this.” And I start to have self-doubt and then I remind myself, “Lolly, you have the competence and you have the capabilities, and rely on that to show up in confidence.” Because if I’m going to say, “I’m the best and I’m the greatest,” that won’t help the situation. I go back to the core of my capabilities and I bring back to the situation. The Impostor who has self-doubt is so busy looking over their shoulder constantly that they

can't work on themselves. If we're constantly looking at someone else—what happens is we're not working on ourselves.

W: So, what's interesting about this is, is I pull this back to my listeners who are thinking about the S-curve in their brain, and moving along their personal learning curve. What I hear you saying is that if you decide who you are, which is the Rebel, and your virtue is confidence, then that's going to allow you to move along the low end of the curve into this sweet spot of the curve. Right at the time where you're firing on all cylinders, maybe even approaching the top, you start letting the leadership gap...you start looking, "How am I doing? How am I doing?" Looking at your left and right—self-impostor...or the Impostor Syndrome rears its ugly head and you potentially slide back down the curve. And so, what you're saying then is, if you can be aware of the Impostor, you can move up the curve. Now, help us understand, how does that awareness of the Impostor actually move you up the curve...or move you forward?

L: I like the way you describe that and it's very interesting that you describe it, because I describe it a little bit different but I love your analogy. I think of it this way: each one of us has a polarity of character; we always have the light and the dark. We always have the strength and we always have the weakness.

W: [Carl Jung](#).

L: That's...absolutely. My mentor. Everything is based on that; that's where this comes from. It's not my work; it's all about Jung. The thing is that we have a choice in the moment. At any given moment, anyone of us can ask, "Do I want to stand on my greatness, which is the Rebel, or do I want the Impostor, which is my leadership gap to take over?" And knowing the difference—the polarity of character—gives us more control of our lives; gives us more choices in our lives. People always come to me and say, "I have no control. I have no choices." That's not true. If you know this system, at every moment, at every meeting, in every encounter you can ask yourself, "Who do I need to be?" And even if the Impostor shows up, we know what it takes to be confident, so all we have to do is go back to that.

W: And do you think that the Impostor piece when it, when it shows up—I mean if you think about it from a psychological perspective, kind of the dark side—do you think it's giving you information?

L: Brilliant. Absolutely. I think there's been a big disservice in the...I think in the past couple of years, which is only concentrate on your strengths, because your weaknesses, if you leverage them, as you just said so beautifully, gives you information; it gives you knowledge. It gives you the information of what you need to work on. I don't mind feeling like an impostor because I know that I have a choice of how that I'm going to show up. So even though I might feel

like an impostor, the information is tap into your capabilities and your competence and you'll be fine.

W: Is there...as you go through your coaching do you find that people—CEOs in particular—fall into any one category more often than not? Or do you find that it's pretty evenly distributed between these seven archetypes, or virtues?

L: I'm so happy that you asked me that question, Whitney. It's a brilliant question. Why? Because most people will be thinking that. They'll want to know which archetype do I lean into. Because that's how we have been groomed to think. I'm only one; I'm not something else. Let's go back to Jung and what does he say? We're the sum of all our parts. And interestingly enough, this book is more about the virtues than anything else. There are personas in this book; there are archetypes in this book, but it's the behavior, it's the virtue that really matters. And these seven archetypes stand for truth and trust and honesty and integrity and loyalty. So do we have all these virtues within us? Yes. Do we choose them all the time? We might not. But it's important to choose them in a given moment of what the opportunity calls for. And it's interesting that you said you read the book; you said, "oh, nope, this is not me, this is not me," and I find my clients say that to me all the time because it's hard for us to see ourselves sometimes the way other people see us.

W: Mmmm.

L: And someone...like if we take the Explorers—always about being intuitive—the leadership gap is the Exploiter, who manipulates. Nobody wants to see themselves as an exploiter who manipulates, but when times are stressed, when times are challenged or when you feel things are out of control, we try...as human beings we try to rein things in and we might say something that is manipulative, that is exploiting someone and we don't even realize it. That's why this leadership gap—this book—is so important, because it does get between us and our greatness. And without having this awareness we might say, "oh that's not me." But if you understand the driver of when it shows up and rears its head—it's us.

W: So, in your work you reference Carl Jung and [Joseph Campbell](#). Um, I venerate them as well. Probably...I don't know that I've studied them to the extent that you have...but could you talk about how they've actually influenced your work and just share with us a little bit more about how the light and the dark are important, how, you know in some religious traditions we talk about opposition in all things and certainly in psychology we talk about the light and the dark and yet we're so quick to disdain the dark, to try to find scapegoats so we don't need to look at that, that side of ourselves. So just talk a little bit about how they figure into and inform the work that you do.

L: Everything stems from the work of my three mentors: [Viktor Frankl](#), Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung. Everything that I've ever taught, every coaching practice, every session, every call is based upon their psychology and philosophy. Think about it this way—you can't have a shadow without a light. If you look at the sun, right; what does the sun do, the bright, beautiful sun creates shadows all the time. And it's the same thing in this mythology, is that you need to have one, because you can't have the other. It's almost like you won't understand happiness if you haven't gone through sadness. You won't appreciate your strengths if you haven't suffered from your weakness. I am not a one-sided coin human being. I have two sides and I have to learn to integrate them—not balance—integrate them both to be the whole person.

W: For people who are listening who are now saying “I want Carl Jung and Viktor Frankl and Joseph Campbell to mentor me” what book or what...what would you recommend people listen to or watch or read as a way to, to meet them for the first time?

L: Absolutely. Viktor Frankl: [Man's Search for Meaning](#); Carl Jung: [The Undiscovered Self](#); and Joseph Campbell: *The Hero's Journey* and I think it's called [The Hero of a Thousand Faces](#).

W: It is.

L: And if you read these three books, I guarantee you that your life will never be the same. It changed my whole perspective.

W: How old were you when you read these books?

L: Young. I was very young.

W: One of the things you say in your book is that everyone has a responsibility to question who they are, who they are being while they are leading. Um, what do you mean by this and how do we do this? And, and before you answer that question, I want to ask you another question, which I think is important—I want people to understand how you've got to answering and asking these questions. Again, in your book you talk about having come from an Orthodox Jewish background in New York City, um, where you began to question everything; you studied everything. Talk to us a little bit about that because our life work is often driven by a problem that went unsolved, or a question that we had, as a child. So help us kind of weave together your background to now this question of 'who am I being while I'm leading?'

L: So when I grew up we weren't really allowed to ask questions and if we asked questions most of the time the answer was because I said so and because it needs to be this way. Which is fine if you're not as curious as I am, and it really bothered me because I wanted to understand it and it left me wanting. It left

me with a void and, um, there's this, um, Hebrew word that is used in our community. It's called an apikoros? An apikoros is someone who asks questions of something that is a given; of a truth. And it wasn't because I was asking a question because I wanted to say it wasn't a truth; I was asking because I wanted to understand. And there's a big difference.

W: Absolutely.

L: There's one thing to challenge something and there's one thing to understand. But sometimes people look at as wanting to understand as a challenge. And this void left a very big whole in my life as a youngster, because we studied when I was younger Gemara and Talmud and when you are a student of Talmud and Gemara the whole thing about learning that way is that you're always asking questions. What is the layer? There's a whole study of Gematria which is numerology; what do these letters mean? So there is a questioning but they always want to get to the same answer.

W: Ah.

L: And for me that was great, but was there more? Is there another God? Is this really the right way? Is this my way?

W: So basically, as a child you were...you had all these questions; you weren't...and what's interesting about that is when you're at the low end of a learning curve, when you're first starting out, people have questions. They're "why do we do it like this? How come it looks like this? How come it looks like that?" And there's a tendency for someone who, who's a manager for example, to think you're challenging when in fact you're just asking questions.

L: Brilliant.

W: And that's what you were doing; you were asking questions but it threatened...it was threatening at some level perhaps.

L: So I wanted...

W: Or annoying at the very least.

L: ...so I really want to say something and this is a P.S. or this is a footnote: there's nothing wrong for a group of people to think a certain way. I am not saying anything negative about a group of people. It just didn't work for me.

W: Right, so I think it's important because, you know, just to kind of have this...to kind of play this out, is that I'm very religious and I'm very much a believer in God and I think it's an important question for people to ask; I mean, we have children and we have people who say "do you believe in God? Is there

a God? What does that mean?” And being able to...in fact, I had a person the other day say to me, “Do you really believe all that stuff?” And I said to her, “You know, I do. Um, but it’s a good question that you’re asking me that because when I was growing up the question was always was, ‘well, which church is right? And I realized that for me, I have to basically up my game, if you will, of being able to say, “I believe in God and this is what God looks like to me and be able to logically explain that so that I can have a conversation with someone who doesn’t necessarily believe in God. So, I think, I think going back to the experience you were having growing up, we were in a different generation, so when you were having those questions, that was just completely foreign to your parents. Like, what...? I don’t even know what to do with this. And so, I think oftentimes when, again, going back to the disrupt or disrupted, people are asking these questions that we don’t know what to do with and so you were having these questions; you weren’t getting the answers that you needed and so...but, but the fundamental thing for you is that you’re a questioner. You ask, you wonder, you want to know; you’re a seeker. And so, I think there’s a lot of things for us to tease out of this, but I think that that’s a really important thing is to allow the people in our lives, either our children or the people who have just started working for us to ask questions and to recognize, as you said, they’re not challenging us; they’re just curious.

L: Great point, great point. And that applies to life, leadership and business. When people come to us with questions how are we going to react? And that takes us to one of the archetypes actually.

W: Good!

L: One of the archetypes is The Navigator. The Navigator is someone who is very smart, who is someone pragmatic and practical. They’re very good at looking at a challenge and being able to connect the dots and they’re very good at coming up with solutions. But the gift of The Navigator allows people to ask them questions without answering them. They steer them and they guide them but they don’t answer them. And the leadership gap of The Navigator is The Fixer, who comes across as arrogant. That means someone comes to you with a problem and the first thing you do is tell them what to do and how to do it and when to do it. Most of the time when people come to you, they’re not interested in the solution. Unless someone says, “How did you solve that problem? Can you tell me?” most times—99%—people just want you to understand that there is a problem and for you to listen. And so this is a very important archetype and people might say, “Oh this is not within me.” It’s within all of us. This can save a marriage, this can save a partnership, a business and leadership.

W: You encourage leaders to question who they are being while they are leading.

L: Absolutely. At any given moment we get very caught up in being the Destructor and with distractions. Think about what a leader goes through on a given day. Not only do they have to worry about what's happening on the outside world but they have to happen...what's happening within their organization. And this is even about parents. You're worrying about your children, you're worried about having the house run a certain way; this applies to everyone. This is not only about leaders. We have too much going on and when we have too much going on it's almost like we're racing against time and when we're racing against time, we're concentrating on the how's. How are we going to get through this? How are we going to make this happen? And what happens is we tend to lose ourselves; we tend to forget what's important and what's important is the virtues of who we are.

W: And we go to the saboteurs, when we're under stress.

L: When we're stressed we become Exploiters, we become Deceivers, we become Mercenaries, we become self-serving, we become Destroyers and corrupt; yeah, we become all those leadership gaps that end up costing us in who we are. So, we have to concentrate on the personas, on the archetypes that lead us to greatness and who is the who that we need to be? So, the question that I always ask my leaders to ask themselves: in this meeting, who do you need to be? In this conversation, who do you need to be? In this venture, who do you need to be? And what that means is, which virtue are you going to come with? And that's the most important part. The 'who' is attached to a virtue.

W: When people realize they have a leadership gap, what do you recommend they do? Because they've got to disrupt their current way of being. So is there one thing that you typically do when they say "Oh, I see it." What do you say? What do you do?

L: Well, I smile. Because as a coach I could never tell anyone they have a leadership gap. It is only when they say to me, "There's something wrong. I'm not being my best," is when I know the work will begin. And then I talk to them about now we need to deconstruct to reconstruct your life. Let's deconstruct what isn't working, and reconstruct it in a way that lets you be leading from your greatness and not your gaps. I could never do the work that I do with my clients when they're not aware. Because this...they only, they only want the how. They don't want the who. So sometimes we avoid things because we think it's hard, but the truth is, if there's a system in place, it could be easy. If you have a discipline, it could be easy.

W: Certainly easier. But always changing. Disrupting yourself is the hardest work that we do. It's the most meaningful. It's the most...

L: It's the most meaningful.

W: Important. How will you disrupt yourself in the next 12 months?

L: I think I'm in the disruption right now with this book; it's taken me totally out of my comfort zone because the kind of work that I do? I'm usually the woman behind the curtain. I'm not usually up front, talking about myself, talking about my childhood. So, I'm in a disruption now where I have to put myself in the forefront, talk about myself, which makes me uncomfortable. Ask for help, which makes me uncomfortable and be the face in front of [*The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness.*](#)

W: Well said. If people want to find you, where can they find you?

L: They can find me at lollydaskal.com; I think I'm the only Lolly you can find that's attached to leadership around the world, which is nice. An interesting name gives you good Google analytics, right, you can find me in search. And the book you can find at theleadershipgapbook.com

W: Great. Thank you, Lolly, so much. It's been great to have you.

L: Whitney, this was a great conversation. You've made me reveal things I've never revealed before and you're really brilliant at what you do. You are a true disruptor.

W: Thank you.

L: Thank you.

I'm especially struck by Lolly's statement that if you're stuck in the mire of you imploding, you are leading from your gap. The only way to get unstuck is to do the very thing that feels hard, really hard – to lead from the virtue. And yet, we can't ignore the gap. We need to be aware of it. To paraphrase Joseph Campbell, if we don't own the gap, the gap owns us.

Another thing that stood out from our conversation, was that Lolly referred to Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Viktor Frankl – to these peoples as mentors. People she's never met. We tend to want these real-life, in person, Obi-Wan-Kenobi mentors. Lolly's experience, her story, reminded me that mentors, they're everywhere. Maybe even on this podcast, if we will let them be.