

## Disrupt Yourself Podcast

### Episode 42: Karen S. Carter

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption. Today's guest is [Karen S. Carter](#). She started at Dow Chemical, twenty-three years ago as an intern; she's since run billion dollar business units, and is currently Dow's Chief Inclusion Officer.

Karen Karen S. Carter. I grew up in a place called Wichita, Kansas. And we got there because my dad was in the military. He was in the Air Force.

I grew up there my first 18 years. And then went to college, went to Howard University. For undergraduate, I always aspired to go to a historically black college and university. And so I had an opportunity to go there, and then actually was a freshman when I started interning for Dow.

So my childhood was amazing. I grew up with two awesome sisters. They are older than me so I'm the baby in the family. And I tell people there's a difference between being the youngest and the baby. I am the baby in the family. My sisters are 8 and 10 years older than me. I talk to at least one of them on a daily basis. We have a conference call every Saturday to catch up.

But when I went to college, my mom was a single parent by that time.

Whitney Wait. What happened to your dad? What happened to your dad?

Karen Yeah. My dad - I know one of the questions you were going to ask me was kind of a failure or saddest moment. And this is, to be frank, one of them. My dad died suddenly of a heart attack when I was 12 years old. And I remember, Whitney, the day like it was yesterday. I can remember where I was. But most importantly, I remember the sound of my mother's scream. And so, of course, I didn't know what was happening on the other end of the line. But I can remember thinking, "This has got to be really, really bad." And so he died of a heart attack. He was in Kansas City at the time. And while that was an extremely sad moment for me, it also was a very pivotal moment for me, in particular, because of my mother's resilience and how she really had to pick up the pieces you know, really quickly. I mean, she had three mouths, three pairs of eyes looking at her. And of course, we were all wondering what we were going to do. And so it was extremely devastating. I mean, I can remember thinking, as you can imagine in the mind of a 12-year-old child, the first thing that came to me was, you know, "What am I going to do next Father's Day when I'm supposed to make a craft or a card or--" you know, you know how they do at school? You make something for your father. And that is what I remember the most about that time. But you know her ability to raise three capable and confident daughters on her own while often working more than one job and long hours-- I mean, I can remember a period of time when my sisters were gone off to college and it was just my mom and I. And my mother worked during the day, and then she would work at night. She'd have to get up and be at work at around 2:00 AM. And we had a German shepherd at the time, his name was Samson. And what

she would do, she would let the dog in the house when she would leave and he would literally come and lay at the foot of my bed. And so if I would get up in the middle of the night and have to go get a glass of water, he would follow me to the kitchen. And then...It was almost as if he knew that he was the alarm system while my mom was gone. And so it just is a testament to her strength and her will, and to be frank, her faith. When we talk about her and we say she made such significant sacrifices, she's always quick to tell us that it was not a sacrifice, but it was her duty but also her honor to do that. If I know that it's that period of time, that period of pain that is now part of my DNA and why I am so determined in every aspect of my life-- and you know, I...people are quite surprised that I tell this story, and I tell it often, because I think it's important for people really understand the genesis of my passion, which was born out of pain but again converted to determination.

So the reason I'm Karen S. Carter, and the reason my sisters are Carol S. Cole and Carla S. Eckels, is because he didn't have any boy. And he was the baby of his family. And so we kind of made a pact that when we got married, if we got married, we were always going to maintain that maiden name which was Shepard.

So I'm Karen Shepard Carter because that's a constant reminder of my father When people - If I'm in an article or even on our internal system, or somebody writes my name, I always remind them, it's not just Karen Carter, it's Karen S. Carter in honor of my father. Because he was amazing.

Whitney What did he do in the military? What was his--?

Karen He was an engineer.

Whitney He was an engineer.

He was an engineer. And so when I was born, when I was a kid, he actually was out of the military and working for the FAA as an air traffic controller.

Whitney Got it.

Karen He was a whiz at math.

Whitney Can you think of any situations today where you kind of channel who your dad is? You think, "Uh, I'm my father's daughter." Can you think of any times that you do that, today, this week, last year?

Karen You know he was incredibly kind.. He would stop and help strangers all the time. We had an open door policy. You know, my cousin - one of my cousins, I can remember him coming and staying with us for the summer. And what I didn't know at the time was that he was in trouble. He was in trouble. My father's from St. Louis. And my cousin had gotten into a lot of things. And people were looking for him. And my dad told my aunt, "Send him to me." And I didn't know this at the time. We were just glad that our big cousin was coming to stay with us for the summer. And so I saw him a few weeks ago at my brother-in-law's 60th birthday party, he said, "Your dad saved me." And now my cousin is actually-- has been in the military. He's actually a very high rank in the police department, the St. Louis Police Department. He's also incredibly bright. And he's going on to do big things. And so the passion to take time, to stop, to help people and ultimately

to make a difference, my dad was all about making a difference. And there was no person too big or too small for his time. One of the things that I know Kate's working with me on is the art of saying no [laughter]. And the thing's that hard for me to do when someone appears to need me is because of my dad's open door policy. And how now later on in life I can see the impact of the 5 minutes, the 20 minutes that he took. The summer he had my cousin come live with us. And how you never know how that comment, that moment, that sharing, will and can make a difference.

Whitney Excuse me, that's so beautiful. Wow. That's a great story. Thank you for sharing that. And so now I'm curious about your mom. So when you were looking at your mom and your father's just died, you've got two sisters who are either in college or graduating from college, had your mom been a stay at home mom up to this point and had not been working? So you were like, "What are we going to do? How are we going to eat?" Is that sort of part of what was happening inside of her brain?

Karen She is a go forward kind of woman. She always has been. She was working. She worked at the telephone company. She worked at the telephone company for over 30 years. And so yeah, she was working, but my father was for sure the primary breadwinner. For certain. And I think what was going through her mind was, "How am I going to raise these three children by myself?"

Whitney So here you are. You go to college. You've got these amazing parents, amazing older sisters. And you get to Howard University and you said there was kind of a funny story. So I'd love to hear it.

Karen Yeah. So I get to Howard, and we really didn't know, all the way, how we were going to pay for college. We didn't know. I had good grades. I got a scholarship but it wasn't a full ride. But, just, I knew I wanted to go there. So here my mom drops me off in Washington, D.C. So here I am, first time in my life living away from home, living in Washington, D.C., roommate from New York, and I had, really, no idea how I was going to pay for college. And I think I had enough to pay for a year and a half. And so in order for me to continue to go, I knew I had to find a job. And not just a job at the drug store. I had to find a job where I could really make some money. And so I was walking through the school of business one day and I saw a sign for [Dow Chemical](#) that they were hiring interns. And you needed to be a junior if I remember correctly, and I was a freshman. But I thought, "I don't have anything to lose. I'm going to sign up anyway." And I didn't even know who Dow Chemical was. And back then, I mean, we had computers but you didn't really have Google and all of that. And I don't even think I was thinking that way. I was just thinking, "I got to sign up for some interviews." So I go and I go through the interview process, and they never ask me what my classification was. So I didn't tell them. So I didn't lie, I just didn't divulge.

Whitney Right. They didn't ask. Yeah.

Karen And then they invited me to the second interview in Midland, Michigan. And I came up to Midland and they still didn't ask. And so I went through the interview process. But then there came the time when they wanted my transcript [laughter], so I had to give it to them. They said, "Oh, my gosh. She's a freshman." But do you

know that they hired me anyway?

Whitney Really?

Karen You know, and as the story goes, I was told later that someone said, "She's got enough moxie and nerve to go through the whole process. And we were going to hire her thinking she was an upperclassman. We should give her a chance."

Whitney That's amazing.

Karen And so I actually ended up, yeah, interviewing for Dow for three summers. Changed my life, to be frank. So last time, the first and the last time I interviewed at Dow and when I see these young people coming through now, I wonder if I can compete to be frank. But the opportunity to work at Dow has not only changed my life, but changed the trajectory of so many other people that I know. Because my job is a means to an end. For me, it really is about making a life versus making a living. I live by that mantra. That is not just a slogan for me and my husband. We take every opportunity we can to give back because we've been blessed with so much. And a large part of it is because of what I've been able to do at and through the Dow Chemical Company. And I can go on and on about that. And this is not a commercial for Dow. It isn't.

Whitney But you don't need to. You've been there your whole career. I mean, that's the commercial right?

Karen 23 years. Living around the world. You know, if you would have told me when I was 10 years old that I would be living in Shanghai amongst 20 million of my closest friends as an African-American woman, I would never have believed it. I've done that. And I've climbed the Great Wall with my mother. It wasn't just about me going there and working. It was about the experience of my entire family.

Whitney So Karen, one thing I'm wondering is do you remember who the person was that gave you that shot very early on when you interviewed? Do you remember who that person was? Because that's a talent developer. That's a talent spotter. That's a person who says, "This person has potential. Let's see what can happen here." Do you remember who that person was? Their name?

Karen That was Stan Land. I remember him.

Whitney So you started out as an intern. What had you majored in in college? And if you can just walk me through-- you said it's been 23 years. Just some of the milestones of what that trajectory has looked like inside of Dow Chemical.

Karen So I majored at-- undergrad in marketing. And then I came in through our program called The Commercial Development Program. Started in sales in Chicago. I had one of the most amazing leaders on the planet, who really instilled in me a confidence that I could do anything. My mother had already taught me that. So I had the nerve to believe that. And I've been trying to exceed her expectations ever since then, and that is like impossible. Anthony Johnson was my first boss at Dow. And he was just amazing. He just...he made me feel like I belonged here. That's the think he did for me that was different probably than anybody. He made me feel like I belonged here.

Whitney Karen, do you remember what he did that made you feel like you belong? Because we talk about this sense of belonging. And yet it feels so abstract sometimes. Do you remember any concrete one or two things that he did that made you feel like, "I've got a seat at this table."

Karen You know, he never treated me differently. So it wasn't like-- I got the customers that I should have gotten. There was no special treatment. It was all about equal treatment. He gave me good and bad feedback just like he did everybody else. And he said to me, "You belong here, and don't let anyone tell you that you don't."

Whitney So he respected you enough even though you were a woman and a woman of color to give you real feedback.

Karen Absolutely. And tough feedback. But it made me a better seller. And it made me a better person. And that, if I kind of fast forward through my career, that has been the difference maker. That's been the difference maker. You know, people have said, "Here's the difference between your performance and your capability. We got to bridge that gap. I know you can do better. I know you can do better. So I'm going to measure you today based on how you perform. But then I'm going to develop you so that you can perform at a higher level which matches your full capability. Because I see it."

Whitney That is so powerful. So there's your performance. There's a capability. There's a gap. I, as your boss, am going to help you bridge that gap because I know you can.

Karen Yes.

Whitney Amazing. Okay. All right. So you had Anthony Johnson-- were you in sales then? And then what happened next?

Karen Yeah. I was in sales. And then because of my potential, I was asked if I wanted to go back to graduate school. Because it wasn't, to be frank, on my radar screen. When I got out of Howard, I was like, "I'm done. And I'm tired. And I had good grades. And I worked hard. And I made it through." I guess I always thought I wanted to go back, but for sure not that quick. And so through Dow I had the opportunity to go back to graduate school. And when I was in graduate school, I majored in International Business because I always had this passion about you know, International matters. Even back then had a dream of living overseas. At that point I'd never been outside of the US, and knew that there was a bigger world. And so I decided to major in International Business. And had an opportunity to move at that point into HR. And they really wanted me. As the story goes, they came and said, "Hey, we want you to go do this job in HR." And I was like, "No, that's okay." And so then the Vice President of HR called me to his office. Because I was living in Chicago. I was living the dream. And had a car, had an apartment, and was in graduate school.

Whitney Yeah.

Karen And so when the vice president, at the time, of HR called me to the office and he was kind and he kind of let me go through this whole thing about why I didn't think that was the job for me and HR is too slow and I don't want to do that. And he looks at me and he says, "You know what, Karen? Sometimes you have to

volunteer [laughter]." And I was like, oh, so that means that it wasn't really a question, they were saying that this is your next job.

Whitney Right. What was his name?

Karen Larry Washington.

Whitney You've--

Karen Yeah, Larry Washington.

Whitney --had some great bosses, Karen.

Karen I have had some great bosses. And so I went to work for a man by the name of David Helgerson at the time and then David Wilkins in HR. And I did that for a few years. It was my first people-leader role. I had people that were twice as old as I was in that job and it sparked and ignited a passion in me for people. It really did. I mean it threw me into a situation where I really needed to figure out how to not be a people manager but to be a leader and there's a difference.

Whitney Right so you had a background in sales so you knew how to persuade people but now you needed to know how to lead people in a way that they would persuade themselves?

Karen That and again, imagine someone in their 20's managing someone in their 50's. And so it wasn't just about persuasion, it was about being authentic and ensuring that I could lead in a way that benefitted them.

Whitney When you say--

Karen So that it wasn't about me.

Whitney When you say authentic, what does that mean to you?

Karen For me, that means being real to yourself [laughter]. And I think people can tell the difference. "Are you just giving me the company line," or "Are you giving me something that benefits you?" That's important to me and I say this to Kate a lot, "I've got to be able to wake up to myself in the morning."

Whitney Yeah. Yeah.

Karen That's important. I can't be who I'm not. That's not comfortable for me. And I believe people know the difference.

Whitney Yeah, they can tell.

Karen People know the difference.

Whitney They can tell.

Karen And I believe that people are hungering for that. "Who are you really?" And when you show up, when you really show up, you really show up, then that's a foundation for us to build on, to move from. But if you're always showing up as somebody that I don't recognize or that's not real, that's exhausting.

Whitney Right.

Karen That's exhausting for me.

Whitney Exactly.

Karen I mean, I don't know any other way to be. Now I think, and I've said this to my leaders before, I'm all about being better, I'm not about being different. And if it requires me to be someone that I'm not, then I better make a change.

Whitney So human resources then what happened after human resources?

Karen So, after human resources I there was a Vice President by the name of Kathleen Bater. She was one, I think, of the first executive women that we had at that office.

Whitney Yeah. Your first female boss it sounds like.

Karen Yeah. She wasn't my boss, but she was the boss of my boss. But she was one of the Vice Presidents. And she promised me, she said, "Once you get through graduate school, I will give you a job back in the business." She promised me that. And so one day I remember her taking me to our executive wing. And I can remember her walking me through-- and there's a theme here. Not by design. I don't have this written down anywhere. But there's a theme of you belong, that now I'm-- it's interesting because that's coming to me now that you brought it up. But I remember her walking me through the E-wing. And so we walked in the E-wing and she's talking to me all the time, but I'm not really hearing her because I'm like, "Oh my gosh. I'm in the E-wing. I'm in the E-wing." And so she walked me all the way to the corner office and it was the office of the CEO and he wasn't in there. And she says, "Have a seat." And I'm thinking, "Like, here?" And she's like, "Have a seat. Have a seat in the big chair." And so I was like, "Oh my gosh." And so I sat in that chair.

Whitney In the CEO's office?

Karen In the CEO's office. He probably didn't even know we were in there. And then she just was sharing with me how proud of me she was that I had gone through school, that I had graduated. She started talking to me about, again, my potential, the things that I'd already done, and what she sees in me. Can you imagine?

Whitney That's amazing.

Karen And then after that, I got a job to be a global marketing manager. And I had gotten a degree in international business as a global marketing manager for our information technology and equipment business. And one of the things I'm proud of in my career is that Apple Computer was our customer and we got our material in one of the first iMacs back then.

I did a few jobs. I did a sales manager job. I had a number of different jobs in P&L. And then there's a couple of pivotal roles for me. One was game-changing, I would call them. So one was when I got my second P&L job which was in our polyethylene business.

My leader at the time knew me from my previous job. He'd actually been my mentor because when I got my first P&L job, I asked our vice-president at the time, "Who is the best product director that you know?" And he told me, "Glenn

Wright." And I said, "Well, I'm going to go ask Glenn Wright to be my mentor." And I did. And it was through that relationship that we got to know each other.

I told him, I went to him. I said, "Hey, listen, I don't even know how to spell product director, so I really need your help here," because I was coming out of a marketing job. "I need your help. Here's what I don't know. Here's what I want to do. Here's what I'm thinking, etc." He was awesome at that. He was really great. And then Dow sent me to Thunderbird for an executive management experience.

And I can remember the day. I was sitting at the desk in Arizona and I got a call from Glenn on my cell phone. And I'm like, "Oh, what's this about?" And he called. He said, "Hey, I want to offer you a job." And I was like, "Really?" He was a global business director at the time. He said, "Yeah, I want you to come be a product director for me over in polyethylene." And I was like, "That's big time [laughter]. Wow! I'm in the big leagues now."

And it's such a great experience working for him. He was one of the toughest managers I've had, and not shy on giving me the tough feedback. I remember one year when he gave me an average rating on my job performance review, and I just knew-- I just knew I had knocked it out of the park. I had the numbers. I had all of this. And you know what he said to me?

Whitney

What?

Karen

He said, "If you want me to give you the highest rating, I'll give it to you." He said, "But if you just want me to rate you based on, again, how you performed this year, you deserved a three. Could you have been a five?" And five is the highest rating.

Whitney

Yeah.

Karen

"Absolutely. But you didn't put it all on the field."

Whitney

Wow!

Karen

"I know what you're capable of, and you didn't." But then what he said next-- because at this point I was mad. I'm mad [laughter]. And he knew I was mad.

Whitney

Yeah. Yeah. He wanted you to be mad. He wanted to push you.

Karen

He did. He did. He said, "But if you want to be a five next year, I can tell you how to do it. This is what you got to do." And you know what I got the next year?

Whitney

A five.

Karen

So after that, I did a few jobs, and then I started working for an amazing man by the name of Diego Donoso. And he's still at Dow. And Diego would do things like-- so I was one of his-- I was in a change management job for him where I developed a marketing strategy around our value chain and our packaging, especially plastics, business.

But he would do things like invite me to a meeting with him with a controller. And I would think like, "What does that have to do with anything [chuckle]?" He would have me come there. Or he would invite me to play golf with a customer in Midland, Michigan. And I'm thinking, "That's not even my job. Why does he have

me to do that?" And he would do these things periodically. Or he would invite me to a people meeting and say, "I'm making some decisions. I just want to get your opinion on this." And he would do that all the time.

And then one day, I was coming back from Christmas vacation. I was in my house here in Midland, Michigan. It was really cold, and I was thinking, "Oh, it's just so cold here." And I got a call from him. And we hadn't yet started work. It's kind of in the quiet period. People hadn't really gotten back to work, and so I looked at my cell phone and it's Diego, and I picked up the phone, and he said, "Are you sitting down?" And I was like, "Oh, gosh. What have I done this time [laughter]? No. I'm not." He's like, "Well, sit down." And he's like, "Guess what?" I said, "What?" He said, "You got the job." I was like, "Oh, okay. Great. What job did I get?" I'm just thinking, "Okay. I'm moving to another role." He's like, "No. No. No. You got 'the' job." And I'm like, "What's 'the' job?" And he's like, "You are my--" and he used these words my. "You are my new North America Commercial Vice President for packaging and specialty plastics."

And I was floored, amazed, excited all in the same moment because that is our biggest business in the company and the biggest region for that business in the company. They've never had a woman in that job, and they've never had a minority in that job. But what was beautiful was that that didn't matter to him. The reason he picked me is because I had earned it and I had demonstrated that I could step into that role. And it is a job that I have aspired to do. Many people aspire to do it. Very few get the chance, but what was more important to me and what he said to me was how I could tell how he was feeling in that moment. And he had prepared-- and it was like the movie playing backwards in my mind. I was like, "That's why he had me go talk-- talk with him to the controller. That's why he invited me to those sessions with the customers. That's why." He was preparing me for this moment. Preparing me, not testing me. He was preparing me for this moment.

- Whitney I want to hear about your current job. So how did you get this job, and what are you trying to get done?
- Karen Okay. So I thought, again, I thought I'd been in the job of a lifetime in the last job I was in [laughter], and so I'd only been in that job for 18 months, but when I got the call for this one, but just really quickly, and if you get a chance I think [you should watch it](#). So we had an African American Leadership Conference back in July of last year, and it -- and there were, I don't know, over 400 people that -- that attended, and it was really something that was borne out of a request from our CEO Andrew Liveris at the time. And I was one of the folks that planned that session, and it was just an amazing couple of days. [And it was in that conference-- and again you can kind of go back and take a look or--](#)
- Whitney Just so I know, so it was a conference for African American leaders inside of DOW or across industry?
- Karen Inside of DOW. It was African Americans, period, inside of DOW.
- Whitney Okay. Got it. Okay. Keep going.

Karen Inside of DOW. Yes. And he gave a speech at that session, and he announced that he was creating the Chief Inclusion role. And I've seen Andrew speak many times, and he's an excellent orator. He's amazing and he is authentic when he speaks. He's really good. That speech was different for me. It was very different. I mean he acknowledged that our company, like many other US-based companies, that we were falling behind in the effort to build more diversity in our workforce but also eliminate bias in our actions. And I'll tell you what, that honesty was extremely refreshing. But he was also extremely compelling in his conviction that our company needed to reflect the world we were becoming and not the world we left behind.

Now when he announced that they were going to name a Chief Inclusion Officer, it was not on my radar screen at all. As a matter of fact, I had given them some suggestions for names. I'd given them some names because I was just so excited that we were going to do that. It isn't that we haven't had people focus on D&I before but this was different. And so he made this clear commitment from the top about doing this, and so when I got the call, I was totally surprised. I was totally surprised and to be frank, I was unsure because I was in a great job, right? But I was so passionate about what our CEO said we must go doing forward.

And so my husband actually looked at-- my husband said, "Well, [let me take a look at this video you've been talking about](#). You've been raving about it. Let me take a look at it." And remember that I've said for 23 years, my biggest priority is about making the biggest impact possible, period, whether it's people, doesn't matter, the biggest impact. Literally, Whitney, my husband closed the top of that computer and looked at me and said, "We must go do this. We must go do this. The time is now, Karen. You've got to walk through that window of opportunity, not for you but for every employee in that company. This is not about you."

And so I called our Chief Operating Officer back and I said yes. I said yes, and I can't tell you how honored and humbled I am to be the first Chief Inclusion Officer of a company that's more than 120 years old.

And what's historical not about me, but about this moment is of course you know we just completed the largest merger in the history of the chemical industry with DuPont. And so this is all about creating the future of our new company and creating the culture that is going to enable us to deliver unprecedented business results.

This is not about the right thing to do. This is about the smart thing to do because we will deliver better business results through a [more inclusive culture](#), and that is the bottom line. I'm sure you know all about the business case for diversity and inclusion, but it's ultimately about ensuring that every person, every employee in our company can bring their entire selves to work and be and feel valued. That is the bottom line. Do you know what's uncomfortable about this?

Whitney What?

Karen It's because so many people are depending on me. This is legacy stuff, Whitney. They asked me to do this because they had the audacity to think I can. This is about change management. This is about the culture of the enterprise. This is about ensuring that as we go forward, that everyone that walks through this door,

regardless of their difference, that they do feel like they belong. And that is a significant-- the magnitude of that responsibility is huge. So that's what makes me uncomfortable because there are so many people depending on me to go do this. I mean, lots of people have opinions. Lots of people have ideas, but this is about action and making it happen. And that's huge, but I understand the magnitude of the responsibility, and I firmly believe I'm up for the challenge. And it requires all of us. It's not just about me. It requires all of us for us to embed this, and make it sustainable and part of our corporate superstructure--

Whitney Well, like your husband said--

Karen This is not about a program of the month. Yeah.

Whitney Right. And like your husband said, "We must do this." I love that sense of mission--

Karen We must do this.

Whitney --and determination. So Karen--

Karen Let me tell you about another fun thing that I'm doing to disrupt myself, just really quickly.

Whitney Oh, yeah. Please.

Karen So I'll be 50 in the not so distant future, and so one of my friends inspired me to create a list of 50 things before I'm 50. So she did the same thing, but she did them all in one year. I've created this list of 50 things before I turn 50, and it's kind of like a bucket list.

Whitney Yeah?

Karen Yeah. It's kind of like a bucket list, and so some of them are big, and some of them are small but the point is about doing all those things you wish to do but doing them today.

Whitney Okay. What's one of them? What's one of them? Share with us.

Karen So one of them is I'm going to take my granddaughters to Paris. I'm going to do that.

Whitney Ok! Do you have a date--

Karen I'm going to do that.

Whitney --on the calendar?

Karen I don't have a date on the calendar, but I'm going to do it before 2018 ends.

Whitney Okay. So I dare you--

Karen Because I was going to wait until they were 12, but--

Whitney get your date--

Karen --I'm not going to wait. We're going to do it.

Whitney Get your date on the calendar now [laughter]. That's your deal for the day.

Karen           And I also want to go to Africa. And I want to go to Africa. Yeah. So I've done a few of them, but those two are big ones.

Whitney        Love it. Karen, thank you so much. I really, really appreciate that you took the time to talk to me.

Karen           Thank you so much, Whitney. Appreciate you.

Whitney        All right. Take care.

Karen           Have a good day.

Whitney        Bye-bye.

Karen           All right

People often ask—is it really possible to disrupt yourself inside of an organization? If you, like Karen, are determined, willing to risk, and hire the right boss, the answer is yes. I must admit, it would be really interesting to have Dow [take our S-Curve Locator](#). If Karen is the rule, not the exception, then people reinvent all the time. When an employee gets to the top of a learning curve, instead of saying, “we like you right where you are,” they say, “go ahead, jump.” If you want to lower your ‘we’re about to get disrupted’ score, let your people disrupt themselves.

Now here’s a practical tip: If you are wondering how you can reinvent without leaving your job, analyze Karen’s process. What have her bosses done? What does she do? How does she make it easy for them to push her onto new learning curves?

Thank you to Lisa Poulsen for writing in. She shares, “I’ve sent [Donald Miller’s episode](#) to no less than twenty people (Lisa’s a comms expert -- she knows good when she hears it), [Dan Pink’s](#) she’s sent to five people, and [Peter Sims](#) -- well, what a great way to be in the world.” So glad you enjoyed Lisa; and thank you for letting us know.

Thank you to Karen S. Carter for being our guest, sound engineer Whitney Jobe, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributor Heather Hunt, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I’m Whitney Johnson  
And this is Disrupt Yourself.