

Disrupt Yourself Podcast with Whitney Johnson

Episode 45: Richie Norton – UNSTUCK

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption.

Today's episode is an interview, but with a little twist. When prepping to record the video content for our upcoming course [UNSTUCK](#), Richie Norton and I started the process by interviewing each other on camera. Today's episode is an audio segment from those interviews.

Whitney: So, what I thought we'd do is here we are, we're gonna collaborate, we're gonna do this course together, we actually never, ever met in person.

Richie: First time meeting in person.

Whitney: Which is super exciting, and this is the, the joy and the boon of the internet.

Richie: I know.

Whitney: Well, no, that's not true, we met because of [Macy Robison](#).

Richie: Yeah, well, we met ...

Whitney: We met because of her, she connected us when you were working on [The Power of Starting Something Stupid](#).

Richie: That's right.

Whitney: Is that what it's called?

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: Yeah. She introduced us.

Richie: You helped, um, promote [my book](#), and then later, I helped you [with yours](#).

Whitney: Right.

Richie: And then, we just kind of ... just kind of off and on knew of each other, but we never actually met in person.

Whitney: And now, we became friends, and that is what I love about social media.

Richie: I know, it's amazing.

Whitney: So, here ... so, here we are. We're gonna do this course together in a day, and this is ... So, in my, in my parlance of [Disrupt Yourself](#), I talk about one of the, um, accelerants of managing changes being discovery driven. And we are going to be discovery driven with this course.

Richie: As we do it.

Whitney: Yes.

Richie: Yeah, I know. And it's gonna be amazing.

Whitney: Which is really fun, and so, one of the things that we decided to do, and I'm so glad that you were game for it is, we're not going to get acquainted off camera, we're gonna get acquainted on camera, and do kind of a quasi interview.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: So, you are game to let me ask you a bunch of questions?

Richie: Go for it. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: I want to hear a little bit about your story. Where you grew up, uh, what you studied in school, how you came to be where you are today.

Richie: Okay, cool. I mean, I grew up in San Diego.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: A little farm town up, up in North County. Uh-

Whitney: What's it called?

Richie: Called Ramona. And uh, loved it there. Cows everywhere. I wasn't a farmer guy, but uh, you know, I was, I, I would skateboard around wherever I could find some cement. (laughs) It was fun. And, so, born and raised in San Diego. I served a mission for my church in Brazil.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And then, right after I went to school at BYU Hawaii.

Whitney: Oh, you went straight to BYU Hawaii. How did you choose BYU Hawaii? That's so remote.

Richie: I'm the oldest of my siblings, and my younger brother went there while I was, you know, in Brazil.

Whitney: In Brazil. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And he told me about it. And Hawaii's cool, you know, I surf and things like that, but it was more about ... what he was telling me about the people.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: From all over the world. It's a very small school, it's very international. I was like, that sounds like a really cool experience. So I went there, and when I was there, I became student body president. And-

Whitney: Why am I not surprised?

Richie: I don't know, I don't know. I was surprised. (laughs) And I got to know President Shumway at the time, like really well. And he would, you know, tell me stories about these students come from all over and a lot of them don't go back, and there's places in the world that need these kids and we don't want to facilitate the brain drain, and what can you do, Richie? And I'm like, What can I do? I don't know. So, I actually went around and asked students, why don't you want to go home, or do you want to go home, what's your plan? And they would say, "Well, we want to go home, like, America's cool, but home is home.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Um, but there's no jobs. And we, we're talking places like South East Asia, Mongolia, um ... 'Cause at BYU Hawaii, they focus on the Asian Pacific Rim.

Whitney: Right, so, give us ... So, what are some other countries, like, Mongolia, Samoa ...

Richie: Mongolia, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and, and I, I would ask and they would say there's no jobs, and I'd say, what, what about through entrepreneurship, and at the time, it was ... there was a school of business, there was no real focus on entrepreneurship; but they would have these business plan competitions, people would win them, and they'd win 1,000 bucks or whatever it was, and they'd go spend it-

Whitney: And they'd win.

Richie: They'd win, yeah, but they would spend their money at Foodland, which is our local grocery store. And like, yeah, you've got to eat, but I'm thinking like, why not use it for your business. So, I wrote a business plan to help people start their own businesses in their home countries. And it was to help build a fund from, what we called Mentor Venture Capitalists.

Whitney: Huh.

Richie: To help them go back to their home countries. And I proposed the plan, and it totally failed, didn't even go through the first round. And they said, you don't have the ... it's

just a paper round, you know, you don't have enough details. And I'm like, I'm doing it anyways. (laughs)

So, I actually met with this ... and I was still a student. I'm student body president...

Whitney: So, you're 23 years old.

Richie: Yeah, and I have a ... yeah, I think I was, actually 23. And we just had our first baby. Like, everything, uh, crazy. You know, it's like my last year in college, so we're, we're really busy, but I have to do this anyways. 'Cause when I was in Brazil, I saw a lot of people in poverty.

In Brazil, it was and not just Brazil, it's anywhere, but there's a lot of people who I met, who just ... they were very talented, very smart, but they didn't have, necessarily the resources or the network to work their way out of poverty, and that wasn't their fault. And so, I thought, how can I help people do this, and I also thought, most people wait, 'til their 65 and retired to do that kind of work, and I thought if I do that at say, 25, I'm waiting ... Am I really gonna wait 40 years. I mean, that's, essentially, two generations.

Whitney: Right, two lifetimes.

Richie: And so one thing I've learned from a mentor of mine, um, Mark Willis. I don't know if you know who he is. He was, uh, CEO and President of the Times-Mirror at, at one point. And he said, "Ask a better question, get a better answer." So, I always thought, how could I ... how could I do the work I would like to do in retirement ... this volunteer work, this social entrepreneurial kind of, kind of thing; but right now, and still feed my family at the same time?

Whitney: So, what's amazing, quick pause, is that this all started with a question-

Richie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: That the President of the University asked you.

Richie: Yeah. President Shumway. When he said, what can we do to help the students, yeah. That's a really good point; and so as I went through it, I didn't know what I was doing. Like I was still in college, I ... you know, I started a little lemonade-type stand businesses when I was a kid. You know? I don't know what's going on, but I found mentors. Like, I went to professors that thought it was a good idea, and I met a couple that said, we've thought something similar, let us help you.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And one of them took me to Mongolia-

Whitney: On his or her nickel.

Richie: It was ... It was my father's dime. I asked my dad if he would be supportive, and he was. And um, the professor went and we went, and we started a business with a student from Mongolia, who had already returned home. And her name is Ariuna and Odgo was her husband. They started a cashmere business. You know, cashmere is that really soft ...

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Um, goat hair, actually. And, you know, it did well, it wasn't the best thing in the world, but what happened was, it was successful in its own right, and that family, you know, was able to flourish, and they're doing all kinds of different things now; but the thing I didn't expect was this. The Mongolians at BYU Hawaii were inspired. And they thought ... they thought.

Whitney: Oh.

Richie: They thought if we can do ... If they can do it, we can do it. And for the next three or four years, they won the international section of the business plan competition, every single year.

Whitney: That makes me cry, just because they saw someone doing it, they believed that they could, too.

Richie: Oh, yeah. And it, it was inspiring. And other donors started getting involved.

Whitney: Hm.

Richie: And we, we formed a literal mentor venture capital board, like, through the university, and it became inte- integrated; and then, Mark Willis, who I mentioned, he came in, funded the whole thing, so it's like, has an endowment fund, it's an official center at the, at the school. This is not all me, I, I just was an idea guy, and I had helped a little, but there is a lot of people, a lot of different parts. The president had to do it, it had to go all the way up, you know, I, I-

Whitney: You had to go all the way up and you had to reach out to Mark.

Richie: I'm a little tiny person in this whole scheme, but it started with one question, it started with one idea. It started with the belief that even if you say I can't do it, it's only gonna make me wanna do it more. (laughs)

Whitney: What's also interesting, too, that you just said is that, you put forward this business plan, and they said it wasn't very good, but the near ... And, and so, it, it didn't need to be a perfect business plan, it was enough-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: To get you started. And, and I think that's also really interesting.

Richie: One, one thing I've learned, actually, just even this last week I was thinking through this story, and others is, humans don't do what they don't see.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: So, we can conceptualize and we think and we say all these things, but until they actually see someone else do it, it's hard for them to believe they can do it, too. It's a terrible thing ...

Whitney: Right.

Richie: But that's one of the reasons it's so important to learn from other people - to travel, to meet, to, to read.

Whitney: But someone has to see it first.

Richie: The, the innovator, right? The inventive person that's like - I see it in my mind, they do it; and then, everyone else goes, if they can do it, I can do it, too.

Whitney: Right.

Richie: And then, they're ... this new thing starts happening.

Someone who's willing to shift their mind and say, I can try something new. The other pieces of their life are also thinking, I can do something new. Right?

Whitney: The contagion affect.

Richie: And so, we don't always know what it is, and we don't even see what other people are doing, but you can tell when one thing shifts, everything shifts.

Whitney: That's so powerful.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: You wrote a book.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: Where does the book come in, and maybe, we'll talk more, in fact, we are definitely going to talk more about the ideas in the book, but just give us at a very high level, how the inspiration for the book came about, and what are um, some sort of Cliff Note things that we need to know about the book.

Richie: Okay. I, I take a deep breath, because it's, it's actually a lot. So, during this whole time I was doing this ... so, I'm living in Hawaii-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: I ... and, and you know it's very expensive there, so I'm doing everything I can to figure it out. So, even while I'm starting the businesses to help other people make money, I'm not necessarily making money. Even though, I hope I would, I mean sometimes we were recycling cans to fill up our car with gas. Like, you know, like, literally. And-

Whitney: That's really powerful. So, you have this vision of what you want to accomplish and at the same time, what you're trying to make happen for people in developing countries, you're having that same experience.

Richie: Yeah, of ... Yeah, of course, and-

Whitney: Well, not of course.

Richie: Yeah, oh, well, for-

Whitney: It's not-

Richie: In my head.

Whitney: Right, but that's not of course, so let's not take that as a given.

Richie: Mm.

Whitney: So you're having this recycling cans to put gas in your car. So you're having that same experience that other people are having. It, may be on a slightly different level, but within the United States, that's a pretty meager existence.

Richie: Yeah. And I, I remember ... when you say that, I'm thinking of ... we weren't in abstract poverty, you know, we have, you know food and water.

We're students, we're doing whatever we can to make money, and um, over time, we started figuring it out, and ended up doing well; but during this time, even the idea of this idea, I ... of helping people become successful, I started interviewing people.

I would approach people who were approaching retirement.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Or in retirement, 'cause I would want them to look back. And they would say something to the effect of, um, "I always thought that I would wait for a time when I had more time, more education, more experience, and more money to do this thing. Now that I'm here, I still realize, I need more time, more education, more experience, and more money." And I quickly realized that those who were, uh, I guess successful in making their idea happen earlier, rather than later; they did it without those resources, because

they leveraged what was existing, they leveraged existing resources. We always think we need more.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: But that thought, inherently, means you will always need more.

Whitney: Hm.

Richie: And so, I thought, well I'm gonna start and do this ... And so, I started writing this book called The Power of Start. And start was an acronym for Serve Think Ask Receive and Trust.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: And this was one of the principles that I got from like reading about Gandhi and, you know, whoever else I thought was amazing. But then, when I really realized what it was, it wasn't that I started something, it, it, it was that I started something, and made them successful, but it was that they started something that someone once called stupid.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: Different, um, or crazy. Henry Ford was called Crazy Henry, that was what they called him when he was trying to figure this out. And the guys at Twitter said, that all their engineers thought their idea was stupid. You know, um, even.. I have a million examples.

Whitney: There's so much power in that word, and yeah ... of stupid.

Richie: Yeah, and so, I started looking at it and I realized that it's not that it's inherently stupid, it's that we don't believe we can do it, or, or we're afraid of what someone else will think, or someone else thinks we can't do it.

People are like, they're on different levels when they start something.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And some of them are starting from ground zero, like I was. Some of them have already built up to something great, and they feel like they need to reinvent themselves or whatever. And it's actually harder to reinvent yourself because you know so much and the fall is greater.

Whitney: Right.

Richie: And so, how do you, then, reinvent yourself without having that huge tumble when you know that starting at stupid again, was what you have to do.

Whitney: So, you decided to write this book. I mean, the book was in part a product of your doing all of these interviews around ... And you were trying to build your own business, you do these interviews and you realize there's this common denominator and from that came the book, or you had the book idea and went out and did interviews or was it a little bit of both?

Richie: A little bit of both, and then, the stupid, uh, the more I started doing research, that was the ... I wasn't just starting, it was ... it was this, what we would call now, is creative, innovative, disruptive. That's what I call stupid, that's what they called stupid, back then. But then, some terrible things happened, my brother-in-law-

Whitney: Terrible things.

Richie: Terrible things. While I'm trying to write this book, my brother-in-law passes away in his sleep, natural causes, nothing, 21.

Whitney: He just dies.

Richie: Just like that. And then, a few years later ... His name was Gavin. My, um, my ... we have, our fourth son-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And we named him Gavin after my, my brother-in-law, and he was awesome, perfect, totally healthy, and he got this little cough, and we took it seriously, took him to the hospital and doctors, and they said it's nothing, then they said it was RSV, and ... So, we would take him in, and I remember one night we'd actually carry this little humidifier tent for him, and everything. Long story, short. One night, it gets really bad and we go to the hospital, and they keep us there for a while, which was unusual. And then, we were there for a few nights, and longer, and finally they tested for something called Pertussis.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: Whooping Cough.

Whitney: Hm.

Richie: And it turns out that, that's what he had. And it had progressed so far that it was too late. And I remember, like, we were like doing everything we could, we're, we're praying, you know, and my wife's blogging, asking for help, and whatever we could do, but one night, a nurse comes in and she says, you know, you guys should stay the night, and we always stayed the night, but she was ... she was cluing us in on like, this is actually pretty bad, and I remember, they came in there, they brought like a crash cart, and they said, look, he's not gonna make it, but we have to, like, use this thing, just by law, um, unless you don't want us to, because it will be violent and it, it won't keep him alive.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Something like that. And we sat and we prayed about it, thought about it. My wife's on one side, I'm on the other of him, we're holding hands thinking about it. I'm like, you know what, we should have this ... if this is it, a total like horrible moment, we should let these last moments be peaceful.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And so, we sat there as they, um, took out all the little cords and he was all puffed up from all the liquids they had in him, like a little Marshmallow Man, and I held him for a moment, handed him to my wife and she rocked him and we sang lullabies, and I had my hand on his little heart, and uh, we just ... felt his last beat, you know, heart, heartbeats there. And um, it's your worst nightmare as a parent, one of the things you don't think about, though; that my wife described to me later was, um, when you leave the hospital, you also have to leave your child.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: And like, she's holding her dead son, not knowing what to do. And ... We don't want to leave, but at some point you need to, and a sweet, angelic nurse comes in, and uh, she says, "Can I rock him?" and she, and she rocks him, and we leave, you know, empty handed. And the world never felt heavier on our shoulders and, you know, it was the worst thing in the world.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And his name was Gavin? So two Gavins.

Richie: Gavin, yeah. So, two Gavins are gone. And then, um, a woman who I admire, who, uh, became my publisher later, Sheri Dew, she asked us, in person, like, so what did you learn? What did you learn from Gavin and Gavin passing away, and my wife said, "I don't know. I'll tell you in a year."

Whitney: Right.

Richie: (laughs)

Whitney: Right now I'm not learning anything.

Richie: Right. And uh, we thought about it, and what I dis- bringing it back to the book, is this is where there is a huge shift in the book. It wasn't just start, it wasn't just stupid, it became now.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Because I learned that life is short, and that's just not some cliché, you can die at any moment, or someone else in your life can die, or if death is, if it, it's certain, but you think it's unlikely right now, an illness, a broken ankle, like anything can happen, so all

you really have is this moment. And so, I created something called Gavin's Law, which is live to start, start to live. Because if you live to start those ideas, those stupid ideas that are pressing on your mind, you really will start living.

Whitney: Yeah. So, start something stupid, now.

Richie: Which is another way of saying, take those thoughts and ideas, those impressions, those things that you can see in your mind, but you're scared to do them, and do it anyways.

Whitney: Act on them.

What do you do for your business today? So-

Richie: Okay.

Whitney: It's been 15 years since you first started, what does-

Richie: Okay.

Whitney: What does Richie-

Richie: Here's, here's what's interesting.

Whitney: Life look like today?

Richie: Yeah, yeah. I wrote, I wrote that book even at a relatively young age. It took me six years to write it.

Whitney: Okay.

Richie: I started it when I was like, 29. (laughs)

Whitney: Okay, so mid-30s.

Richie: Mid-30s, it came out. And but, but so many things happened, because I became ... you can Google Stupid Richie and I'm everywhere.

Whitney: You're Stupid Richie? Did you do that on purpose?

Richie: No, I just ... I, it is what it is. (laughs)

Now I'm the stupid guy, so people started reaching out to me with their stupid ideas.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And I'm not the subject matter expert on their idea, so I had to become an expert at something. And so, I started becoming an expert at, at being a business modelist, if that's a word.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: So, I would take their idea, and I'd say, "Cool, here's how you can validate it, and here's how you can make money with it. In fact, you should probably charge double what you're thinking, work with less people; and then, expand down, out rather, like, like, what Tesla's doing." You know, something like that. And so, then, I started doing one-on-one coaching, one to many, and then, started doing online courses; which are a little more long form, it can go deeper, a hybrid of that, plus one-on-one. And uh, because I had a background in physical products with Mongolia-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative). All the work that you had done-

Richie: I started a sourcing company, to help people ... It's called [Prouduct](#), Products You're Proud of, to help people who had-

Whitney: It's called Prouduct?

Richie: Yeah. I bought the domain.

Whitney: I love that name. Alright, keep going.

Richie: So, so now ... So, now, not only am I helping people with their head game, I'm helping them actually create physical things. And so, we'll do everything from helping them with ideation and whatever else, manufacturing, shipping, warehousing, and fulfillment. And so, we're making everything from just printing people books, to making teepees. So, we're in Austin, Texas, right now, and even here, we're, uh-

Whitney: Shout out to Austin, Texas.

Richie: Yeah, shout out to Austin. Um, one of our clients lives here, he, he sells teepees, and so, I'm staying at his house, right now, 'cause he invited me over, and alright, why not? So, like-

Whitney: Yeah. The question is, are you sleeping in a teepee.

Richie: I asked him, I said, will I sleep in a teepee? He said we can make it happen.

Whitney: (laughs) So how many products, how many Prouducts have you done?

Richie: You mean, companies, or products? Oh ...

Whitney: Well, yeah, how many products; and then, how many companies?

Richie: I don't know the number, but several-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And several.

Whitney: Mm.

Richie: Because once you learn that it's a game, a serious game.

Whitney: Right.

Richie: And once you understand the implication then it's just about replicating it, and, and, you know ...

Whitney: Over and over-

Richie: And iterating, based on what you're doing, and if you want to do something wild and crazy, it actually gives you a little bit of a safety net to be disruptive, 'cause you know this works.

Whitney: Can you give us just a quick example of a product that you've been iterating on, or have iterated on. So, people can sort of understand, not only conceptually what you're talking about, but maybe a little bit more-

Richie: Why don't I use a very simple one.

Whitney: That will be perfect.

Richie: So, one of my clients, his name is [John Lee Dumas](#), and he is a podcaster.

Whitney: Okay.

Richie: And I was on his podcast-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And he gets like, I don't know, over a million downloads a month, and he's just a, he's just a, he's a, he's talking about entrepreneurship. So, he had me on about my book.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And at the end, he says, what's your new thing? Kinda like what, you know, you ask, what else are you doing? And I said, well, I have this company where we source products for entrepreneurs, usually from China, and he said, "Well, we need to talk." And so, he had this idea for a journal, and I'm like okay ... you know, journals aren't-

Whitney: Well, journals are the past.

Richie: They're not crazy, but he started saying, I want it to be this, and I want it to be that, and so, as I talked to him about it, we started making it ... So, it's what's called the [Freedom Journal](#), we started making it look like ... I don't know, like a sacred text, you know?

Whitney: Yeah, I absolutely does.

Richie: And it has like, the gold ... So, we started being like, if this is your journal for freedom, this should be special. And so, it went from this idea of basically, a book, pen to paper, to this thing you're gonna keep forever. And something that you're gonna love. We put it on, um ... it took some time, like even this, like this band or like even like, uh ... you can't really see it, but the bookmark, they had to actually go out and like, get the fabric, then dye it. He wanted everything to be like ...

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: So, we went to China, figured it out, we saw, like, them make the whole thing. Like, amazing. He ... Well, he puts it on Kickstarter and raises \$453,000 in 33 days for this thing.

Whitney: Way more than you needed.

Richie: Sells it, plus he's making money selling it every month, then he did this one.

Whitney: Wait, before you go on. Why is it called the Freedom Journal?

Richie: So, this one ... this is his, you know, subtitle, is accomplish your goal, your number one goal in 100 days. So, it was basically to become free in that thing that you're trying to do. You know?

Richie: So, we do that, and then, we also did the [Mastery Journal](#) one.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Which ended up doing, like, almost over 250 Grand, or something like that on Kickstarter-

Whitney: Wow.

Richie: And he has more ideas. And now ... So, he took his digital podcasting company, and turned it into a physical product, which is a journal, and he's making good money with it.

Whitney: Perfect.

Richie: Anyone can do this stuff. You're not-

Whitney: And he, he reached out to you to help him ...

Richie: You just have to have the guts.

Whitney: Well, not only have the guts. I mean, this goes back to your original, original idea that you talked about when you were in school, which is - people have ideas, but they don't necessarily have the networks or the resources to execute those ideas.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: And so, by ... Now John Lee Dumas can probably figure it out-

Richie: Sure.

Whitney: But you, now have developed an expertise-

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: In making that happen, so he says, "Richie, I've got this idea, can we make it happen, and you are now an expert in helping stupid things happen, now.

Richie: That's exactly right.

As I said at the outset this episode is about to take an unusual turn. Now that you've heard me interview Richie, he's going to interview me.

Richie: Should I interview you?

Whitney: You probably should.

Richie: I think I should.

Whitney: Yeah, you probably should.

Richie: Okay. Okay, so I have lots of questions for you.

Whitney: Okay, good.

Richie: You are what some people would call a baller (laughs).

Whitney: Oh my goodness, can you even say that word on camera?

Richie: You are amazing (laughs). Everybody knows you're amazing, and so I'm very humbled and grateful to be here with you (laughs). So wait, let's-

Whitney: Well, tell people what a baller means because not everybody knows...

Richie: No, it's just like ...

Whitney: You think everybody knows?

Richie: It's just a little kid, you know like, just a kid term for, like, you're super cool

Whitney: Oh.

Richie: You are awesome (laughs). Right? Wait, we got a kid back here. What do you think? Is that what it means, a baller?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Richie: She's like, she's so good. You're so cool, you're like the top of the top.

Whitney: Okay, all right.

Richie: (Laughter).

Whitney: I'm blushing, okay, go ahead.

Richie: All right, all right. You're the coolest. Um, like where ... Before I go back to the beginning, like, what are you doing now? Like what's your thing?

Whitney: What am I doing now. What am I doing right now besides working with you is, it's the new year, it's early January 2018, and I am doing the very final edits on my next book called [Build An A-Team](#), with Harvard Business Press and it's going to be published on May 1st. And so what I'm in the middle of and for everybody who's written a book, they all know this. But everybody who has not written a book, here's ... here's what you need to know. Here's what you need to know everybody, is that the writing of the book is the easy part. The getting the book out into the world is the hard part.

Richie: Yeah, that's so true.

Whitney: It is the hard part and so figuring ... Because it ... it draw on skillsets that you don't necessarily have, of figuring out how do you talk about the book, how do you get the book into the right people's hands so that you've got an actual chance of selling more than a hundred books.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: And ... And ... And also getting it out to people that you think can actually benefit from the ideas because everybody who writes a book, yes they want to write it because they feel like they have something to say. I think we all do that, we're motivated by that. But the biggest motivation is that we feel like we have something that will benefit people if they will read it and so that's what I'm focused on right now is really ramping up to the launch of the book.

Richie: Yeah, well there's no doubt that it's going to be super valuable for those who read it. Right? Like that's the thing.

Whitney: Exactly, so how do you get people to read the book?

Richie: It's really hard, it's really hard.

Whitney: Yeah, yeah.

Richie: But why do you do this work? Because like ... because this book is called the A-Team, you said.

Whitney: [Build An A-Team](#)

Richie: Then you had [Disrupt Yourself](#). Right?

Whitney: Right.

Richie: And then you have before that, you had uh-

Whitney: [Dare Dream Do](#).

Richie: *Dare Dream Do*.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And why? Why.

Whitney: Why.

Richie: Why?

Whitney: So it's interesting that we decided to do a course on "[Unstuck](#)" and it's interesting to me that so many questions came in from people on how to get unstuck when we put out the survey of what do you want to know, and we got hundreds and hundreds and, I think, thousands of questions.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: And one of the questions that people asked over and over again is how to get unstuck. Well, what you don't know and anybody who was asking those questions doesn't know, is that when people ask me what my why is and what, actually more importantly, scares me the most, I'm scared of being stuck.

Richie: Mm.

Whitney: I'm scared of being stuck and I want to always figure out how to get unstuck, I want to know how to get unstuck, and then my why is I ... and part of getting unstuck is a willingness to change. And so my why is I want to make it safe for people to change because we need to change.

Richie: Hm, that's perfect.

Whitney: Change is desirable.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: But it's scary and so my why is making it safe for people to change, whether it's you as an individual, whether it's an organization, um, I want to make it safe.

Richie: What does it mean to be safe in change? Because change is inherently risky.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Or not.

Whitney: For me, I think what makes it safe is ... believing that change is part of life, it's part of the cycle of life, of really recognizing that. I think it's also understanding that when there are different ways to mitigate the risk around change-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: ... and which we'll talk more about, but this idea of we often think about, um, when we're trying to change, take on competitive risk.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: So like I'm getting a new job and I want to go after this job that 50 other people on LinkedIn are applying for. And so that's taking on competitive risk when you're trying to get a new job or change.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: And I talk about the notion of market risk, of not applying for the job 50 other people are applying for, but find a problem that needs to be solved and ... and figuring out and scoping out what that would look like, matching it to talents that you have and take on

market risk. And while you still may not get the job, when you take on market risk, and this is what disruption theory tells you, your odds of success ... are, are six times higher. So even though it feels less certain when you take on market risk, whether it's starting a company or getting a job, it's actually less risky because it's more likely it's going to happen.

Richie: Oh, interesting. Yeah-

Whitney: So that's one way that I make it safe for change. I think the other way I try to make it safe for change is unpacking, and this really ... I learned a lot from [Brené Brown](#) around this, is this idea of ... of shame and vulnerability, and so often when we change, it means that we're going to fail because we're doing something new. And unpacking this idea of it's shame that limits disruption, it's shame that limits change. It's not failure. And so if I can help people separate their identity from their actions or things that they're trying to do, that makes it safer for them.

Whitney: You have children, I have children, a lot of people who are listening have children and everybody who's listening was once a child. Well, when we're children, oftentimes people say to you, oh you're so smart, or oh you're so pretty, or oh you're so X.

Richie: Hmm, correct.

Whitney: And so let's focus on the smart p ... piece for a second. So what happens then is your identity becomes wrapped up in being smart. If I got an A, then I reinforce my identity as being smart. If I got a B, then I am dumb. So I'm a success or I'm a failure. It's very, very binary and this builds on the research of Heidi Grant Halvorson and also Carol Dweck, who wrote [Mindset](#). So as you grow up, then you have this ... this notion in your mind of - if I graduate from college Summa Cum Laude, I'm smart and therefore I'm worthwhile.

Richie: Right.

Whitney: If I don't graduate with straight A's, I am dumb and therefore not worthwhile.

Richie: Right.

Whitney: And so then, when we say okay, now it's time to change, now it's time to do something new, now it's time to be a novice, to not know exactly what I'm doing, I might not get an A

Richie: Right.

Whitney: ... at first.

Richie: Right.

Whitney: And therefore I am not worthwhile. And so what I think part of making it safe for people to change is helping them see that distinction.

Richie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: Like when I speak to people, one of the things that people often tweet is shame limits disruption, not failure. Because they're realizing, oh this isn't my identity-

Richie: Right.

Whitney: ... it's just that I'm trying something new.

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: So ... So to answer your question, there's lots of different ways to make it safe for people to change. It's that idea of market versus competitive risk, it's this whole framework or structure I have a personal disruption that puts a structure around change, which involves the piece of identity of trying something new doesn't attack your identity. It's just I am inherently valuable regardless of what I do, and I'm trying something new.

Richie: So you can have this concept of self worth based on a certain outcome but that's not necessarily the truth.

Whitney: It's not the truth, it's false. And what's ... And part of the reason I think the mindfulness is so big and so popular and so important right now is ... There, there was a wonderful book by Stanley Block called [Come to Your Senses](#), and part of all of this mindfulness work is helping people tap into the fact that they are fundamentally perfect.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: They're fundamentally unflawed and mindfulness helps us figure that out, and I think that's why it's so, in part, it's so popular. It's people are trying to tease and pack ... unpack all of that.

Richie: Interesting. So tell me ... Let's just back way up-

Whitney: Yeah.

Richie: Where ... Where are you from?

Whitney: I grew up in San Jose, California.

Richie: Oh, okay, very cool. Was it as full then as it is now?

Whitney: No, it was not.

Richie: It is the place.

Whitney: It was not. It was just San Jose back then. It was a nice place to live-

Richie: Yeah, right.

Whitney: ... Silicon Valley, um, but yeah, that's where I grew up in Almaden Valley.

Richie: Okay, cool. And then growing up, did you ... I mean I'm just guessing here, I have no idea. But did you have experiences where you were like, I want to do this and this is my self worth, and now I'm stuck and how do I get ... I mean, did ... did something happen or can you think of something in your ... in your life that helped you realize these things?

Whitney: I don't know, I think is the answer. What I will tell you is that, um ... And so much comes back to our origin story, and I wrote a little bit about this in my first book [*Dare Dream Do*](#), is that I've always been very, very driven and ... which for a girl, um, growing up when I did, was not very acceptable. Girls aren't allowed to be driven and ambitious and, um, but I was very driven and I think this is in part because my parents they got pregnant, they weren't married. So you know, but they got married because that's what you did in the 60s and ... Um, and I think that because my mere existence somehow had to make up for all the mistakes and the regrets my parents had, I was never good enough.

Richie: Oh.

Whitney: And so that caused me to constantly be like, I need to prove that I'm good enough.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: I've got to get A's. Also I'm the oldest child, right? So all these things and so I think that's what really stoked my ambition of wanting to excel. Um, the piece about being stuck, I think that's something that I probably haven't been aware of-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: ... for, or sort of been able to articulate or put any words around it until probably the last five to 10 years. What I will tell you though is that I did always have this sense of, I have to keep moving forward.

Richie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: I have to keep developing, I have to keep, um, becoming a better person.

Richie: If you don't change ... If you ... You know, you want people to change and we're always afraid of what will happen if we do or if we don't, but what are you afraid would happen, like, to you or to others if they don't change? If you stay.

Whitney: That's such a good question. Um, I don't know. I think maybe ... I think that goes maybe back to my childhood, if I don't improve then I won't be good enough. Now what's interesting about that is that I think so often, um, people in their lives ... the work that

they end up doing in their life, the contribution that they want to make, somehow comes from a wound that they had. Now-

Richie: That's a good point.

Whitney: So what ... The question I think that you're asking me is a really interesting one, is what will happen as I get older and, um, perhaps I'm in my 80s and 90s and I'm not able perhaps to change at the same pace that I was-

Richie: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Whitney: ... able to do when I was younger, perhaps because of physical debilitation. How will that feel and what kind of challenge will that present for me? Because the way that I've navigated through the world for those first 80 years, I can't necessarily navigate the same way. So what that ... what's that going to be like. And I think often times, that's where the crisis comes and why we get stuck, is because the way we've been doing things as Marshall Goldsmith likes to say, one of my mentors, what got me here ... Oh, I sound like I'm totally name dropping. I'm not trying to-

Richie: You're not at all.

Whitney: I'm just trying to give credit.

Richie: These are your people.

Whitney: He says what got me here won't get ... You know, what got you here won't get me ... What got you here won't get you there.

Richie: Won't get you there.

Whitney: Thank you. Um, and so I think that's where our crisis comes, where we realize oh, all the tools I have in my toolkit, guess what, they don't work. So to answer your question of what would happen if I couldn't change, I don't know.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: But that will probably be a challenge that I have to deal with at some point in my life.

Richie: Okay, I'm going to shift gears. What's this S-curve thing?

Whitney: Ah, what is this S-curve thing? Well, it's ... I think it's quickly becoming my favorite letter in the alphabet.

Richie: Okay.

Whitney: Um, what happened, um ... So I was investing with Clay Christensen at the Harvard Business School and we had started a fund called the Disruptive Innovation Fund. We

were trying to, um, figure out which stocks we should be buying. One of the things, um, we came across as we were doing this work was the S-curve, and that was popularized by a sociologist named E.M. Rogers, that was looking and had looked and collected this whole body of research over decades of how quickly is an innovation adopted. How quickly does a virus spread?

Richie: Interesting.

Whitney: So he looked at lots of different ... and it all has to do with exponential growth. And so here's the notion of the S-curve, is at the bottom of the S, growth is happening but it's still in ... in sort of the absolute ... Like a lily pad, right? You've got one lily pad, it's doubling to two lily pads, to four lily pads, to eight lily pads. But the numbers themselves, the absolute numbers, are so small that over a course of time, that looks like absolutely nothing is happening.

Richie: Oh, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: Right? So we're doubling, but nothing is happening. So that's the low end of the S. But once they double enough-

Richie: Oh.

Whitney: ... they hit a tipping point.

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: And so that tipping point-

Richie: Roll over, flip over, yeah.

Whitney: It flips over and so now you move into the inflection point or the sweet spot of that S. That sleek steep back of the S where you've got lots and lots of exponential growth. And then as you start to reach a saturation point, the top of the S-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: The system itself ... So for example, you've got so many lily pads, the lily pads start to die because they're not enough water, etc, then the growth again slows. So this is a ... a pattern of growth that happens over and over again in the natural world, it happens with innovations etc. So that's the basic idea. Then you think about from an innovation perspective.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: At the very beginning, you introduce the products into the market. Growth is happening, like this happened with cellular, it happened ... it happens with, um, television, it happens with any sort of technology adoption.

Richie: Right.

Whitney: Growth is really slow, then once you reach this tipping point, which is typically 10 to 15% of a market, you enter hyper growth. And then at 90% of the market, or saturation, you taper off. Okay, so that's what it looks like with the market.

So now, the S-curve as it applies to the individual, and this is the big a-ha for me. So we're applying this framework to investing-

Richie: Right.

Whitney: And I have the a-ha that the S-curve also helps us understand the psychology of disruption. So at the outset, you're starting something new. You're starting a new job, you're starting a new business, you're starting anything new. You're starting a new year, you're trying to eat less sugar, whatever it is. At the outset, you're working hard, not much is happening. So this is the point in time where you can feel kind of discouraged because you're looking and you're like, I'm working so hard but I'm not losing weight. Okay, low on the S-curve. But then you put in the days and weeks-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: ... and months of practice, you accelerate into competence. And with this comes confidence. The high end of the S-curve, you've hit mastery. Things are easy, you can do it, you can chunk, no problem at all. But you become bored.

Richie: Hm.

Whitney: So the reason the S-curve becomes important is now you get to the top of that S-curve, and you've got what we call the innovator's dilemma. Do you jump off the S-curve or do you try to stay there? The problem is if you try to stay there, your plateau can become a precipice because you can't stay there forever. You'll get bored and so when you get bored-

Richie: You can drop like a cliff too.

Whitney: You can drop like a cliff. Because you precipitate your own demise when you get bored. When you get bored, you just start dialing it in. And so that's where the S-curve comes in for personal disruption, which is what we're talking about today. Now my next book is how do you use that to build an A-Team, how do you manage your team, how do you manage your organization, as a collection of S-curves.

Richie: I love that, cool.

Whitney: So every organization, every person is on an S-curve, and you build an A-Team-

Richie: Do you picture on top of each other?

Whitney: Yes, so you've got this S-curve and you build an A-Team by having roughly 15% of your people at the low end of the S-curve where they're brand new, they don't know what they're doing, they're asking lots of stupid questions-

Richie: It's still interesting to them.

Whitney: Yep, and you have 70% of your people in the sweet spot where they're competent and confident.

Richie: Yep.

Whitney: You're giving them lots of stretch assignments. That's where the innovation is happening.

Richie: Yep.

Whitney: And then you've got 15% of your people at the high end of the S-curve. And then you build innovation ... innovative organizations by when people get to the top of the S-curve, you help them jump to the bottom of a new S-curve.

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: And in fact, if you want to know-

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: ... if your organization is about to be disrupted, you just take the pulse of your workforce because if you've got too many people at the top of that S-curve, they're bored-

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: They're probably going to leave or they're bored or, and worse, they are complacent. And complacent, bored people do not innovate, they get disrupted.

Richie: I love this, but do you know what else happens? Is in that middle, where the people who know what's happening on the bottom and the top, they also get frustrated.

Whitney: Which ones?

Richie: The ones in the middle because the ones at the top aren't supportive.

Whitney: That's right and that's why you've got to let the people at the top jump-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: ... because when they jump, now they're going to be innovative again because they don't know what they're doing. And the middle people get to move up.

Richie: But what's so cool about this ... Oh yeah, they can move up.

Whitney: Right.

Richie: It's actually always upward movement because instead of jumping down to the bottom of the ... your A-Team, you're actually jumping up because the bottom of the next one is higher than the last.

Whitney: For you.

Richie: For you.

Whitney: For you, it is higher than the last.

Richie: Love.

Whitney: Even inside the organization, if it's ... it's a different role-

Richie: Sure.

Whitney: ... and it looks like a step back, it's always moving up for you.

Richie: Yup.

Whitney: Because you're learning and you're getting unstuck.

Richie: You're getting unstuck and that's what creates this ... a series of positive changes. Right?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Richie: If you can see that your next change is actually going to actually ... If you can see that it's going to help you and not hurt you-

Whitney: Right.

Richie: ... you'd be more likely to-

Whitney: Exactly.

Richie: ... make the transition.

Whitney: Exactly and that's why the people at the top are holding other people down because they're like, what do I do? And they're ... They're afraid. Right? Because what do I ... They're either afraid or bored and so if you can, as a manager, help them jump to a new

S-curve, then they're going to re-engage and then the people who were frustrated, that frozen middle, are able to move up.

Richie: That's really good, that's really good. In my ... And I'm all for stupid, it doesn't keep going up like that. Yours is better (laughs). Like I call it the stupid loop where ideas start as stupid-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: ... but then it catches on and it becomes standard.

Whitney: Yup.

Richie: And once it becomes standard and adopted, it becomes ... it becomes stagnant.

Whitney: Oh yeah, we're saying the same thing.

Richie: Because you have to do it over again.

Whitney: Yeah, right.

Richie: It's a loop.

Whitney: Right, right.

Richie: So good.

Whitney: So stupid is the low end of the curve, standard is the sweet spot and stagnant the high end of the S-curve. And so, yeah, we're saying the same thing. We just have different language-

Richie: So good.

Whitney: ... to walk people through it. And what's going to be so fun-

Richie: Yeah, this is ... this is great.

Whitney: ... in this course, is to figure out how to help people, whether it's low end of the curve, high end of the curve, um, stupid or stagnant, it's still the same question. How do you get unstuck?

Richie: Safe ... Safely, safely.

Whitney: How do you get unstuck safely? How do you pack a parachute?

Richie: Do you like what you do? It seems like you love this.

Whitney: I love it so much.

Richie: Your brain is on, like, fire right now.

Whitney: I love my work so much.

Richie: This is so good.

Whitney: But it takes ... And I think that's actually a really good question for us to think through, is that you know, it takes a lot of iterations to get through what you like-

Richie: I know, it's true.

Whitney: ... and love to do because I mean, for you maybe, but I would say you're a little bit unusual of figuring out, or being willing to do what you wanted to do in your 20s.

Richie: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. I don't know, will have to think about it.

Whitney: Yeah, okay.

Richie: Um, just personal life, tell me about, like, like what do you like to do with your family, like ...

Whitney: Okay, so, um, we live in Virginia, in Lexington, Virginia and a small town in the ... My husband teaches at Southern Virginia University, a small liberal arts college. We have two children, um, I'm so glad you asked me this because all the nice people, like, do you have children? Um, so we have a son who was on a mission in Brazil. Interestingly enough, now he's a freshman in college and we have a daughter who's a junior in high school.

Richie: Okay. What's the future? Like for you but also for everyone, like, what ... What do you see? I know you see something, like, what do you see?

Whitney: You know it's really interesting that you just asked me that question and I ... I would've given you a very different answer five years ago or even I don't know, as a child. And so some things have shifted for me and so I'm really excited that you asked that. One is that I grew up in the cold war era and so I, along with many people of my age, my generation, um, were afraid of the apocalypse. The world was going to end and we were all going to get bombed. And so ... And so I think for much of my life, I've been afraid of the future. Like the future was a scary, dystopian place. Um, what's fascinating for me is that over the last couple of months, I've gotten acquainted with the work of Singularity University and Rob Naill and I remember him giving a presentation about the future and how there are so many reasons to be incredibly optimistic about the future.

And so the combination of that conversation with him, a combination, um, of my real belief that there has to be opposition in all things. And so while it may be true that things in the world are bad, and there are many bad things, it is an immutable law that

there has to be a countervailing force of goodness. And so part of I think the choice that I'm making, and so when you ask me what I see going forward, is I feel tremendously optimistic. Yes, I know there will be bad things happen but I am so excited about all the good, amazing things that are happening. And I get excited about being able to be a part of it and knowing that part of the role I feel ... that I get to play is to make it, again, safe for people as all of this change is accelerating because it is. To be able to be in that change and be ... and feel optimistic about it, to feel safe from it's the change, as opposed to as I like to think about ... You know, rather than, um, be tumbled by the waves of change, to be able to surf and ride those waves of change. To bring it back to a surfing metaphor-

Richie: I like it, I can understand that. I can understand that (laughs).

Whitney: Yeah, exactly.

Richie: Well, cool. I honestly, so grateful that you came out here and we're doing this, like-

Whitney: It's going to be fun.

Richie: This is going to be fun.

Whitney: The last question. The last question for now-

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: ... that I want to ask you is the word unstuck. So we're about to embark on this two days of unpacking and figuring out how to help people get unstuck. Can you think of a time in your life where you think you were most stuck?

Richie: Hmm. Well, I, I'll reference when my son passed away cause your world falls apart. And we also read some statistics you know, like, "Hey, the, a lot of marriages fall apart after something like this happens", so we, we knew that we had a choice and we told ourselves we would let, we would either let this destroy us or we would turn this tragedy into a triumph.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: And I read a grief pamphlet that said, "It's a tunnel, not a cave."

Whitney: Interesting.

Richie: And so I had that hope, like, even though it's dark and even though it's hard, and even though-

Whitney: There was an end on the other side.

Richie: ... you can get through-

Whitney: Not trapped, okay.

Richie: But a tunnel can become a cave if you let it. Right?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: It's actually, it actually is a choice. And so, so we decided whatever we do, we're going to try and live better for him.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: You know, to, to ... And, but, we've had all kinds of weird, crazy things happen, you know, in our lives.

Whitney: Initially you were stuck. Right? So that was your stuckness.

Richie: Because when you're stuck in, in that mindset, like, really what gets you stuck is "What am I going to do next?" I don't know.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And I'm not sure I have it in me.

Richie: So, I won't do anything or I'm scared that it will be a cave.

Whitney: Right.

Richie: Instead of a tunnel, and so without that idea, that hope, without that courage, you just stop. And when you stop you regress.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So how long was it do you think, or do you recollect, before you started ... So you had made the choice for it to be a t-, tunnel not a cave, but how long before you felt like you had gotten out of that tunnel.

Richie: I don't know if I'm even out of it, even in this moment. You know? Like sometimes it, it comes in waves. And so when we feel down, we're just like, "I'm feeling down. It's okay."

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: You know, when we feel up, sometimes when it, immediately after you actually feel guilty for feeling okay because so many bad things have happened to you or to others. You know?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richie: Now I'm saying this in the framework or thought of my son passing away but it's similar feelings. I mean pain is like gas in a room, it just expands. Right? So, it could be that...

Whitney: I've never heard that metaphor before.

Richie: Yeah, it could be like a job loss, you feel it and it affects everything. The same way earlier we said about one idea can change everything else. That one, I'm willing to do it, changes everything else. Pain can do the same thing, unless you actually have to recognize it.

Whitney: Excuse me.

Richie: And if you recognize it and name and tame it kind of thing, then you can then move forward and do something about it.

Whitney: Hmm.

Richie: But you don't always know where you're going to go. At first you just kind of have to know, or have the desire to be, like, "I'm not where I want to be."

Whitney: Right.

Richie: "I'm stuck."

Whitney: Right.

Richie: Yeah, and then look forward to how, w-, which is what we're going to unpack. Right? I mean, Th-, th-, in this course but how am I going to get unstuck? I think it starts with recognizing that you might be stuck or being prepared that you know one day you will be stuck.

Whitney: Hmm.

Richie: So, so General Motors, they ... Just real quick. It's a good example. Henry Ford was crazy and they owned over-

Whitney: Crazy Henry.

Richie: ... 50% of the market at one point. You know? Model T, Black Cars. And then his employees, this is a true story, his employees when he was on vacation made him a new car. He came, saw it, jumped on the windshield, smashed it and broke off the, the, the side, you know, the car door and all these kind of things and then like, "Okay, I guess we're not doing new cars". GM started doing so well in different colors, different models, started eating their market share, that they actually had to shut down their plants for, for I think it was like six months, and then create the Model A. They were forced, but GM believed in something called planned obsolescence. They knew they were always going to go out of business, they'd always create something new. And it's like that in our lives. You have to always realize you're, at one point you're not going to be relevant anymore, so you better have the continuous learning...

Whitney: Planned obsolescence.

Richie: Yeah.

Whitney: I love that and, for me, obviously, I think about that all the time if this ... Well, you would know this, obviously, not everybody who is listening, but my ideas around disrupt yourself.

Richie: Yes.

Whitney: It's the notion that you need to be willing to disrupt yourself and that whether you're pushed or you jump, it's still an opportunity to grow but this ... You've got to plan your obsolescence. What I love about that, what I think is so fascinating is that one of my mentors is [Alan Mullaly](#) and, who was, who turned around Ford in the last decade-

Richie: Wow.

Whitney: ... and-

Richie: There you go.

Whitney: ... where he, he understood that, but at this point now, GM didn't. So, it's fascinating how there have been times where...

Richie: There you go.

Whitney: ... Ford didn't get it, GM did and then, now in the last two decades where Ford got it and GM did not.

Richie: I just bought a Ford, so, there you go.

Whitney: We have a Ford too.

Richie: (laughs)

Whitney: Go Ford! I have Ford stock as well, so-

Richie: There you go. (laughs) Full disclosure.

Whitney: So, Yeah, exactly. So I, I think for me that, that is a wonderful introduction and I'm so excited because I, I, we get to have this experience of - as I'm getting to know you...

Richie: I know.

Whitney: ... at the same time that everybody who's listening-

Richie: I'm excited.

Whitney: ... is also getting to know you as well.

I love that Richie's starting a cashmere business with BYU students from Mongolia was helpful to the students and it also helped him see his own possibilities. When we help other people, we aren't as weighed down by our own emotional baggage, and therefore able to think more expansively. Which allows you to trick your sub-conscious mind. It doesn't know the difference. Now that you've made it possible for someone else, it's your possibility too, opening the door to many more possibilities: Richie's helping source products overseas has become one of his major businesses -- Proudct. And, don't wait until you're 80 to start something stupid. Richie's son and brother-in-law dying woke him up. Let this be your wake-up call. Start something stupid now.

As for what I learned from all of this. Well, I was pretty nervous heading into the recording process because we didn't have scripts, we didn't have teleprompters, we'd made the decision to be discovery-driven. What made this "Let's just see how it goes" possible was the power of collaboration. Working with Richie -- he just puts you at ease. I was genuinely surprised, and delighted, at how much fun I had, and how much great CONTENT came out of the process.

If you'd like to see what we've created, take a moment and visit UNSTUCK45.com. Enter your email, and we'll let you know when the course launches. Richie and I look forward to helping you get unstuck.

Practical tip: If someone reaches out to you to collaborate, and the digital breadcrumbs (if you don't know what I'm talking about, go back and listen to the Peter Sims' episode) if the digital breadcrumbs tell you this person is deeply generous, and they are very different from you (the more different the better), give it a whirl. Something wonderful might happen.

Thank you again to Richie Norton for being my guest, to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, manager and editor Macy Robison, content contributor Heather Hunt, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson.
And this is Disrupt Yourself.

