

Disrupt Yourself Podcast with Whitney Johnson

Episode 75: Karla Ballard

- Whitney: Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption. My guest today is Karla Ballard, the CEO and co-founder of [YING](#), a peer-to-peer skill sharing platform, a time bank that allows you to trade time rather than money. Welcome to the show, Karla.
- Karla: Thank you for having me, Whitney.
- Whitney: I want to hear about where you grew up and what you wanted to be when you grew up?
- Karla: Oh, that's always an interesting question, (laughs) because I will remember when I was really little creating something called Karemybars. My best friend was Remy Newman and my name is Karla, K-A-R-L-A (laughs). So, I, um, we decided, Remy and I decided to create these marshmallow and chocolate ... actually, it's so funny cause she was white, I'm black. So we created these marshmallow chocolate candy bars and we actually sold them at school.
- Whitney: They sound good. (Laughs)
- Karla: Right. (Laughs)
- Whitney: Yeah, I want one. You have to bring them back.
- Karla: I guess I might have to. (Laughs)
- Whitney: (Laughs)
- Karla: So I always had this thirst to be an entrepreneur. I even created these clay-like earrings, you know, I would spend the weekend working on them and be excited to bring them to school to sell them, so I think it started way back when.
- Whitney: How, uh, sorry, where did you grow up? What part of the United States?
- Karla: Oh, so grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Whitney: Okay.
- Karla: Um, so this was a good, you know, Super Bowl year for us. (Laughs)
- Whitney: Hmm, right. Right. Okay. You didn't become an entrepreneur at least initially. You went and you became a banker.
- Karla: Exactly. So it's interesting how life sort of, uh, plays out, because you know, there were circumstances that, uh, positioned me to certainly make sure that

there was steady income coming in, um, you know, right after graduation. So I ended up, uh, growing up in Philadelphia, then went to Ne- University of Virginia.

Whitney: UVA. Yes.

Karla: UVA wahoo, wahoo. (Laughs)

Whitney: I-I live near ... I live in, uh, Lexington, Virginia, so-

Karla: Oh, my goodness. That's awesome.

Whitney: ... I fly out of Charlottesville all the time. UVA is a good school.

Karla: It is a solid school. It definitely is. I'm just super proud of that, and I graduated and went-went straight into banking. My, uh, father, unfortunately had a stroke and so I, um, was excited to have the opportunity to be close to him. And I was accepted to be a part of their management development program. So-

Whitney: At what-at what bank?

Karla: At MBNA America.

Whitney: Okay. Got it.

Karla: MBNA I ... one of the opportunities I had was when-I had was when I went through the management development program, which was essentially a rotation throughout the entire corporation. I had a chance to be in Camden, Maine, spent time there, um, to be in their marketing department. And I traveled a lot, but one of the things that I realized is in Wilmington, Delaware, we were faced with a lot of juvenile delinquency that started to pop up in this little city that we were living in. And, um, I had an idea to figure out a way to teach young people about the economic system versus the underground market that they were getting engaged in. So MBNA was one of the in ... uh, first, uh, investors in the program.

I also partnered with the 76ers and the, um, University of Delaware. And we, this was sort of my first entrepreneurial venture,-

Whitney: Hm.

Karla: ... where I was very blessed to have, you know, an investment from the bank that was also very passionate about, um this CSR effort, this Corporate Social Responsibility effort. So that was my first leap, um, as an entrepreneur. And then, eventually, I started to create a consulting practice that led me to work with local non-profit organizations on their strategy around sustainability. So I was able to take-

Whitney: Interesting.

Karla: Yeah, able to take some of that corporate experience and bring it into the NGO sector.

Whitney: And what's interesting then as I look at your background is f-from there, it looks you started to move. You did consulting in the cause marketing space and moved more in that direction. Do you want to talk-

Karla: Yes.

Whitney: ... about that very briefly-

Karla: Yes.

Whitney: ... just because I-

Karla: Yes, you got it.

Whitney: ... it's fun to watch all these puzzle pieces pull together. So maybe talk about that-that quickly?

Karla: Well, locally, in, uh, Wilmington Delaware, there were a lot of NGOs that were struggling, you know? And part of what I learned in being in corporate America was a fierce understanding on keeping your eye that bottom line, right?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: And making sure that not only did you keep your eye on it, but you thought of innovative strategies to, you know, increase your returns. And so being able to translate that dialog to non-profits in Wilmington, and then eventually in Washington D.C., that were also focused on social return outcomes was super exciting, because this is when you started to see people were defining what CSR was, corporate social responsibility. So I was really at that precipice of, when the dialog, you know, the dialog started. And so just really working with NGO, um, leadership, both the executive director and the board to really, um, put our heads down to think about what assets do you have in your organization that we can monetize.

Whitney: So you-you are an entrepreneur at heart as a child and you go to college, you realize, okay, food on the table, not entrepreneur yet. I want to go be with my dad. You go back up to Philadelphia. You go into the rotation program at MBNA and then you start the ... but the entrepreneur in you just in you just cannot ...

Karla: (Laughs)

Whitney: ... it has to come out and play. And so you kind of straddle the two worlds by getting MBNA to-to, um, to fund this Youth Literacy Program. And that just-

Karla: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: ... starts moving you closer and closer to this-this non-profit world, but also really cause-marketing world. Then you go and become a cause marketer.

Karla: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: And so then in 2015, I think-

Karla: Yeah.

Whitney: ... you decide to start [YING](#). Now time banks have been around for a while. Time sharing programs have been around for a while. What ... in what ways would you say [YING](#) is disrupting or reinventing, you know, what was and-and what is different about what you're doing? Your approach or-or the rationale or what ... what's different about it?

Karla: You just brought up a really interesting point, um, that I haven't had a chance to talk about much, which-which is the fact that time banking is this incredible movement of individuals that really have, um, defined a different way of living in their life, you know? It's really about saying, "I believe first and foremost in the essence of what community means or to be in community means." And I'm also looking at myself as somebody who is very interested engaging in that as well as engaging in, um, sharing my time and skills, right? And I'm not looking for a financial return. I'm looking for, um, you know, that connection, and I'm looking for potentially having the ability to get access to services I might not have the ability to get access to because of finances.

So your first time banking is really at the essence about that type of mindset.

But, at the same time, keeping that core value the same, the essence of that, it's almost like when YWCAs and YMCAs came out in the world, we knew it was like that local place you could go to work out. You could go there. You might see the same people over the last four decades, but they created a sustainable model in which to grow these branches.

So ultimately, it was the same type of thinking that we put into it. Taking into the consideration this Venmo-like model, [Venmo](#) is a peer-to-peer payment platform. We wanted to really focus on making something very easy for people to access. So different than time banking, you're going, typically, um, online, you know, uh, through a desktop. We wanted to create a mobile experience.

Whitney: Hmm.

Karla: So that's the first thing that was different. Second thing that was different was the branding. Time banking in and of itself has its own sort of reputation for a certain market. Um, and it's also, it feels very non-profit-like, right? So from a brand perspective, we had to make sure even the name was, um, short, sweet to the point. And some people might be like, well, why [YING](#)? You know, we'll get to that. But, ultimately, the brand of [YING](#) also needed to be defined in a very certain way. So we, that was the second thing that was different, because it's a short, one-syllable, uh, word. The third thing was that we wanted to make sure that we were also focused on the millennial population as well as the perennial population, right? So those were our two target areas.

Uh, so if we stay with the millennials, we understood that for them, you know, times are tough. It's not very easy for college grads to go out and get a job. But what they love doing, is they love connecting with each other. They love, um, you know, creating that tribe, having experiences. So we needed to make sure that technology and the platform and the brand were positioned for that type of populace.

Whitney: You just said something, the perennials, who are you defining as perennials?

Karla: Well, (laughs) I'm glad you asked. So it's-it's essentially-

Whitney: I've never heard that term before. (Laughs)

Karla: So, you're talking probably, you know, 40s and up, you know individuals with the millennial mindset.

Whitney: Got it. Okay. So-so, um, it's a mobile experience, the branding's experien ... the branding is different and it's also more focused on people who have a very purpose driven mindset. I'm thinking initially about millennials, but there are a lot of people who are ... you just taught me a new term, perennials who are also thinking about that.

Now something that you said, um, that you've been quoted as saying, which I thought was really interesting, um, as I think about [YING](#), is you said, "47% of jobs we know today will be lost over the ne ... next two decades." We know there's a lot of literature on that, but here's what you said that I thought was fascinating.

"By creating an alternative to cash, time banking will be in a fundamental part of addressing this transition."

And, um, so talk to us a little bit about why you think, um, this is so important, in terms of us being able to manage this massive disruption and upheaval that is-is-is currently and will continue to take place within the labor market?

Karla: When you look at, um, artificial intelligence and machine learning, we are only getting a taste of what's to come, in terms of structural unemployment. And it's pretty, um, disheartening if you want to stay there and marinate in it, right? Or if you want to start to look at things that are potentially alternatives to that, um, this is where I believe we come in.

Part of that is looking at the assets and values we already have, right in terms of skill sets in our-in our, um, society. And not under-utilizing them, saying, "Okay, yes, AI is going to possibly disrupt jobs." We know that's, you know, that's sort of the projection here. However, what we can't dismiss is the fact that there's still people that will have skills, um, and needs that can be matched up, so that we can still create, um, an individual that's not stressed out because they just lost their job. We have to create more resiliency. And part of it is that being able to create a database and create a community that's very intentionally wanting to connect with each other to trade with each other to you know exchange skills with each other is just the beginning of what I think is going to be foundationally important when it really does hit.

Whitney: So your-your sense is that by having this idea of time banking, it's gonna be really helpful for us in addressing this whole transition and this upheaval that we're gonna see in the labor market. Um, and one of the things I love that I've-I've seen you, um, imprint saying that it allows us to see everyone's skills and time as being valued equally. It helps us like realize these invisible skills within our social network. I think all things that are really important and valuable.

Um, can you just talk for a minute, um, people who are listening to this I know they're gonna be interested, so can you talk through how someone can engage with this and if they're not in one of the communities where, you know, you're doing this, what does that look like, et cetera? And just talk us through a little bit of the-the technical aspect of being able to engage with you.

Karla: So one of the key things, you know, we're-we're a startup, so we're just getting out there, um, even though at the same time we've-we've been approached, uh, by some major multinational corporations who interestingly enough are wanting to bring a sense of community back into their corporation. So, (laughs) I could not be more excited about, um, about that.

Whitney: So from a business model, I was wondering about that, um, because on the face of it, it sounds very non-profit, but you're a startup so it means you're for-profit. So, is the business model that people ... how-how ... if someone wants to engage with you what does that business model look like?

Karla: Right. So we're doing a promotion, um, in terms of the in-introductory pricing. So right now, it's, um, \$150 a month for an organization to lar- ... you know, fairly large organization to have access to the platform. We are working though with smaller organizations that we think are a great fit and we'll be ... we'll negotiate what the pricing looks like in that space, right? Um because we're building the platform, we're building the audience. For individuals, it does not

cost anything at this time, so we're only working with organizations. So our revenue model is really a monthly SaaS license fee. Um, for large corporations it's a whole different pricing.

Whitney: It sounds like it's like really reasonable, because you're, so you're still just trying to build out and build traction, and you're experimenting, it sounds like with the business model itself, is that correct?

Karla: Right, exactly. So we're at the point where we're, um, experimenting with pricing.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: And making sure that we're landing in the right, uh, spot, you know with that. And ultimately we have now on the table about three major multinational, um, corporations interested, right? So that's a different pricing model all together.

Whitney: Mm, okay. All right, so when you're saying \$150, that's more for small-small businesses, affinity groups.

Karla: You got it.

Whitney: Whereas, if you're working with a major mer ... multinational, we're talking a much different price points.

Karla: Correct, correct.

Whitney: Okay, all right. Are you disclosing that or no?

Karla: No.

Whitney: Okay.

Karla: Not yet.

Whitney: All right, that's fine. Okay. Um, all right. I just wanted to be really clear, so a major multinational doesn't listen to this and go awesome and it's like, you know,-

Karla: Okay. (Laughs)

Whitney: ... you get a different price, you don't get that same price, sorry, you can pay for this. Um, okay, so-

Karla: Right.

Whitney: So, it's interesting. If I look at the skills listed, so on the-on the app, so I went into the app, um, I signed up this morning, it's very ... I love the, you know, the user experience, it's very easy to use. Lots and lots of different skills that you can trade, I'm curious if you would-

Karla: Hmm.

Whitney: ... share some of the skills that are listed on there and, um, just give us an idea of what kinds of skills you've listed, maybe give us, uh, a sampling of those skills?

Karla: This is my favorite part, because I'm, uh, (laughs) I'm obsessed with this inventory. I know it seems weird, but you've got things like cooking, sewing, pet sitting, babysitting. You know, um, we have hiking groups, so walking, you know, walking companions, someone, a workout buddy, personal trainer. So they range in different categories, you know, nine different categories. We have business services, so that could be anywhere from consulting to marketing graphic design, web development.

And then we move over to education so you could have tutoring, you know, um, Spanish less- lessons, uh, runs the gamut. Then we can move over to wellness, we have yoga instructors, you know, massage therapy and things like that. Um, and then they really, you know, it ranges now when you're talking about emergency services. When we went to Houston, we had to put the skills mucking and gutting, go figure.

Whitney: Hmm.

Karla: I have no idea what mucking and gutting, um, you know, was and how crucial it is for FEMA. So we also are making sure that we are very sensitized to regional skills and different categories.

Whitney: So interesting, so are you finding that there are, um, some skills that people are offering really frequently like as you're looking at your data, are there certain skills that get offered the most and are there certain skills that are asked for, for the most from an economic perspective?

Karla: Absolutely. So you just, uh, really hit the nail in the head, so for instance, um, graphic dec ... graphic design, web development, logo making, you know pet sitting, um, personal trainer, yoga, you know there are some very key ones that are re ... Spanish lessons.

Whitney: Those are requested frequently.

Karla: Frequently. Here's the other cool thing, is accounting, tax preparation, um, administration, um, errands. There are a lot of people that are saying I'd love to offer errands. I-I just ...

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: I was shocked when I saw that, but I was like, "That's so cool." That people are willing to run errands for each other.

Whitney: And this doesn't ... And-and, it sounds like there are ways to do this where you have to be in the same physical location like running errands, but it sounds like there are also ways to do this virtually, uh, are you doing ... are you experimenting with both types of models?

Karla: Absolutely, we had, um, an individual reach out to a member from New York. Uh, located in Los Angeles and they just-just kept talking about how incredible it was. She needed to optimize her website for mobile and one member had that skill here in Los Angeles and they were able to connect and get it done, which was incredible. She didn't have to pay for it. She paid through it through time credits. And now they're in a position where, uh, when she comes out to L.A. they're going to go and hangout-

Whitney: Hmm.

Karla: ... and connect (laughs).

Whitney: Yeah, that's really fascinating. So, uh, yeah, there's something I mean, uh, as I said earlier that, uh, you ... I ... this idea, it's something that I think that I think is so lovely and beautiful about this is that this idea is everyone is an asset that you've said. And also the...the notion that, um, that we all are ... uh, it allows and-and we obviously can't do this in all facets of our lives, at least, I don't think we can.

Karla: Right.

Whitney: But, there is something about it that allows us to just be reminded that my time is as valuable as your time, and your time is as valuable as my time. And there's, uh, something very, very, um, I don't know what the word is, um, humane. I guess, you-you talk about this-

Karla: It's humane, right. (Laughs)

Whitney: ... it's hum-hum ... You talk about this.

Karla: It's humane, currency for humankind. (Laughs)

Whitney: No, that's right. I was like, "Oh, yeah, I got you got a slogan that goes something along those lines, currency for humankind. That is a great slogan and double entendre and captures everything that you do." Um, just it's really, uh, a lovely, um, thing.

I think from a business standpoint, you know, I talk a lot about learning curves and, you know, you're the low-end of your learning curve, you're in the sweet spot, you're at the high end of your learning curve, um, where would you say you're on your learning curve in terms of as an entrepreneur and building this out? You're definitely not at the high-end, do you think you're-

Karla: No, no, no.

Whitney: ... low, low, low-end? Do you think you're moving into the sweet spot where do you think, where does it feel like you are?

Karla: I think, you know, I think I am coming up on the sweet spot, but I don't think I have arrived at all.

Whitney: Okay.

Karla: You know, um, so for me, it's really, uh, I've been so embedded in getting the technology right, right?

Whitney: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: Um, and that's been a major focus. Our next focus is product/market fit, so we're really getting an understanding of what's going to work. We're experimenting right now, you know, who's the best customer for us to really focus on. Similar to [TaskRabbit](#), they ended up saying, you know what? We're going to really focus on the handy work-

Whitney: Right.

Karla: ... and building things. So we're going to end up with IKEA, ultimately. And that was ... they were, you know, they had various tasks that they were offering. So for us, right now, it's, you know we're really at that point where we're understanding what's the best market fit, what are the affinity groups that really can pick this up and show us what pe ... what our customers really want, you know. It's not about us just dicta- dictating this is what it's going to be, but we're in that-that nascent stage, so as an entrepreneur myself, I'm learning that process.

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: You know.

Whitney: Yeah and it sounds ... It's interesting, if-if I think about, you know, I went on the app this morning, um, thank you for the ... uh, the code that allowed me to do that. And, uh, looking at, um, you know the skills that I was offering, the skills that I was asking for based on what you just described, I'm probably a little bit of an outlier in terms of what I could offer and even probably what I asked for.

And so it's intere- ... it will be interesting. I think what you're saying is you're going to get all this data and you're going to crunch the numbers.

Karla: Yes.

Whitney: And then based on what the data is telling you that's how you're going to-to, um, to get the-the product/market fit right.

Karla: You got it. In fact, here in L.A. though it's a good point. Podcast came up like literally someone wanted to learn how to do a podcast and understand that industry, you know.

Whitney: Hmm.

Karla: Those are the types of skills we have to stay on top of, because they're also reflective of where we are in our trends in society. You know, what are people interested in? We ... You know, I feel like we've done a ... uh, a good job to a good start, right?

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: A solid job.

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: Now, we have to make sure we're staying open. I'm staying mentally open to receiving and very flexible to where it takes us.

Whitney: Right. So at its simplest, I over time, I put it ... you know, I-I consult with someone for an hour. I, um, coach someone for an hour, um, I start to build up these time credits and I have 10 credits in my bank. And then I can use those for other services that people are offering. Is it that simple?

Karla: Right, oh, uh, well, it's even more simple, but more exciting, I think,-

Whitney: Hmm.

Karla: ... because we all are given 24 hours in a day. It's what we do at that time that matters. So when you open your account, you're going to see 24 time credits already there.

Whitney: Oh, interesting, interesting. So how does that work though, if your ... are people donating their time initially, how do you-

Karla: No, you-y ... because we innately start with 24 hours every day,-

Whitney: Right.

Karla: I am for bringing balance back into our economic system. And one of the things that we always forget, because we're sometimes basing our value too much on what's in our bank account versus not or we judge people based on what's in their bank account versus not. We have to get that out of our heads if we're going to continue to sort of maintain the sense of wellness in our community. Um, and so part of it is, okay, I start with 24 hours, what can I do with those 24 hours? I have skills. Oh, that's amazing, how ... Okay, how can I use those skills? Is it going to be all for me, me, me or can I share those skills with other people?

Whitney: Okay, wait. Uh, my mind is a little bit blown here, so all right, so-so I sign up, I've got 24 hour ... 24 hours of time credits in my account right now.

Karla: Correct.

Whitney: Is that ... Okay, that's okay. What I ... I'm struggling with is I'm like, okay, so you just said to me, "Whitney, you just signed up for [YING](#), you've got 24 hours of time credits in your account."

Karla: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: So I'm like, "Awesome." So I'm going to use the ... I'm going to use three of them, I need a room in my home painted, it's probably going to take three hours, so now I'm down to 21. I need, you know, I promised to take a meal over to the school for the teachers, for my daughter who's a senior in high school.

I'm going to use another one, because I'm not going to make it, I'm going to ask someone else to make it,-

Karla: Right.

Whitney: ... so now I'm down to 20. But, the question I have is, where did those 24 hours come from?

Karla: When you woke up. Every day, we have 24 hours, right?

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: We ... We're given 24 hours with those skills. So for us, it was really important-

Whitney: Huh.

Karla: ... for everyone to recognize that when we get up in the morning, we have 24 hours. We have 24 hours, you know.

Whitney: Huh.

Karla: And that's, and e... and everyone has 24 hours that wakes up in the morning. Every human being, every dog being, you know. Anyone we all have 24 hours, everyone across, anyone across the globe has the same amount of hours. The folks in, um, Australia and New Guinea, you know, I mean all over. And so part of it is for us to be really very clear that in order for us to all be on the same level of playing field here, right? In terms of how we're ... we're building our sharing economy or skill sharing economy-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: ... that we all are valued beings, we're all valued assets period, point blank, no questions asked. But, no one is starting with more than someone else. We're all starting at the same level playing field.

As it relates to this particular sharing economy, right? We're all starting at the same playing field. If you are in the capital economy, mar.., you know, the monetary economy, the fiat monetary economy, we all have different ... we're coming into it, and the market economy, monetary economy at a different level. That's just the way it is, that's how it was set up. There's no harm, no foul, there's nobody that's anti-that. It's just how it was set. The way that the sharing economy is set and the skill sharing economy is set is that we all start with 24 hours in a day.

Whitney: Right, but the thing-the thing that I am struggling with is that I ... so I know that I've automatically got the 24 hours, but I, uh, how ... but I haven't-I haven't earned those hours, is that where you're trying to go with this?

Karla: (Laughs) Look how that sounds. I love how you said that, Whitney. "I didn't earn them."

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: So what did, uh, what did you have to do? Imagine that.

Whitney: Well, I-I didn't, you know, I didn't earn them, because I haven't served anybody. I haven't gone out and I haven't consulted anybody, so I-I don't have an hour in my account, because I didn't give an hour. You're just saying, "No, you have the 24 hours and you get to start there." I think that's what you're saying.

Karla: Uh, that's exactly, what I'm saying.

Whitney: It's fascinating.

Karla: And it felt, it's so ... And it ... it's-it's interesting, because I, we had this VC meeting.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: And, um, one of the individuals was really ... just really struggled with the fact that-

Whitney: Kind of like I am right now. (Laughs)

Karla: Right, right. He said to me ... he was like, "Okay, wait, Karla, hold on."

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: "Are you telling me, like I went to Harvard, I went to Penn grad school, uh, and- and I spent at least two years at this particular law firm, worked really hard to get in to that law firm, are you telling me my time is worth somebody that's in construction? My time is worth his time?" I had to look at him, because it was one of these moments where I was like, you know, I used to be a banker, I used to be in the financial service, so I get it, right? I absolutely get it, so very hard to put your head around, but at the same time, when you hear it vocalized like that, you know, um, it-it-

Whitney: Actually, Karla. I get that part. I get that part.

Karla: Wait.

Whitney: I get that my time and your time are equal. I get that. I guess what I'm struggling with is the fact that I have 24 credits just at the very beginning, that's where I'm getting confused.

Karla: Yeah, and I-and I ... uh, so I see what we ... I see where you're going. With the 24 time credits, it really is just that, because in a factual way, right? We literally wake up with 24 hours.

Whitney: Okay.

Karla: So what we wanted to do was to give, um, almost the serotonin hit, dopamine hit-

Whitney: Yeah, got it. Okay. So you are doing what I thought you were doing, okay, got it. And your-your view is-is that by doing that there ... you're creating a sense of abundance and so ... So it's almost like you're seeding the market and saying, "Okay, Whitney, you've got 24, what are you going to do with them?" And then, because I've got those 24, then I automatically think, okay, what am I going to do? Who am I going to ...

Karla: You got it-

Whitney: When someone comes to me and says, "I need an hour of consulting." I'll be like, "You got it."

Karla: That's right.

Whitney: I'm going to give you that hour of consulting, because I know I have 24 hours in my bank that I can use.

Karla: That's right.

Whitney: Okay, I get it now.

Karla: You got it.

Whitney: All right, understood. I-I got the-the more sort of metaphysical, existential part of it, it was more of just the mechanics of it,-

Karla: (Laughs) Got it.

Whitney: ... so I was getting completely thrown off on. Okay.

Karla: (Laughs) Got it.

Whitney: All right, so, um, just to wrap up... actually I have two final questions, so when you think about this idea of how this is going to help smooth things as we're having this, um, this seismic shift in the labor market, why do you think it's going to make a difference? In your brain, what's the-what's the psychology around why you think it's going to make a difference for people?

Karla: Fundamentally, um, people are very interested in two things, what am I worth, how am I seen as valued and can I get my needs met? And so, ultimately, the exercise, right, just the pure exercise of what we're creating, in spite of a massive disruption coming with potentially individual's jobs, um, based on AI machine learning and being able to create more efficiencies in our financial, you know, in our, um, economy. There's still that human-human desire to feel valued. So if I get now laid off, just me, being able to have an opportunity to have, um, the ability to help someone else or to actually leverage the skill I was using or a skill that might have been dormant that I would have always loved to use-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla: ... now that I'm being displaced. This is awesome. I'm going to get the psychological impact needed to start at least being able to be human and be valued, right, to be valued?

Whitney: Yeah. I got it.

Karla: That's huge for me. Second, I still have needs. (Laughs)

Whitney: Right.

Karla: I still have fundamental needs that need to get met, so if I'm in a situation where people are willing, you know, to help meet my needs from that perspective, then fantastic. And if I can then create savings, economic savings, by leveraging my, you know affinity group members and, uh, the people around that have these skills, then by all means, I'm going to leverage that.

Whitney: Yeah.

Karla: So I think it's those two items.

Whitney: Yeah, yeah, right. So it comes back to this idea of, okay, I've lost my job, things are changing, things are shifting, but if I am willing to show up with the thing that I have, which is my hands and my heart and this next hour, that's enough, that will be enough.

Karla: That's enough, that's enough.

Whitney: And it's really powerful. Okay, Karla Ballard, thank you so much for being our guest on the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. It's been interesting and fascinating and I think I'm so-I'm so hopeful for you in the good that you're trying to do in the world, so thank you for sharing your time with us.

Karla: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you, Whitney, thank you, this has been wonderful. Thank you.

What you earn is based on what you do--how valuable it is to other people--and how replaceable you are. That is how our capitalist society works. I get that. I honor that.

What I love about Karla's work is that it acknowledges us as human beings. Not only the skills we've developed, but our inherent value. This becomes especially important during times of transition like when we lose our job. It levels the playing field. It allows us to preserve our identity. I also love the idea that when you open [YING](#) account, you start with 24 hours already in the bank. From the get-go, everyone has value.

Practical tip: Time is a form of currency. Maybe you're not ready to sign up for something official like [YING](#) but what if you spent one hour of your time this week to serve someone?

Thank you again to Karla Ballard for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributors Emilie Davis and Libby Newman, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.