

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 85: Q&A WITH WHITNEY

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast, I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption. And today, as we do on occasion, we are going to disrupt, and the way we're going to do that is I'm not going to be answering the questions, or actually, I'm going to answer the questions but I'm not going to ask them. The person that's going to ask those questions is Macy Robison, you might remember her. She did the question asking on our [episode Build an A Team](#).

She's our podcast manager and producer, and so with that. I'm going to turn it over to her to be in the driver seat while she asks, and I, I hope answer. Macy.

MACY I love being in charge, this is delightful, I'm excited. We reached out on social media, and asked um, what questions you would like to ask Whitney. We got some great responses, and we've combined those questions that you asked as listeners with some other questions that she gets asked often, and some that you know I just wanted to know the answer to. So to start with today Whitney, you talk a lot about books, and love books. And in fact we [have a new page on your website](#) that we'll link to in the show notes that has just a huge library of the books that you love, the books you've been listening to and reading right now, and, and books from our podcast guests. It's whitneyjohnson.com/library if you want to check that out.

So this is a good excuse to talk about that in addition to the question that I have which is, what are you reading right now? And I also want to know because you ask people this all the time, what changes have you made as a result of what you're reading right now?

WHITNEY Hmm, I love that question so much. Yeah I do, I love books. Whenever I read a book and I actually underline a lot in books because then it's like I'm having a conversation with the person that wrote the book, but I also find that I love to share books because it's a way for me to connect with you. Like if I read something and I loved it, and then I can share it with you, then I feel more connected to you.

And so with that, I will tell you the two books that I am reading right now, and what I'm doing. So the first one is called *Reinforcements*, it's by Heidi Grant, and she talks about how do you ask for things? She says we have to ask for help all the time, and yet, it's so painful for so many of us, and then she talks about well, okay, so how do you ask for help more effectively? And make it less painful for yourself?

And so one of the things she said to do is that when you need help, people oftentimes don't know that you need help, and they also don't know how to help. And so what you want to do is just be very direct and specific, I'm trying to do X, will you help me with X? But she said it's really important to make sure that when you're asking, you don't apologize like oh, I know this is so much trouble for you, this is so difficult for you because what happens is when you do that, you are taking away from the person who's about to help you the opportunity to feel good for having helped you.

So she said it's really important that when you ask for help, to do that, be direct, be specific so that they know what you want, and then just be really grateful when they offer the help, so that they can have that good feeling of saying you know what, I just helped someone today and it felt really good. And so what am I doing as a consequence of that? Well just this morning, I needed to ask someone for help, and I thought to myself, okay, in the past I might've asked this way, I might've maybe apologized or even been not direct with what I wanted. And so I was straightforward and I said, you know, here's what I'm trying to do, would you be willing to help me?

And so I did something differently. I haven't gotten the answer yet because I literally did it this morning, but I think that's a great um, way or see for me a practical application of something I read, and now something that I'm going to do. It's a fantastic book, in fact I'd really love to get her on the podcast. So I'm going to reach out and see what happens.

MACY I love that, that's so, and, and learning in real time like you just did it this morning, so we'll have-

WHITNEY Yeah, isn't that, isn't it helpful to say so, don't you love that idea of like I'm going to be direct, here's what I need, would you be willing to help me?

MACY Well and I just finished listening to Brené Brown's new book [Dare to Lead](#).

WHITNEY Yes.

MACY My biggest takeaways from that kind of piggy back on what you just said here, which she teaches her kids, they've infused it in her work, that - clear is kind. Unclear is unkind. And so when you communicate with people, if you've got a hidden agenda, if you've got something that you, you know really want but you're holding back like you just said, that is, that is not kind. It's, it's kind when you're clear with people. And, and, even if it's a hard conversation, it's better to be clear and, and that just goes along with it. If you're asking for something, it's more kind to be clear, and use your words like I say to my seven year old all the time.

WHITNEY Right, I love that, those two things really, really dove tail, and super cool that you just mentioned Brené Brown, she is going to come on the podcast in a few months, so I'm really excited about that as well. So clear is kind, be direct about what you want. And so now the challenge for you dear listeners is, think about that and the next time you ask someone for something, be clear to be kind, be direct and then people will be able to have the opportunity to help you, which we all want to help.

The second one is an oldie but goodie, and it's [The E-Myth](#) by Michael Gerber. For some reason, I seem to find books way, way, way after they were written. Um, but this book has really been helpful to me as I'm thinking about building out our business around building A teams, and he talks about three different roles or hats that we all wear. We wear a technician's hat which is oftentimes why we go into business in the first place. And then he talks about the manager hat, and the entrepreneurial hat and we have to be willing to wear all three hats. And so um, and I tend to try to dwell in the technician, less in the

manager, maybe that's why I needed to write a book about building an A team, and then entrepreneurial piece.

And so on the manager it's really managing your people, the people that you work with, and how can you help them do the job that they need to do? And then the entrepreneurial piece is how do you run a business? And so one of the things he talks a lot about is systems, and processes in order to be able to scale, and so something that I'm doing differently as a consequence of having read that is that when we have, and Macy you've experienced this is when we have some sort of systemic breakdown, as we're running the business, it's not okay, well what did you do, what did you do wrong? It's more of okay, what broke down here so that we can fix it, because we're trying to get the system in place, so that we can scale.

It's a fascinating book, and I think that's, that's the question, or that's the do, the big do for me around that is as we're, anybody who's listening to this trying to build a business, trying to build a team is when something breaks down say to yourself okay, what system was in place, or wasn't in place that we can fix so that the next time it doesn't break down so that we can scale, so that we can be even more high performing than we, than we believe that we are today?

So those are the two books, what I'm learning, and doing.

MACY And just real quick to extend that a little further, if, even if you're not an entrepreneur, I feel like this is an important book, because the systems that you have in your life, and in your home um, can make your life run more smoothly, and can you know, work well or break down as well. So if you're listening to this and maybe you don't own your own business, maybe you work for someone else, there are still systems you can probably implement in your day to make your day to day tasks go more smoothly and, and manage those better instead of just being the technician all day.

WHITNEY Oh, Macy! I'm so glad you said that. So, for those of you who um, [subscribe to my newsletter](#), you will know that just a couple of weeks ago I wrote a piece and we'll include it in the show notes about how when I'm on the road, we have systems in place. I know where I'm supposed to be, I know what I need to do, I know what I need to deliver. And there's something that's quite relaxing about that, and then I get home, and I feel like all the systems break down because I still need to do my work, but then also attend to my family, attend to my household, attend to my church life and, and my friends. And then I don't really have systems in place.

MACY Moving towards the next question, um, this is kind of along those lines actually. What single habit or ritual do you believe contributes the most to your success?

WHITNEY You know, that's, that's, that, that's a hard one to answer, and it's not hard to answer um because I don't know the answer, but it's hard to answer because it's a personal answer. But I'm going to answer it anyway. I think the, the thing that most contributes or I would say the ritual is that every single morning, when I get up, regardless of the day of the week, I read um, and or listen to a scriptural text and a religious mess-, message. Um, and the reason that that is so important is that it grounds me in my faith, and it grounds me in what I believe, and I, and that allows me to then know what my purpose is.

And I think that I can't function and none of us can function if we don't know why we're doing what we're doing. And so that's the single most important thing for me, and I would say the same is for everyone who's listening. So regardless of your religious persuasion, even if you're not religious, I do think it's important for us, every single morning and possibly every single night is to read, or re-read, or listen to, or write down what is it that I believe? What is it that I value? So that becomes the thing that really centers us and

grounds us, and because once we know our why, then we're able to focus on that what. But also once we know where our, our why is, then we're willing and able to persist in the face of difficulty and frustration, and discouragement.

And so that's the thing that I do every single morning that I absolutely believe is the fundamental um contributor to my being able to get anything, of any sort of worth done in any given day.

MACY

I love that you said that, I have a similar ritual, and you just made me realize, I have not been following it for the last several days. And that explains a lot of my chaos in my day to me. Um, and in addition, I also love that you said um it doesn't matter what the text is if it's meaningful to you. I have a, a friend who reads one of Eckhardt Tolle's books, as though it's scripture. Like she studies it, and re-reads it, and gets a new copy, and re marks it up, and, and that's what grounds her. So yeah finding that, and then reading it, that's a great, great suggestion.

It's been about a year since the last Q&A episode we did. So when you look back, um, at this past year, at 2018, what has been your biggest lesson?

WHITNEY

I think a really important lesson for me as I thought about you know, it's interesting, because I look at the fact that you know I worked on Wall Street, and I was a financial analyst, and I've analyzed, you know, probably thousands of different companies.

And yet, I had this a-ha, probably six months ago that I needed to apply all of that, that I had learned in terms of analyzing my own business, and that I'm running a business, and that um, I need to focus not only on revenue, but also on profit. And managing the cost side of that business. And so that has been a really important lesson for me, and, and in part, why I picked up The E-Myth. And I can't remember who recommended it, it was probably two or three people because I tend to not actually read something or listen to something until I've heard someone recommend it two or three times.

But um, that's been a really big and important lesson for me and really, really exciting to find myself at the bottom, and I hope at some point moving into the sweet spot of learning, in terms of building a profitable business. So it's not just you know I go out and I speak here and there you know, and I, I go and I coach here and there. But how do you build a robust business, one that can scale around the ideas of building an A-team, around the ideas of personal disruption?

And so that's been a really big lesson for me, what does that look like? Who do I need to have in place? And how do I need to be able to interact with the people that I work with so that I'm, you being one of the people Macy, so that I can um, so that I can build this, but also um, walk my talk and as I'm talking about jumping to new learning curves, and allowing the people who I work with to jump to new learning curves, I think that's a really, really important um question to be asking an answering.

MACY

I love that, so um, you know, you said that you're, you, you feel like you're at the lower end of this curve, um thinking of yourself as, as a business owner applying those lessons to that role, and when you give your speeches and when you talk about that learning curve of learning, um, I'm sorry, that learning curve of disruption and, you know there's the low end sweet spot, and the high end, um you often say that you know if it feels lonely or you're scared, you're on the right track, and that there are um, feelings of doubt and discouragement when you're at that low end of the learning curve.

And since that's a place where you just said that you've been in this, in this particular learning curve, I'm wondering um you know, since that comes with feelings of doubt, how

do you overcome those feelings of doubt and discouragement? And continue to persist on that learning curve?

WHITNEY

Yeah, yeah I you know it's so interesting because that, that, what you just paraphrased of you know if it's lonely and scary you're on the right path to disruption, because by definition if you're disrupting you're playing where no one else is playing? It's so interesting because that ends up comforting me and I think whenever I say it people, it really resonates, because we're like oh so I'm supposed to feel this way. Um, I think that's one of the ways that I deal with it is I, I recognize all right, so part of the reason I feel this way is that I'm at the low end of the curve, I'm working hard, it doesn't look like much is happening because that's the S curve math. And so awareness of that is helpful.

Another thing that I do is go back to that, that spiritual practice or that morning practice of grounding myself in knowing why I'm doing what I'm doing that allows me to persist. It's also really important um, for me to have a few um, few people and few things in my life that aren't about me, and aren't about what I'm trying to grow and build. Um, whether it's interacting with my husband, whether it's interacting with my, my children. Um, whether it's interacting with some young women at church that I am, I'm their advisor or leader, they're 16 and 17 years old and thinking about what do they need today? And, and finding ways to show up to them um on a weekly basis.

And so I think it's again, I, I remind myself that if it's only in scary I'm on the right path. Um, I ground myself in what I believe, which gives me purpose, and then the third thing is to have some balance in my life, so it's not just about work it's also about being connected to people I love, and um finding ways to um, serve them and care about them, and what they care about, and just being present for them. So those are some things that I do to shift my focus. I guess the fourth thing I would say, because I think this is important is that I've started meditating, um, about a year ago I started meditating. Um, I, I used the Headspace app, and that has been incredibly helpful as well, to be able to focus on okay, I'm not what I do, I am who I am.

Just like every single person who's listening, none of us are what we do, we are who we are, we are inherently of worth, and so when I can remember that, that also helps me to separate out so I love the Zig Zigler quote, you know failure is an event not a person. And so those are four things that I do to help me um, to deal with the, the fear I feel. Um, which I often feel, but I, I, that's, that's what I do to keep moving forward.

MACY

Oh thank you for sharing that. I think we all do, it's just part of human nature. We, we try to avoid fear so of- we try to avoid things because of fear, so often. Or whether it's the fear of failure, or um fear of you know getting egg on our face or whatever it might be. Um, but pushing through it is so, so important. And, and those are some great strategies to do that. In fact, um, one of the um questions that came in from LinkedIn dovetails with what you just answered a little bit, the question was, what are the five main personal strengths you consider that an executive must have today to get harmony between family life and job without losing control of any two? You know we see implosions of, of leaders often in the news who haven't managed to keep harmony between you know personal life and job.

And some of the things you just mentioned are great for that. Like that, that knowledge and mindfulness of you know knowing that you are not what you do, and, and keeping boundaries, and making you know your life rich outside of work. Um so those are kind of three things that I would, you know pull from that previous answer, are he asked for five, so I don't know if there are any other-

WHITNEY

Yeah [crosstalk 00:20:04]. I, I love that, I mean it reminds me you know many, many people who listen to or, or follow what I do are familiar with Clayton Christensen's work

and he wrote that book How Will You Measure Your Life, which has been so, so formative for so many people. And I, I think one of the things he talk about is you know how are we spending our time today? And so one of the things that I did to, to build on that question or to maybe supplement, the, the answer to that question is a few um months ago we had Laura Vanderkam on the podcast, and she wrote a book called Off the Clock, which was really influential for me. And she suggested that we track our time, um for, in 15 minute increments or in half an hour increments.

And I did that for about six weeks, and that was a really important exercise for me and I think it can be for you as well is if you're saying okay you know, I value home, I value family, then you track your time, how much time am I spending at home? How much time am I spending um, um sorry, home and family, but also work as well, how much time am I spending work, at work? How much time am I spending with my family? How much of my time am I spending in the community? How much time am I sleeping? You know all those different things. And one of the things that was actually really encouraging for me is because I love work and I get so absorbed in work and it's, it's very much on something that, that feeds me but is also very much a, a solace and it's challenging, and all those things.

And so I can get very absorbed in it. And one of the things that's really encouraging is that when I started to track my time I found yes, I do get seven hours and a quarter of sleep on average a night, my children are, are not young. But also I am spending more time with my family than I thought I was. And so that was really encouraging for me, so I think you know to answer the, the question that was asked on LinkedIn, I think that if we track our time that'll allow us to see if you know if what we're actually doing is in sync with what we want to be doing.

And then we can, we can recalibrate if necessary, but that would be the other suggestion that I would make.

MACY That is great, that is, I'm going to take that advice actually. Um, because I'm, I do have young kids and, and, and try to juggle a lot of things, and that actually might be a useful exercise for me. Um, let's see, okay, so here's another great question from LinkedIn, and I think this was from Janika, um, when faced with a big decision-

WHITNEY Oh Janika Dillon?

MACY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

WHITNEY Yeah.

MACY When faced with-

WHITNEY Yeah-

MACY Big decision, what are the questions you ask yourself to say yes with three exclamation points, or no, and how did you come up with those criteria and questions? And I think that's such an important thing along with this you know conversation where you just had about time is that you know saying no to things is so critical, and having a criteria to do so just creating a system that makes that easier if you have that decided ahead of time you made that decision in advance.

So, um, and what questions are those that you ask yourself?

WHITNEY So that is a great question Janika, I don't know that I have actually a system in place, but you know it's interesting, it goes back to what we mentioned at the very beginning of the conversation, is Reinforcements and, and Heidi Grant's piece about people you know asking for help. What, what she found is that we want to help, and so we want to say yes. And so it's actually painful for us to say no. Which makes it really difficult for any of us who are pleasers, I think it's, it's especially difficult for women because we're socialized to say yes.

MACY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

WHITNEY So one of the criteria that I do use is if someone asks me to do something I just go immediately to my sense of like do I want to do this? And sometimes it's like yes! I want to do this! Um, and there's some things that are an absolute no, this doesn't make any sense at all. Um, it's a lot, lot more difficult when there's this gray area. There's some things that I have in the back of my mind that are helping me think through that, I remember um, my daughter sharing with me something that Warren Buffett had written where he said you know someone said well what's the secret? You know, how do you make decisions?

And he said you know I want you to make a list of 30 things that you think you want to do in your life, and they're like okay good. And then he said, all right now I want you to make a list of you know look at the top 10 priorities, and then after, and I'm paraphrasing, but after you look at those 10 top priorities then I want you to take you know number 20 to 30 are pretty easily to you know check off and say I'm not going to do those, but then he said I want you to take like numbers three through 10, and ignore them like say I am not going to do those, because those are the ones that are the siren song that always pull you back in, and say yes I can do that.

Um, and so I think the challenge, so the, the ones that are yes are easy, the ones that are an absolute no are hard. I think the hardest ones are when we want to say yes to a person, but we need to say no to the activity. And that is where I'm spending a lot of time, Janika is trying to figure out how do I do that? How can I say when someone asks me to do something that I really cannot do because it will allow me to or disallow my ability to do other things that I have set as a high priority, whether it's my family or something that I'm trying to accomplish in the business is how do I say no to that person without them feeling like I'm saying no to them?

And that is what I'm trying to figure out, and I'm working on it, I think I'm getting better at it. The other thing I'm doing Janika is that I'm consulting with people like Macy, with people like Amy Humble who um, who manages all of our speaking. Is having that conversation of okay, does that make sense for the business, and having a bit of a, of a um, a convening ourselves in making a decision strategically if it makes sense to say yes or no. Um, the last thing I would say uh, and this is probably not quite what you're asking, but I do think it's an, an important nuance is that sometimes people ask for something and they're asking, they're not asking you to do things for free, or they are, but they're not asking you to do it long term.

They just need a quick favor. And I remember one of my coach slash therapists saying to me a few years ago you need to just figure out the difference, you know are they trying to take advantage of you and asking you for 10 hours of work for free, or is it something quick that they need? You can help them, you're in a position to do that, it will take 10 minutes and you can help them, and it's done and then they've gotten the help that they need and they can move forward. And so it's a bit of a jumble but those are, that's how I'm thinking. Figuring out what are your absolute yes's and figure out what your absolute no's are on the in between convene with people, have a conversation. Talk to your truth tellers, whether it's your, the people who you work with, whether it's your family make a decision, think about it, sleep on it before you say an immediate yes.

Like, oftentimes we say yes way too quickly, and then when we have to say no, find a way to say no in, in, in a way that has people realize that it's not no to them as a person, their fundamental worth, it's just no it won't work in terms of the things that you're trying to get done. So those are my thoughts.

MACY Just to add is that when you've decided you're going to say no and you know why you're saying no that I have to remember and I think it's important to remember that I can't control their feelings about it.

WHITNEY Hmm.

MACY That even if they feel like I'm saying no to them as a person, I don't get to control how they feel about it anyway, and so I just need to make the best decision I can make, and be in, as clear and as kind as I can be. And, and say no because it's not in alignment with what I'm trying to do with my own values, and my own life.

When you're, when you're living with in, within your values, um, it's okay to just go ahead and say those yes's without thinking. But that's a little bit of a system,

WHITNEY You know it's interesting too Macy, you said the thing about you know being clear, one of the things that is difficult, I think it's, it's actually more difficult for women to say no than men, or at least there's, there tends to be more of a backlash for women than men, so just for everyone to be aware of that. Um, we know from the, there was a Anna Fels is a psychologist, she wrote you know do women lack ambition or you know or necessary ambition? Women are tend, tended to only see, be seen as feminine within the context of them um helping someone else or giving up resources to someone else.

And so as women in general we're expected to give, and so it is a little bit harder for us to say no. Um, because there's potentially more backlash but I think if we're all aware of that, then when we have a woman say no to us, whether we're another woman saying no to us or a woman saying no to a man, if we can be, understand that there was actually a higher cost for them to say no. Um, and that they really are trying to live out their convictions and be gentle with people when they say no and not take it personally, I think that's a really important thing for us all to remember, and as I'm saying this I'm like yeah I need to remember like if a woman says no it was hard for her to say no to me, so it's really important that I respect, respect that no, um, and, and respect her and who she is and what she's trying to do, and how she's trying to, to show up in the world.

MACY Absolutely, and some of the best no's I've seen in emails actually um, with a, a template that I saw of Michael Hyatt's, I think he was talking about it in something, uh, a, a podcast or something and it was just something along the lines of, you know, you clearly have something wonderful going on here, um to stay in alignment with my values and what I'm trying to build, um, that's not going to work for me, um my important, you know, but I, I wish you the best of luck. Like it was a very kind no.

Um and it was very clear I'm not doing it justice because I'm paraphrasing, but um, you know framing it for people that I'm not just rejecting you, and, and that may help protect their feelings even though we can't be in charge of them, um-

WHITNEY Right.

MACY But framing it in that, in that way that I really have thought about this, and this is what I'm trying to do and how I'm trying live. I think that the um, that that's, that's, that's helpful as well, that's been helpful for me.

WHITNEY I think giving people a framework and a template for how to say no um, in an appropriate way is, is really lovely.

MACY I love this next question, this actually came from LinkedIn as well. Um, and I, I think this is going to be timely for you. The question is, curious about how you as a parent with huge accomplishments, have thought about parenting your children in a way that they don't feel like they have to be a replica in values and accomplishments. The example she gives, is "I'm an entrepreneur, went to an Ivy League school, and while yes these things are great, I don't want to push my kid even subconsciously into going for what I wanted for myself." And I've heard you, there's a quote that I've heard you say often that about the unrealized dreams of the parents.

WHITNEY Hmm.

MACY Um, and I, I think this kind of goes, this question kind of goes along with that. So I'd love to hear how you-

WHITNEY Yeah.

MACY View that, with your two kids.

WHITNEY Yeah, so the quote is from Carl Jung. "He said the greatest influence on a child is the un-lived life of the parent." Um, so well first of all, one of the things that's really important for all of us to, to recognize is that um, our children um, actually listen to what we say far less than we think they do, and they watch what we do far more than we think they do. So, so even though subconsciously we're trying, not trying to foist our lifestyle upon them, even though we want to foist it on them.

Um, they're going to watch what you do, and they're going to end up modeling much of our behavior is modeling for them. Um, it's really funny though that you ask that question, because just this week we had this experience where my daughter, um, she's graduating from high school, she wanted to apply for this um, for this study abroad after high school, and um, to go study in China.

She's doing college applications, school's really intense right now and she missed the deadline. It was like 4:00 PM, it got to be 10:00 at night, she said well what should we do? And I said well, I think you should email them and see if perhaps they are willing to extend the deadline. They're probably going to say no, but they might say yes. So she wrote them a note, um, I still filled out my parental questions that I had to answer, I wrote a note as well to, you know advocate on her behalf. But then they came back and said no still, like we, sorry, but we can't, we can't do this.

Um, one of the things that it was difficult, and challenging for in this whole experience is that it's so easy as a parent to have it start to be about you. Like if my child gets this internship, than I'm awesome as a parent, and I'm also by extension because she got this internship, and she doesn't get the internship, than I'm terrible as a parent. And by extension, I myself am terrible. And so this is something that I had been working on, and working on, and I probably will be working on until the day I die. Is to repeat to myself as my children are doing things, and they're successful, and sometimes they're not successful and they're learning is that it's not about me, it's not about me, it's not about me. It's about her, it's about him, it's about her, it's about him, and what's happening right now does not determine their future it does not determine their past.

It's just this experiences that they are having. And I recited that to myself a lot yesterday. What we can do is to the extent that we whenever we catch ourselves trying to live out our

lives through them, is to pull back and just remind ourselves this is not our life, it's their life.

It's really hard, and we're not going to do it very well most of the time, but the fact that we want to do it well, that we're trying to do it well, that we're not telling our children how to feel, because when my daughter tells me I'm struggling with this, I'll want to fix it immediately. The more we can just say it's not my life, it's theirs, it's not about me, it's about you, and say that over, and over, and over again. Our children will pick up on that. They will pick up on the fact that we're going to go do our thing. We want to be successful, we want them to be successful.

But we also respect and honor that this is their life. And wow, aren't we lucky? That we get to be their parent, and we get to be an observer, and a supporter, and a cheerleader, and a coach. If they want us to, but we're going to love them anyway, regardless of what they do because of who they are, and because we get to be their parent.

MACY I love that. Um, it bring ... It actually reminds me of an analogy, one of my favorite parenting analogies I ever heard is from Linda Eyre. Um, and she talks about how children are like plants in a garden. When you first put the seeds in the ground, you don't know what they're going to be when they bloom, and grow, and at the beginning they all need the same things. You know, sun, and light, and fertilizer. But you know this one is a tomato plant, and this one is a pumpkin, and this one is a you know flowering bush, and they all need different things to grow, and, and I think when we get over involved, and over prune, and over control a plant, that's when they can you know they're not able to grow to their full potential. Like if you mess with one too much or try to craft it into something else, like turn it into something that it's not, it's going to die.

WHITNEY Yeah wow, so amazing, that's really powerful. So what you're saying is like if you've planted the seed, and are meant to be thyme for example, which I am really in love with the spice thyme right now, but instead we want them to be a pumpkin, because it's, um, it's Thanksgiving time of year and we just had Halloween, then that's going to be problematic, because then they can't be the thyme, they're going to, we're going to want them to be a pumpkin and, and, and they will lose and we will lose. I love that, I love that metaphor.

MACY I came up with this question based on some stuff you've mentioned a lot today, which is uh quotes. You are a collector and a memorizer of quotes. And it seems like whenever I hear you speak or teach, um, even if it's off the cuff like today, you've always got a quote at the ready that like drives the point home. And I'm wondering is there a quote that has come up for you lately that's resonating for you right now?

WHITNEY Hmm. A quote that's come up for me later, lately that's resonated for me. Yes there is a quote. Um, and that is from Bob Proctor, we call him Uncle Bob in our household because I'm such a big um, follower of his work. Um, and it's um, "Amateurs compete, professional create."

MACY Hmm.

WHITNEY That is so powerful me, for me. And this goes to something that Macy, you say a lot is, you know, don't look sideways, just look forward. You can learn from other people, but don't look sideways. And I think it's the same kind of idea is that we um, there's so much to create, and this goes to the idea of disruption and taking the right risks, and playing what everyone else is playing. When we're competing, then we're an amateur. When we're creating, then we're focused on what we're supposed to do and what we can create, and what we can build. And there's so much opportunity it's not a zero sum game. And that's a quote that's really sticking with me right now, and something that I think about a lot I probably say it to myself several times a day.

Um, and it's very, very powerful in, in trying to again build out a business and um, and actually back to the parenting thing, helping our children build out their own lives is, it's not about competing with other people, it's about what are we going to create?

MACY You know and I actually heard someone say recently, we can't criticize and create at the same time. Like don't be a critic, be a creator.

WHITNEY Oh.

MACY And so that's a different kind of looking sideways right? Like you're not looking sideways and then feeling insecure about what someone else is doing, if you're looking sideways and criticizing, um, you also find yourself in the space where you can't create.

WHITNEY Yeah I love that, and I love that reminds me of the quote from the film "Ratatouille" that you know, that Anton Ego, the reformed um film critic, and he, he says you know whenever someone tries to create or start something new, they need friends. They need people who are going to encourage and support them, and when you're um, criticizing you can't help something you created. I love that, that's a great, that's a great quote, thank you for sharing that.

MACY Yes, and thank you for coming up with another quote to answer my quote. Like I said, you proved my point with your answer, I love it. Um I wanted to do a couple of rapid fire questions that I borrowed from other podcasters that I really love. Um, this first one is from Rachel Hollis, and um, she, she hosts the Rise podcast. Her husband Dave is actually going to be on the podcast next week I think. Um and one thing she asks everyone that's on her podcast that I wanted to ask you, because you travel a lot, what are your one or two must have items when you travel?

WHITNEY A book, a book that I love. So a, a fiction book. So like I've read the, like the Stormlight Archives by Brandon Sanderson, I've read you know, all three of his first books are 1,000 pages, I, I like to have some type of fiction with me that's like my friend um, away from home. And that's one thing, and then the other thing is I have to have false eyelashes with me so that when I go up on stage, if for whatever reason the person who's going to do my makeup for that morning doesn't have it with them, I have them. I've learned that one the hard way.

But those are two things that I absolutely have to have with me when I travel.

MACY I love that, and to give context, when she says she travels with a book, it's not a Kindle, it's 1,000 page book. Like it's and, she takes the actual book with her which I think is just really fun, and endearing. Because you think of it as a friend, I think that's really, that doesn't surprise that that is one of your items. The eyelashes surprise me a little bit, but given your checklist for speaking, and wanting to make sure you feel comfortable and ready to, you know, make audience feel like you're there to be there in service and provide value for them, that actually doesn't surprise me because-

WHITNEY Right, that's right because what I've found is that when you're on a really big stage, if you don't feel like you look your best, and you know that 1,000 people are looking at you, if you feel self-conscious in any sort of way, like you said, then you can't focus on the person that you're talking to. And so make sure you look, you feel like you look good and then you can focus. Focus, focus, focus on the person that you're talking to, and I've found that that's been really important to do. Um, it sounds odd but it is important, and it's, it's made a big, big difference.

MACY Nope, you've got to figure out what works and then do it, that's great.

WHITNEY Yeah. Absolutely.

MACY Last question, you often ask at the end of your podcast episodes, um, what is something you're going to do to disrupt yourself in the next few months. And I have a kind of, I guess alternate version to that question. You've recently posted a quote from Sheryl Sandberg, "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" Um, so you can either answer that question from Sheryl Sandberg, and-

WHITNEY Oh I love it. Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's perfect. I know what I would, exactly what I would do if I weren't afraid. Um, I would uh, do I would reach out to the people that I need to reach out to, to ask how I can give a TED Talk.

MACY Hmm. Well, you know what I'm going to say next, right?

WHITNEY Um, yes I do. But go ahead and say it anyway just for fun, just for everybody to listen [crosstalk 00:45:18].

MACY I dare you, Whitney, to reach out to the people you need to reach out to, to see what you need to do to give at TED Talk. You've given a TEDx talk a couple of them maybe, or at least for sure one I know of, and-

WHITNEY Yeah.

MACY Did a great job. But yes, I dare you then, because I know you know who they are, to reach out to whoever you need to reach out to, to see what needs to happen to give a TED Talk, and we will, we will circle back, or I will circle back at the very least. Um, and, and see if that's happened in the next few months.

WHITNEY That's a great dare, that's a great dare, yeah. It's a great dare. So this has been so fun. So-

MACY Thank you-

WHITNEY So, so, so fun. I hope everybody else enjoys this as much as we did, because I had fun and I hope that you had fun Macy.

MACY I did, it's, I feel like as an avid podcast listener of yours and a few others, you, you have this mental conversation with the host anyway, as you're listening to them talk and you think of things you would want to ask. So to have the opportunity to be the actual other voice is really fun, so thanks for the opportunity.

WHITNEY Awesome. Okay. Everybody we hope you will join us next time, it's been really fun to be able to have this conversation. And as you've listened to the conversation, if there are questions that you think of, that you have that, that you want to know and hope that we will address either next time or just in a Q&A back and forth in the show notes or on social media, we would love to have you join the conversation and or the [newsletter](#) I will tell you, every time someone writes to me on the newsletter, I always respond. I love being able to hear from you. So thank you again for joining us today. I'm Whitney Johnson and this is Disrupt Yourself.