

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPISODE 95: ENCORE – DONALD MILLER

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

Today, we've got a special version of the podcast for you. If you've listened for any length of time, you've probably heard me talk about [StoryBrand](#) or Donald Miller. We had him as a guest on the podcast at the end of 2017 after [Macy Robison](#), a member of my team and I attended the live [StoryBrand](#) workshop in Nashville. This particular episode aired at the end of 2017, It's the most listened to episode.

But that's not why we decided to bring it back.

Those of you who subscribe to our newsletter may remember that a few weeks ago I went on a social media fast, and when it was done I wrote a newsletter to share some of the things I learned. That in and of itself isn't out of the ordinary. One of the things I love about what I do is the opportunity to share and exchange ideas.)

What was extraordinary, is a that after the newsletter was delivered, I received a gift – a gift from one of our readers. She tactfully let me know that my newsletter was interesting, but inauthentic. She noted that the learnings I'd shared were filled with these links and click throughs, but since the links all led to my content, the learning – it came off as self-serving instead of helpful to her as a reader. She very kindly said she'd appreciated my content in the past, but let me know that she would be unsubscribing.

It was, it was kind of hard to read this email. But I'm so grateful she made the time to write and share her impressions. In looking back at the text, I'd realized that the lesson I'd learned and forgotten was crystal clear. Instead of being the guide in this newsletter, I was the hero. Because what I'd learn during the social fast was so personal, and that combined with the links to my own content, I'd inadvertently positioned myself as the hero. And this reader, she felt that difference when she read my words.

Repetition – it’s a good teacher. It is a good teacher.

As you’ll hear me talk about with Don and at the end of this episode - while sitting in the StoryBrand workshop, I had a similar epiphany about a speech I had bombed several years prior... I bombed that speech because I’d been trying to be the hero. The audience felt it. They felt it.

It’s a subtle difference - the difference between playing the guide and playing the hero, but it’s such an important thing to keep in mind as we exchange and share ideas with each other.

So, please enjoy this encore episode of my conversation with Donald Miller - New York Times bestselling author and the CEO and founder of StoryBrand, a marketing company that helps you clarify your marketing message so people will listen.

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**WHITNEY** Don Miller, I’m so happy to have you on the podcast today can you share with us your name and what you do.

**DONALD** My name is Donald Miller and I’m the CEO of StoryBrand.

**WHITNEY** That’s an intriguing name of a company. What does StoryBrand do?

**DONALD** StoryBrand is a company that helps other companies clarify their message and so we believe that most companies are wasting enormous amounts of money on marketing. Their marketing just isn’t working. Even though they’re paying a lot for it.

And the reason is, the Web site they spent a lot of money on, the billboard they spent a lot of money on, even the commercial they spent a lot of money on - those, they’re all beautiful and very creative. But because the message isn’t clear, because they’re not clearly identifying and defining a problem they can solve for their customer. Customers aren’t hearing those ads. They’re not seeing those billboards. They’re bouncing off those Web sites and so, you know, most people buy things because they read words or hear words that make them want to buy things.

So we take our money down to a graphic artist, a designer, they create a web site for us. It’s really beautiful, and maybe we help them figure out what we want to say on that Web site. But nobody in that room - you, me, nobody, the designer - has a degree in sales copy, right? But it’s the sales copy that sells things.

So, we basically created a framework that helps companies figure out exactly what to say over and over - repeated with the same language - to brand themselves in the subconscious of customers. And once they say it correctly and populate all of their marketing methodology with those sentences, with those statements they see increased revenue almost every time.

WHITNEY

So that's interesting. So you're saying it's about the sentences. But what about that statement, "A picture is worth a thousand words?"

DONALD

Well, a picture is worth a thousand words and so it includes the pictures. And so not only in your in your web site - you know it's so funny, Whitney, you probably know that in our workshops we put people's Web sites up on a giant television screen and we just analyze them.

I just did this yesterday for about 300 entrepreneurs - business leaders - and I put up one Web site and it was a wonderful woman who has a floral company and it said, the Web site said, "Floral events." And so I said do you do events for flowers? Where flowers come and spend time with each other and hang out and say, "What are you going to wear to Christmas? I was thinking of wearing a red petal..." you know. No! There's nothing, there's no such thing as a floral event maybe a Rose Parade. And she said no, that's not what we do. And I said well you're telling me on your Web site that's what you do. So what do you do? She goes, "Well, we host, you know, really beautiful events and flowers are a part of that. And I said, "OK, well, flowers are all of that? Or just part of that?" "Part of that. You know, also the tables, the chairs, the dishes, the you know - everything but the food." And I said, "Why doesn't your website say - 'We host the most beautiful events in the world.' Because that would tell me what you do. Instead, it says 'floral events' so I don't know if I come to you - you know, of course I don't think it's an actual event for flowers. I know you do something with flowers - but, do I come to you for my homecoming corsage? Do I come to you for Valentine's flowers for my wife? I would have thought all of that based on what you told me you did." And so what she really did was she tried to get cute or clever, but she wasn't clear.

And this day and age, when consumers are encountering 3000 commercial messages a year...I mean, pardon me...3000 commercial messages a day. You can't be cute or clever. You've got to be clear.

Another gentleman came up, we put his Web site up. He had a picture of his building on his Web site. And across the top of his web site was Contact, Frequently Asked Questions, Connect...you know on and on. I mean, like 10 links - all of them the same color, the same size, a jumble of words - nothing in the header that told me what he did. And so I asked him, I said, "Are you selling this building?" And he said, "No, I'm not selling the building, that's just that's just our building. That's where we work." "Are you leasing this building?" No, I'm not leasing the building." "Because this Web site, with the images - it's telling me that you're selling this building. What do you do?" He said, "Well, we recycle steel. We ship it to China and we ship it back." "Why in the world do you have a picture of your building?" So your building is actually confusing. Everybody goes, "You need to say we are an incredible recycler," and some sort of differentiator that differentiates you in the market. And there should not be 10 links at the top of your website there should be one. It should say Talk to a Rep or Schedule an Appointment.

Those small changes - they sound so obvious - when we're so close to our products and services, it's very hard for us to understand how much we're confusing our audience because we're not confused ourselves, right? We understand it intimately. So, I cast no judgement on the people who make these websites, except sometimes you have to look from the outside and say, "I think what you're saying is not what people are hearing." And remember when people read or hear words that make them want to buy things. Those are the triggers that actually cause them to part with their money. So the words have to be correct. We cannot confuse people.

WHITNEY

So, I have to say right now - I've just finished reading your book *Building a StoryBrand* and kudos to you because it is clear and concise. And so it's on brand. You are walking

your talk. So, congratulations. I recommend it to everybody who's trying to clarify their message.

**DONALD** Well, thanks! That means a lot coming from you.

**WHITNEY** So, you talk a little bit in the book about Maslow's hierarchy - can you just talk us through then what needs are pain points most, if not every, person has?

**DONALD** Yeah, well you know Maslow's hierarchy is so important because it helps us understand what human beings are actually trying to do. So if you're trying to sell a product, you want to know what motivates people, and what motivates people - and Bain and Company has done a study on this. They've basically taken something like Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and turned it into an elements of value pyramid. It's a wonderful tool. Thirty years of research these guys put into it. But they basically have identified 30 elements that consumers actually want. And just like Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the bottom elements are functional, the mid elements are emotional, the top elements are life changing. You know, so you go from "Well, I want to save money and reduce risk," to "I want to experience nostalgia," to "I want to experience self-transcendence." But this is a cheat sheet and everybody should listen to this - if you get the elements of value pyramid they tell you the 30 things that your consumers want.

Now, everything on that list AND everything in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs has to do with one thing. Survival. The dominant task of the human brain is trying to help you survive and thrive. Now, here's what that means.

It means whatever you sell or whatever you talk about in your elevator pitch, whatever you talk about in your keynote, whatever you talk about in the words on your web site - should offer your customers some way of surviving or thriving. Meaning - reducing risk, saving money, organizing information, experiencing a tribe, associating yourself with people of status, some sort of badge value. Those are all survival mechanisms.

And so, when Infiniti the car company sells a car, they really don't sell cars. And in their commercials - I mean they sell cars as a business strategy - but in their commercials, they're selling an identity. You can be a powerful person, a sexy person, a, you know, a person of great status, an adventurous person. Why? Because people want an identity even more than they want a car. And so they understand, I've got to associate this car, which may have nothing to do with survival or thriving. In fact, if you just take Uber you'd save a lot of money. In fact, you'd survive better! But they've got to convince you that, no, you need this Infiniti in order to survive and thrive as a human being, and that increases the perceived value of their product.

So, the way Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs comes into it, is you just need to define how it is that my product helps people survive and thrive. I need to sort of boil that down, or hone that down to a statement, to a soundbite and I to repeat that over and over. GEICO can save you 15 percent or more on car insurance which is about survival. it's the, it's the conservation of resources, right? Saving money is all about survival. Wal-Mart can get you low prices on great products, those kinds of things. So, you know you want to figure out how you help people survive and thrive, and you need to understand that's actually what you're selling - it's not the product. Actually, what you're selling is a tool to help people survive.

**WHITNEY** Well I have to say, so, I've taken the StoryBrand workshop, so shout out everybody. I highly recommend it. And after I came to your workshop, I made two big discoveries. The one is, I changed my web site. If you look at my web site, you can all tell me if I actually

adhere to the StoryBrand guide after you read the book. But one of the things I discovered is, that what the work that I do helps people manage through change –

**DONALD** Yes! Which is all about survival!

**WHITNEY** To not just survive change, but to thrive in change. And so that's something I learned. Another thing that I learned that I think you will be interested to hear, Don, and I hope other people will as well is - I oftentimes share when I do my keynotes about a time that I bombed a speech. And they didn't like it, they hated it. And I had all the comment cards to prove it. Well, when I heard what you said, I realized the reason I bombed the speech was that I had been the hero and I didn't make the audience the hero. Don, do you want to talk a little bit about that? What, how that's really central to this idea of helping people tell their stories and clarify their message?

**DONALD** Yeah, absolutely. It's the central paradigm shift of the entire framework. And the first sentence of the *Building a StoryBrand* book says, you probably bought this book because you wanted to help tell your story. But if you tell your story you're going to lose. Your customers aren't interested in your story, they're only interested in their own.

So, we base our framework on a 2000-year-old grid that is proven to captivate people's attention. It is a story formula. And in story, there are several characters, but I want to talk about two of them. One of them is the hero and the other one is the guide. And so think of Katniss as the hero. And Haymitch - Woody from Cheers - as the guide, right? Luke Skywalker is the hero, Obi-Wan Kenobi or Yoda is the guide. In King's Speech King George is the hero, Lionel the drama teacher is the guide. You see this in almost every story - sometimes there's multiple guides, in fact, often there's multiple guides, so don't get confused about that. But the hero is singular or you know, sometimes a group protagonist hero. But the story is about the hero, not about the guide.

And what we say and what we believe very firmly, is never position yourself as the hero, never make the story about yourself. Your customers aren't interested in you. They're interested in how you can help them. Well, the character that helps the hero in the story is the guide. So we say, position yourself as the guide in the story, and you will become the character everybody is looking for.

And there's a reason for that, Whitney, and this is it: every human being wakes up every morning, and self-identifies as the lead protagonist in a story. We are all heroes in stories. We wake up, there are things that we need to accomplish, there are challenges that we face that are keeping us from accomplishing the things that we want to accomplish. We have this rough, vague idea of an obligatory or climactic scene that might happen at some point in this day that would resolve all of the conflict. You know, muddled as they are, we are all living breathing stories.

Now, when I meet you at a cocktail party...or let me reverse this, when you meet me at a cocktail party, you say, "Don, what do you do?" And I say, "Well, you know, I got a great company and I'm trying to do this and I've written a bunch of books and my grandfather started the company and we're trying to increase our Great Places to Work metric and you know, I'm trying to bench press 250 pounds and you know..." What you hear me saying is, "Whitney, I'm the hero in a story." And you process this by saying, "Well, hmm. Don's the hero in a story, and I'm the hero in a story." And what we're doing then is we're subconsciously competing for a scarcity of resources. In other words, we're contending with each other.

**WHITNEY** Yeah.

**DONALD** And if your brand positions itself as the hero, you are setting yourself up in contention with the very person that you're trying to influence and help. Let me give you an example.

**WHITNEY** It's such a powerful insight. So powerful.

**DONALD** It is! So, this is a political example that proves this point. Eight months before the general election, we created a video and I believe it's still on YouTube you can go find it. But I basically sat down to explained why Hillary Clinton with a tagline, "I'm with her," positions her as the hero. And even though she's the favorite to win this race and it's almost unthinkable that she couldn't win this race. She could basically, it seems like, just stay home and never leave and not say anything and win this race. She's up against a candidate who is shooting himself in the foot every other day, making every mistake you can possibly make and proving he really doesn't understand what it takes to do this job. This man is not going to be elected. And I said in that video, everyone is basically wrong. That she is positioning herself as the hero, and nobody's looking for the hero, they're looking for the guide. And you know what is he doing? He's painting a vision of a climactic scene. You know all politics aside.

**WHITNEY** Right. Right. This is the movie. Right?

**DONALD** You know whether or not it's realistic or not, she's saying, she's saying, "Here's a story about me," and he's saying "This story isn't about me, it's about us and let's move toward the climactic scene Making America Great Again. Let's move toward that together."

Now, you know he had a dismal turnout at the polls. People were not motivated to go. I think because, one, they didn't like him. But really, this is not a race that Donald Trump won. This is a race that Hillary Clinton lost. And she lost it because she assumed people needed to hear her story in order to vote for her, and she was dead wrong. They didn't need to hear her story. She needed to invite them into a story. And she never did that.

And we as brands make this mistake all the time. We have to create a narrative that we invite customers into. And my book helps you understand the seven part framework that invites customers into a story.

**WHITNEY** And you do a fantastic job. And so now Don, I'm going to ask you to do something. And I'm going to ask you to be the hero for just a second. And to tell us a little bit about how you got where you are. Where did you start in your career? What have been some of the pivots? How you've been disrupted how you've chosen to disrupt, and kind of leading up to the a-ha around this whole framework?

**DONALD** Well, I will say this. You know you asked me to be the hero, and a lot of times when people say don't, when I say don't be the hero of the story, be the guide. What they hear me say - and it's not what I'm saying - but what they hear me say is, never talk about yourself.

**WHITNEY** Ah!

**DONALD** That's not true. You can actually talk about yourself all day long.

**WHITNEY** (laughing) Okay!

**DONALD** But there's only two aspects. There's two aspects to the guide, that position you in the subconscious of your customer as the guide and not the hero. And the two aspects the guide must demonstrate are, one, empathy - I feel your pain. I care about your pain. And then, then secondly authority. And by authority, I really mean competency. "I can get you out of this." So, the message that your brand needs to send to the world is, "I feel your

pain." Remember Bill Clinton - "I feel your pain." And, "I can get you out of this. I've been here before, I know how to get you out of this." You know, people think when you share empathy and authority that they've heard your story. They haven't! Really, you just connected with them. So, I'm going to obey my own rules and I'm going to tell you.

WHITNEY All right!

DONALD What an absolute dismal mess I was as a business leader and how I got out of it. How's that?

WHITNEY That, and that will establish your both empathy and competence, so fire away!

DONALD And in so doing, I will position myself in the subconscious of your listeners...I feel like we're in some weird movie now, you know, and we're trying to brainwash everybody, but I'm hoping everybody learns...

WHITNEY Well, I'm enjoying it a lot, I'm sure our listeners will too, so go ahead.

DONALD But you know, Whitney, bottom line. I was horrible at it. I mean, you know, I was a good writer and I sold a bunch of books - millions of books - and I create a little conference, and I invited all my readers - millions of readers - to this conference. And guess how many people came. 350 people. That was a 700 seat theater, and I just thought...

WHITNEY And you'd sold millions of books. You had been a New York Times Best Selling Author, right?

DONALD Millions! This is a...for 42 consecutive weeks.

WHITNEY Ok.

DONALD And what this means is, people love my books but they don't like me. They don't want to see me in person. And so you know I took it personally. And I thought, and then we sent out surveys after that conference and the reviews were glowing. So I thought, OK, no problem. The next conference will sell out.

It didn't. 350 people. 700 seats. I'm looking at a half empty theater and I'm wondering what's going on.

And so, I ended up realizing, you know, the problem is I'm not talking about my conference in such a way that people actually want to come. I'm not giving them these soundbites.

I realized that while talking to a stranger on an airplane who happened to be reading my latest book and I never told them who I was. And I just sat there and asked question after question. I still to this day - I mean I've just never I've never met him again, I never told him who I was. I walked off the airplane after two hours. He didn't know. He is sitting there holding my book and I'm asking him questions about the book and I'm realizing you know what. I've never given my fans - or my customers, if you will - sound bites they can use to spread word about me, because the more he talked about that book the less I wanted to read it.

And so that's when I went away to a cabin in Asheville, North Carolina and I used these elements of story that I've been using to write books for years. They're incredibly effective at capturing a human being's attention. And I thought, how can I use this to filter a message...and then that's when it occurred to me, wait, I don't need to tell my story. I need to invite people into a story. That's what they really want. And then of course developed

this seven part framework and you know we'd spend 30 minutes unpacking it. Whitney, you know it pretty well. You know would take so much time, but it's all in the book.

And I executed that framework in my marketing messages, and we went from 350 people - we had to go to a different theater to hold everybody. It was a theater of 970 seats. We sold it out, I think two or three months before the actual conference. We went to a theater of 1600 seats and sold it out a couple of months before the conference, and finally had to go to Chicago to a theater I think that had 2400 seats. And at that point realized, OK, we've used this framework to sell out this conference but, let's come back to this framework. I think this framework can help a lot of businesses see this kind of growth. That was a scary thing because it worked for us but doesn't mean going to work for anybody else. And we leaked the fact that we had it on my Twitter bio. You know, just nobody really knew, I just thought, you know, hopefully a plumber will call me and they'll want to get together. And our first client was Proctor and Gamble and then after that it was Ford Lincoln and then believe it or not, it was Obama's White House with his My Brother's Keeper campaign. And you know we were off to the races. And we've seen this work for thousands of companies now and we've really identified the problem is messaging.

**WHITNEY** It's so interesting how this was a kind of massive failure and...

**DONALD** Right. Abysmal failure.

**WHITNEY** Became pivotal. Right? I mean, and massive on, on a number of levels right. Because from a functional perspective, it was a massive failure because you had 700 seats and 350 people were showing up, but emotionally as well. Like you said you felt like no one liked you. It was a big, big bomb.

**DONALD** I feel like, you know, I'd been...I'd been the president of a publishing company before, so I wasn't naive about business, but I just you know we were doing everything right.

We had such a good product, and we were treating our customers so well, our customer service was exceptional. The community we were building was really beautiful.

And I think there's a myth that so many business leaders believe, that if you build it they will come. I think we all remember the movie Field of Dreams where I just build it people will come. But that's...it's not true. You have to build it, and then you have to invite people. You have to build it, and then you have to tell people - especially in this day and age, where the average consumer encounters 3000 commercial messages a day. And those are just commercial messages! Imagine how many Instagram pictures you see. Imagine how many tweets you read. Imagine how many - I probably spend two hours a day just reading the news. Right? So I'm reading in upwards of 75 news articles a day. I'm bombarded with information.

So for you to be able to get through to me about some conference that you're doing, you're going to have to be succinct. Clear. You're going to have to associate the conference with my sense of survival. There's going to have to be something that I want in there in order to penetrate all this noise. And so, we weren't doing that. And I'm so grateful to realize that that was the problem. And to be able to fix the problem and experience what we're experiencing today which is just delightful growth.

**WHITNEY** It's really great. And obviously the power of Twitter, that you put some little small thing in Twitter. You had a following, but you didn't even tweet it up.

**DONALD** That's right! We didn't even tweet it. It was in my bio. My Twitter bio! (laughing)

**WHITNEY** So, just a few more questions for you. You made this statement in your book about how story engages employees and I'm fascinated by that because I focus a lot on engagement, on employee engagement. So, talk to me about how your story can rally and galvanize your employees such that they are...they're all in on the company vision and message, and etcetera.

**DONALD** Each of our companies has an enemy, and we call that enemy the narrative void. It's kind of like when you're sitting in a movie, and we've all done it, we sat in a movie and suddenly we've lost track of what the hero actually wants, or this movie is developing too slowly, or perhaps the challenge that the hero is facing is not intense enough to grab our attention. Perhaps the hero is somebody who has mixed motives. We don't know if it's a good person or a bad person. All of those problems ruin a movie. And you begin to daydream, you know? And the same thing happens within a company.

So, when somebody...and we did a year like this at my company. When you say at the beginning of the year, you know, "Here's what we want to accomplish this year." And three months later, you know, you're into March and nobody in the company remembers where, where we were going or what our goals were, because you didn't have those weekly reminders of - This, this is the story we are telling. You end up in a narrative void. And in a narrative void, people don't know what the story is about. They don't know where it's going. And then most importantly, they have no idea what their role is in the actual story. Well, that is proven by Victor Frankl to create depression. I mean you do you want to talk about what actually gives you mental health, it's knowing where I'm going and knowing why it's important. And this is counterintuitive, but being lost in the moment. Not analyzing your belly button, but just enjoying the actual work that you're doing because it's toward a purpose. So we're not just hurting our bottom line and our profits, we're hurting the mental health of our team members.

And so what we've got to do is, we've got to decide, "OK. This is the story that we're going to tell this year." The theme. I'll just tell you, the theme of our 2018 - we're at the end of 2017 now - that story is, Go Big or Go Home. The theme of this past year was Build. We built all of this software, we released a book, we built an online course. We built a new division, we built a Train the Trainer, we built, built, built. And now it's, you know what - live into these products that we've built. Go big or go home. And so we have these goals that we've established. If we reach these goals, we did it. We went big and so we don't have to go home.

But I know for a fact, those goals will be forgotten in the whirlwind that we're constantly dealing with and when that happens, we will end up in a narrative void. You will have decreased productivity. You have confusion, and you will have people struggling with whether or not they even want to come to work because it's just not a happy place to be.

So we had to do is, I had to move my friend J.J. - he was director of facilitation - we had to move him over to Chief of Staff. And, J.J.'s - his main job - in fact I shouldn't even call him Chief of Staff, I should call him Director of Story - because what his main job is not only to, to remind the entire organization, "Here's where we're going," but to go to each individual and say, "Here's what you need to do, and here's why it's important to the overall success of this mission." Of course, there's a lot more elements to it than that, but that's what can get you...

**WHITNEY** But here's the role you're playing in the movie.

**DONALD** Can you imagine showing up on a movie set and everybody's ready with their parts. Everybody is ready with their line and you walk on, and you don't have a script, and you

don't know who you're supposed to be, and you don't know where you're supposed to be. You're not sure who you're supposed to talk to.

**WHITNEY** That's really powerful.

**DONALD** Whitney - millions of people show up to work every morning and that's exactly what they're experiencing. So what do they do? Well, they go to the bathroom for 10 minutes at a time and check sports scores on their phone.

**WHITNEY** Right.

**DONALD** That's what I would do if I didn't have a part. I don't want to be caught in the hallway with somebody and I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing I'm just trying to survive here.

**WHITNEY** Yeah exactly. Exactly. That's a really powerful metaphor. I love that. So how can people find you?

**DONALD** Well, [StoryBrand.com](http://StoryBrand.com) is the Web site where you can find our organization. You can find me on Twitter. I'm just [@donaldmiller](https://twitter.com/donaldmiller) and [@donmilleris](https://www.instagram.com/donmilleris) on Instagram. Well I'm breaking my own rule here giving you too many bowling balls.

**WHITNEY** Yeah. Give me just one bowling ball!

**DONALD** Exactly. [Storybrand.com](http://Storybrand.com) is where our web site is. We also have a great free tool for anybody who just wants to understand some basics of how to make a better web site. It's just called [Five Minute Marketing Makeover](http://FiveMinuteMarketingMakeover.com) you can say it...or...you can use the number or you can spell it out. [FiveMinuteMarketingMakeover.com](http://FiveMinuteMarketingMakeover.com).

**WHITNEY** Fantastic. All right. So Don, last question for you today. How will you disrupt yourself in the next 12 months?

**DONALD** Well, I'm a fan of your thinking, and I tend to do this a lot. In fact, the pivot from memoirist to creating this sort of Six Sigma of messaging was, was a complete disruption. And I've been working with an economic think tank and also an education think tank in government. And so, I'm beginning to write a book that is basically a new story for America so that we can lead through the end of the 21st century. It involves a tax plan. It involves an education plan and it involves a pretty robust foreign policy plan that would have kept us out of Iraq. It would have kept us out of Vietnam and it would move us into, currently, Kurdistan. And so, which is, I think were American forces actually need to be in the world right now. It would keep us out of North Korea. All those kinds of things.

And so I'm working on that. It's a complete disruption. It makes no sense. And yet I'm obsessing over it. And I want to write it. I want to write down. So for my personal life, it's a massive disruption and we'll see how the public receives it.

**WHITNEY** Are you going to run for political office?

**DONALD** I don't think so. I've always daydreamed about it, but I think scratching the political interest is probably more thinking through strategies and practical strategies - perhaps for other leaders to adopt and sign onto or at least put on the table - and begin to think about as potential solutions to some of our problems.

**WHITNEY** That's a big idea. That's exciting.

**DONALD** That's why I think it's a fun idea. I think it's going to be really an enjoyable 18 months trying to flesh it out.

**WHITNEY** OK well, Don Miller. Thank you so much for being with us today. It's been an absolute pleasure.

**DONALD** Whitney, the honor is mine. Thank you.

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A few months ago, one of my team members Macy Robison – who is a [certified StoryBrand consultant](#) – encouraged me to go to Donald's [StoryBrand workshop](#). It was mind blowing. I realized that the speech I'd bombed in front of hundreds of people a few years ago happened because I'd been the hero, not the guide.

Also, I realized that people weren't getting as excited about personal disruption as I am because I wasn't explaining it well. The big epiphany came on the morning of the [Thinkers50 Gala](#) earlier this month. I had this flash of insight – I need to tighten up my elevator pitch so I could connect with people better. Yes, you need an elevator pitch so that people want to buy what you're selling, but you also need it so that you can forget about yourself. Just like you get cleaned up, you get dressed up. Look good, feel good. You need to have an elevator pitch. That way, when people ask what you do, you don't drop a "bowling ball" of an explanation on their foot, which of course, makes you embarrassed and then you think about yourself rather than the person standing right in front of you with whom you want to connect.

So, just like we did [with Claude Silver](#), in the notes at [whitneyjohnson.com](#), there's a content upgrade on how to develop a One-Liner. In the meantime, here's a quick tip, and thank you to Henry Hays for suggesting I give one. The next time someone asks you what you do and you tell them, watch how they respond. If they pick up on something you said and toss the ball back to you, you're on track. If not, pick the bowling ball back up and try again.

Thank you to Donald Miller for being our guest. To Macy Robison for making this connection. To sound engineer Kelsea Peters, content upgrade contributor Macy Robison, collateral editor Heather Hunt and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson, and this is Disrupt Yourself.