

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPISODE 96: RYAN GOTTFREDSON

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

A couple of months ago, we put out another call for people who wanted to be coached and were willing to be coached on air.

In the past, women have raised their hand, this time we have a man being coached. We had people in corporate settings, today, I'm coaching Ryan Gottfredson who has a career like mine. He's a leadership and management professor at Cal State Fullerton in California and shares his ideas through writing, speaking and consulting.

Whitney: Ryan Gottfredson, welcome to the podcast and your willingness to be coached live. It's, it's really exciting to be able to have you on.

Ryan: Yeah, thank you so much for having me on, I really appreciate your time.

Whitney: What is it that you're trying to do, why did you reach out to me to do a live coaching session?

Ryan: I am currently a professor at Cal State Fullerton. I did my PhD in organizational behavior and human resources at Indiana University, and then my first job was here at Cal State Fullerton. So, I was at Cal State Fullerton for two years, and it was a great experience, but there's a- a- a few factors that were making me rethink my future within academia. One of those factors is living in California isn't, uh, the cheapest place to live, so I had a front loaded contract where my teaching load was low. I also had, uh, a bonus for the first three years. But then after those three years my teaching load would increase and my bonus would go away. And so I took a leap and I jumped over t- into the consulting world and I worked with Gallup for a year. And it was a great experience, but at the same time it wasn't a great fit. I was a little bit pigeon holed in the position that I was in, and I admit, also miss the freedom that comes with academia. And so I came back to Cal State Fullerton. But I needed to figure out a way to supplement my income in a way that my bonus previously had, and hopefully even exceed that.

And so up until that point I had never thought about starting a business. It was a time where I could sit back and think about, okay, what, where am I at in my life, and

where do I want to go? I guess I'm deeply driven by the purpose to help and bless the lives of others in, in whatever way I can, but particularly using my skills and expertise. And I guess up until that point in time I hadn't had the impact that I hoped I would have.

And so I decided to do something that I never thought I would do, which is start my own consulting business, and so really, for the last, um, just over six months I've really started to focus a lot of time and energy in doing that, and it's been a huge learning curve for me. I really didn't know what I do, in many ways I still don't know what I'm doing, um, and so I'm really looking for any advice and expertise and making sure that I'm somewhat on the I- on the right path, but at the same time I'm feeling like I'm doing, I'm throwing a hundred different things against the wall to see what- what will stick, and I'm, I'm slowly learning what is sticking and what's not, but somebody like you who's been down the road that I've- I'm- where I'm currently at, I feel like you can maybe help me navigate or be a little bit more strategic in the things that I'm doing.

Whitney: So, let me just recap. You, um, you have a degree in organizational behavior, a PhD, and I want to understand a little bit more what that's about in just a minute. Um, you left for a year when you realized, oh, I don't think I can support a family living in California on an academic salary, you went to work at Gallup, realized that wasn't a fit, and you in fact like the flexibility and the creativity that comes with being in academia and so you came back. How many years ago did you come back to academia?

Ryan: So it's been just over a year.

Whitney: So you came back and then you said to yourself, "All right, I think in order for me to make all of this work I've got to come up with some type of side hustle."

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: And the side hustle being how do I take this IP, how do I take this 10 years worth of academic work and productize it, and use it in a way that I can not only continue to the work that I'm doing at, at Cal State Fullerton, but also expand it beyond, the scope beyond of what you're doing currently. And not only, if I'm hearing correctly, it's not only a sense of, of putting food on the table, but there is this sense of purpose around this, of these ideas are meaningful to you and you believe that they will make a difference in the lives of other people.

So, I think as a starting point, um, what would be really helpful to do is can, u- just partly 'cause I'm curious and I think other people will be, as well, is what is your area of expertise and what's your specialty?

Ryan: Yeah, so my primary focus in, in the teaching, the research, and the consulting that I do is primarily around leadership and leadership development. Uh, and, and the particular topic that I'm focusing is dealing with mindsets and the role that mindsets play in leadership effectiveness. But the basic idea is most of the focus on leadership development has been on behaviors, so what do leaders need to do to be effective? But I think we all know that leadership is more than just doing the right thing, it's being the right person. And so how can we tap into that being? And I think what mindsets is one of the ways that we can do that.

So what I've done is I've identified, uh, different mindsets that people can have that range on a continuum from negative to positive, and, and I've created a framework of four different sets of mindsets, and if, if we can learn more about mindsets then we

can awaken to this very foundational aspect of ourselves that drives our thinking, learning, and behavior, and consequently our success in, in a variety of aspects of life including leadership.

Whitney: Just a quick side note for everybody that's listening. Um, on [my newsletter](#), I actually had taken [Ryan's quiz](#), and I thought it was actually quite interesting, because one of the things it talks about, the mindset, everybody's familiar with, is it a growth or a fixed mindset? This is the [work of Carol Dweck](#), which I no doubt have, has been very influential for you. Um, but one thing that you did quiz people on also was to what extent is your mindset open or closed? And that was fascinating.

And when I got the report back it said that my mindset was closed. Like I was in the bottom, I was in the 25th percentile, and I was like, "What? How can that be?" And I actually had my whole family take this, and I realize that having a closed mindset is not necessarily ... we usually think of closed mindset, bigoted, but it's not necessarily that. Closed mindset can be that you thought through something deeply, you have a very strong opinion about how things should play out, and therefore you brook no, uh, brook no disagreement, because you know what you need to do, and what everybody else should be doing with full, positive intent.

And so, that, I think for me is just one quick example of what your, um, of what your quiz does is to help point out some potential pitfalls for us.

Ryan: No, well you explain that very well. And first of all, thank you very much for, uh, sending that out to your email list. But, but yeah, you nailed it on the head. It's, um, one of the things that I like to say is, I think all of us think that our thinking is the best way to think. The reality is that our, our thinking is probably not the best way to think. And, and so we have a tendency to believe that we're right all the time, but it's usually not the case. That there's the greater world out there, and this difference between closed and open mindsets is you just acknowledge that my thinking is not the best way to think. I can be wrong, in fact, I'm at, I have this huge fear of not having things right that I want to seek after more information.

Whitney: All right, so let's dive into your business. Um, where, first of all you've been doing this for, trying to figure out a business model for this side hustle, it sounds like you said about six months now?

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So it's very, very, I mean you're in the very early stages, very much at the low end of the curve. Um, so, acknowledging all of that, talk to, talk to me a little bit about what you have done to date to start to try to build out a business model around your intellectual property.

Ryan: My primary focus, uh, initially started with the idea that I wanted to write a book. And the more that I learned about the process of writing a book and being picked up by an agent and then a publisher is you really need to have a platform. And so, my main focus has been to, how do I develop this platform?

I initially started up a website, I've [started up a blog](#) which I write o- on a weekly basis, and then I have an email newsletter. I developed this personal mindset assessment that people can take. Um, then I've started to just continue to write the book. I've got the first draft done, and I'm kind of working through the editing process, I'm shipping that off to agents. I have started to guest post quite a bit, um, at a variety of different

outlets. I, I have started to create online courses. So I just, in fact this week, released my first online course, kind of my, it's kind of a little bit of a quick and dirty, but I think it's pretty high quality focused on how people can develop their resumes to truly stand out. So it's called out Stand Out Resume Course. I have plans for additional online courses around leadership and management development. Um, I'm trying to think what else I've done thus far.

Whitney: In six months?

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: (laughs)

Ryan: I mean I'm doing consulting, I have a- a daily email list that I created that's called Intentional Leadership, which is, uh, designed to help leaders be more intentional with their leadership. I have written an eBook that's, it's a short eBook that's about to come out. I do a fair amount of speaking and trainings and-

Whitney: Okay, okay.

Ryan: ... that's about it.

Whitney: Okay. That's about it. All right, so, the first thing I want to say to you I think is really important to acknowledge, and let's talk a little bit about the S-curve of learning for a minute, and I know you're familiar with it, but I think it's worth recapping here, is that when you're at the bottom of that s, um, it looks like, um, your- you're going to work really hard and it's going to look like nothing is happening, and, um, and it's the law of exponential growth. It's like lily pads on a pond, you see one, you see two, it looks like there aren't very many lily pads, but it grows, you know, two and four and, s- two and four and eight and 16 and 32 and 64 and 128, and before you know it there are a lot of lily pads.

And, but what happens often times at the low end of the learning curve is that your, it- it's so small, even though there's a lot happening it doesn't look like there's anything happening. And so what I'm hearing you tell me of everything that you have done over the last six months and all of this trial and error and this iterating is that you are very much at the low end of the curve, but you don't have a good sense because you can't have a good sense of how much you're actually accomplishing.

Ryan: Yeah, exactly, yeah. And, and I- I will say, really in the last month I feel like I'm starting to get some momentum. I'm getting the first sense of that where people are car- are starting to come to me. I mean e- here and there-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... whereas before it was me always going to people. So I'm just starting to get some business trickle in by having things out there.

Whitney: All right. So you are getting a lot of, not a lot, but you're starting have interest, inbound inquiries trickling in?

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: Okay. So, um, so talk to me about what some of those look like, and how are they happening? Can you give me a couple of examples?

Ryan: There was a consultant that's working for this large pharmaceutical organization, and the consultant knew that this pharmaceutical organization was approaching this pretty big merger. And so he had the head of their talent and development take my mindset assessment. She loved it enough that she had their 130 leaders in the organization take the assessment, and had me produce a report for their group. And then, correspondingly, those leaders then had their subordinates take the mindset assessment, and effectively probably doubled my email list, uh, at the time.

So that was, uh, one big win for me. Another big win-

Whitney: Bravo. By the way, bravo. That's exciting, that's traction. On this one, this consulting assignment where you're doing work with a large pharmaceutical company, so how did they find you? Do you know?

Ryan: I- I don't know. I guess one of my guesses is I had a guest post for the Association For Talent Development-

Whitney: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Ryan: ... on their website. And I'm inclined to think that that's where, uh, he or she stumbled across the mindset assessment.

Whitney: So I would find out. So that's one thing that you want to find out, and wh- uh, potential homework for you is to start tracking when you get these inbound inquiries, is how are people finding you.

Ryan: Yeah, okay.

Whitney: Um, because once you know how people are finding then you can start to track, okay, I'm going to do more of that, and I'm going to do less of that. And there are going to be some things that you'll think, this is so valuable, of course everybody's finding me, and you'll find out that in fact, no one is finding you in that place that you think they're finding you. And so that would be something that I would encourage you to do.

When you think about these different things that you're doing, the website, the blog, the newsletter, the personal assessment tool, the online courses, the speaking, um, which of these gives you the greatest sense of you really enjoy doing it? Like you just, like it feeds you in a really, really powerful way?

Ryan: I really enjoy writing, and then, I guess I really love speaking on the topic.

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: And, and the primary reason why is I, I, in the moment I see these people's eyes light up, and they awaken to themselves. I mean, f- in fact I had my, uh, first large keynote address this last Friday, and I had two women that came up to me afterwards and they both said, "I, I'm, am going through a divorce at the moment and it's been a really hard experience. I'm in this transition, and I couldn't, this couldn't have come at

a better time for me." A- and to get that sort of a feedback is e- to me is, that's the type of impact that I want to be having on people.

Whitney: Okay. All right. So you really enjoy the writing, and you really enjoy the speaking. Do you enjoy the research part, or, I'm just trying to figure out like, which part of this do you want to do more of, and which part do you want to try to find ways to delegate?

Ryan: Surely about 90% of the revenue that I've brought in through this has come through speaking, a- and only 10% through the consulting. what I've been hoping is the speaking will lead to consulting engagements.

I would like to do more consulting, and going in and collecting data within organizations, and then, ultimately I would like to use consulting and, a- and kind of create a hybrid between consulting and research and overall data collection in order to produce new knowledge.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: Uh, I just haven't had much opportunities in that area, yet.

Whitney: Right, 'cause right now you're trying to put food on the table. Let's talk for a minute, about your book, because the book is going to be a really, uh, as a linchpin, your being able to speak and to do consulting, it's- it's very interesting. One of the things I remember someone first giving me advice when I first started is that whether or not anybody ever reads your book, you still have to have a book. So, let's talk for a minute about where you are in the book process.

Ryan: So I've finished the first draft, and I'm going to my first writers conference this weekend.

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: I've been, uh, submitting proposals to agents. I'll- I'll kind of do two or three at a time. Usually I'm submitting a query letter, they'll ask me to see my proposal, uh, if they would like to. And then it, so I've had a few people ask me for my proposal, but no one is taking me up on that.

Whitney: Okay, so, I want you to stop right there. I think that, um, it's really hard to get a query, um, have them actually respond. I think, a- and it sounds like when they're responding they're saying what's your platform look like, is that what's going on?

Ryan: They usually just said, "Hey, it's not a fit for me." Um-

Whitney: Okay-

Ryan: ... so-

Whitney: ... well the fact that they're responding is actually good. Um, what I would encourage you strongly to do, I, I mean, you probably know at least 10 people who have written books?

Ryan: Not many, in fact. I wish I knew more (laughs).

Whitney: Okay. So I think one of the first really important things for you to do, in addition to building out this platform, which you're clearly working very hard on doing, on expanding your email, um, list. Are- are you involved in social media?

Ryan: Uh, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Whitney: I think LinkedIn is by far going to be the biggest driver of traffic for you in terms of building your business. Now, again, if you want to do those others, that's fine. So on the, so on the book proposal, what I would say there is, um, reach out to everybody you know that has written a book and say to them, "I'm looking for an agent, do you know someone that I could talk to that's interested in what I write about?"

Ryan: Okay.

Whitney: Because doing these queries, because you could send out lots and lots of queries, but in an era where, you know, you do know some people who have written books, like, you know me-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: ... uh, you can ask me, and I'm sure you probably know more people than you think you know, as in professors that you've had in getting your PhD. And if you look at your network you'll likely find that there are some people that have, um, have, uh, have networks and can make recommendations for you in terms of reaching out to agent. Because you want to get a warm lead to get an agent to look at your book.

Ryan: Yeah. Great. I still recognize that if my book gets picked up by an agent it still might two years until it gets put into press, potentially. I don't know how long-

Whitney: That's right.

Ryan: ... the process is.

Whitney: I- it does, it takes a while.

Ryan: And so I'm, I'm, I am open to the idea of self-publishing. I don't know if it's the, that's the best route to go, and I also, what I feel like I've learned, as I've learned about the publishing process, if I do self-publish I could still be picked up at some point in time by a publisher with that book. I just don't know which route is going to be better for me, and so I'm coming up on the point in time where I really need to make that decision of whether I'm going to self-publish or...

Whitney: So is the book- Is it completely written, the book?

Ryan: Yeah. Well, the first draft is done. I've got a lot of editing to do, and you know-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: ... I've gotta go through it.

Whitney: Okay. Um, all right, so couple thoughts there. Number one, so I did a podcast solo episode where I talked about publishing a book. Number two, if you haven't already

you want to read Michael Bungay Stanier's article about self-publishing his book *The Coaching Habit*, because he walks you through an entire playbook of how to do that. Um, number three, uh, you might want to take a look at, in fact I interviewed him, Zach Obront, he has a company called Book in a Box, - that would be if you hadn't written the book, so that might not be helpful, but I think Michael Bungay Stanier's article in particular about self-publishing. And he sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

If you want to get this out fast, you're probably going to want to self-publish, but I don't think I would do it earlier than next year, because you want to have time to build up the momentum around the release of the book, even if you self-publish.

Even if you go with an agent and you go with the traditional publishing house they will do a lot of the operational aspect of it for you, but there's still a ton of work that you have to do on your own in terms of marketing it. The good news is that you're already doing a lot of that work that you would have to do, so it's not like you're going to be like, "Oh, I didn't realize I have to market that." You know you have to market it.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So, you'll, you'll be well equipped to that. Um, how does that sit with you, when I say that?

Ryan: Um, uh, I think it's aligned with, with what I've been thinking, so-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: ... um, e- and I appreciate the resources. So, I mean that's always something I could do is learn more about the process, and that's only going to help with the decision making with it.

Whitney: One of the things I think homework could be for you, uh, between now and when we talk again is to make a decision about what you're going to do from a publishing standpoint.

Ryan: Okay.

Whitney: Is have, you know, a goal to talk to a couple of agents, and, um, [inaudible 00:31:49] them, what they have to say, and then also do the, um, uh, and then also do a little bit more research on the self-publishing. Um, do you feel like the book proposal is, or the book itself is solid. Have you had other people read it?

Ryan: Um, I, no, I haven't.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: So I need to do that.

Whitney: Yeah. So that would be another piece of homework would be to have people read the book that are not in your discipline, who know nothing about what you're doing. One of the things that I always do with all of my books, is have people read it who know nothing about what you do. What that will do is it will help you de jargon it, and they'll be, like, "Okay, you just used this term, and I have ... ", like, for example in my field I'll

say things like EBIDTDA. People are like, "I don't know what EBIDTDA means, what is that?"

Ryan: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Whitney: Um, or, you know, talking about the s-curve of learning. Like, "I don't know what you're talking about." Like you have to explain it. And so there are going to be some terms of art that you throw around like it's the word cat and dog, and those people who know nothing about your discipline will help you de jargon it, and as you de jargon it you're going to get a much clearer book.

So another question that I'm having as I'm listening to you is I- I have this sense that as you're thinking about building out your brand and getting things to stick, is I can't quite tell yet where you think you want to land. And, and that's okay, but I just want you to be aware of it. So, I've heard you talk about how you've got this quick course on standing out with your resume . You've got, um, this tool that gages people's mindsets. You've got, an intentional leadership eBook. Uh, there are a number of different things that you're chasing down. Is that part of your, I'm throwing stuff against the wall approach?

Ryan: Yeah, it is. And I think you're right, that I probably need some greater clarity. I- I think I, if I were to envision myself 10 years down the road, and if everything would happen the way that I could dream happening, I- I think I would want to be kind of a take after a Simon Sinek, or a Brené Brown type mold, uh, of a thought leader, someone who's writing books, someone who's speaking, someone who's, you know, working with organizations to develop their people.

One of the things that I want to do, uh, kind of, maybe it's more of a short tu- term interest, is supplement my income through, through creating some passive streams of income. And that's really where the online courses come in-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: ... i- is, uh, trying to, to develop multiple streams of, of potentially passive income. But the, but I want to try to create them in such a way that they do open the doors for me for consulting opportunities. Um-

Whitney: Okay, got it.

Ryan: ... a- and that's going to, that's going to come more with my, the courses that I have planned on my managerial development and things like that.

Whitney: You've got the stand out resume, how is that going, that course going?

Ryan: Um (laughs), I just released it two days ago. Uh, I had a big win in that I've sold one [crosstalk 00:35:48]-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: ... so far. So I've only sold one so far-

Whitney: so you don't know-

Ryan: ... but it's been a couple of days.

Whitney: Okay, so it's a test?

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: You're, it's a tes- it's an experiment. And, which is great, right? A lot of people talk about doing an online course, and they talk about it, and then they talk about it, and they talk about it, and n- you didn't talk about it, you did it. So, I think that's-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: ... and, and you're gonna learn a lot of lessons from that. Um, the book, what's the book about?

Ryan: Mindsets, and so, I've got five parts of the book, first part is introduction to mindsets, why they're so important. Then, uh, parts two, three, four, and five go through, I h- focus on four different sets of mindsets, so fixed and growth, open and closed, prevention and promotion, inward and outward. For each of those sections of the book, um, the first chapter is defining the, the mindsets.

Why they impact us. Second chapter is how do they influence our thinking, learning, and behavior? Third chapter is how do they influence our success in our life, work, and leadership. And then the fourth chapter is how do you improve your mindset along that continuum.

Whitney: For each section-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: ... so you've basically got 16 chapters plus an introduction. Okay. To me the big opportunity for you is, yes we've got Carol Dweck, and she really carved out this space, like in the theory of disruption, play where no one else is playing, is mindsets. Like you hear mindset and you think of Carol Dweck.

You've really expanded this, and making it really practical and actionable, I think you have an opportunity to own this space as a next generation if you want, and so one of the things that I would encourage you to do is, as you're thinking about these online courses going forward, is to really put your stake in the ground.

Ryan: Okay.

Whitney: Like everything you say, everything you do, everything you talk about, always, always, always brings people back to your point of view around mindsets.

Ryan: Okay.

Whitney: Like, always. And the four pillars. And like I would consider, you know, on your website, like I talk about mindsets, and these are the four mindsets that you, or ways that you need to be thinking about this, and how is it influencing your organization? Because the leadership space itself is super crowded-

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: ... the mindset space, it's not crowded.

Ryan: Yeah. I feel the same way, so it's good, uh, I feel a little bit of validation hear- hearing you say that, so I appreciate that.

Whitney: So now, your website, and everything you say has to reflect that you actually believe that.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So another piece of homework for you is to go, go, and if you haven't already, so I interviewed Donald Miller on my podcast, um, the StoryBrand is, listen to that podcast, read that book, and so, say to yourself, "Okay, how am I going to talk about mindsets from a StoryBrand perspective?" And you actually already articulated it earlier in the interview. The question is just how do you make sure that anytime someone says, "Hey, Ryan, what do you do?" You say something like, "Well, I'm a professor at Cal State Fullerton, um, my research, the research I do is on mindsets and, you plumb the depths of changing how you think so that what you do changes, right?"

Ryan: Exactly, yep.

Whitney: That's what you do, is you help people change how they think in order to change what they do, and most people focus on what people do, you want to help them change how you think.

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: And so if you say that, like here's what I do, and that's, here- here's my- my title, and here's the work that I do, um, then people are gonna be like oh, that's interesting, and then like it all comes back to your mindset, and then they'll be familiar with the growth fix mindset ... but like there's other ways to think about it, like what I just said to you about the growth versus fixed. I'm like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know all that", but then I did the open closed, I'm like, "Oh, I didn't know that." The hook starts to be is you kinda light touched growth versus fixed 'cause then everybody goes oh yeah, okay, I know what that is, and then you take them to a place, and this is like in your conversations with people where they go huh, oh, I didn't know that. Like that-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: ... where you want 'em. You want 'em to be like you know, growth versus fixed, well all my research builds on that, and then you start to introduce them to some ideas that they didn't know about.

So here's something that's interesting to me, is you took the disruptive strength indicator and your scores, you actually had a pretty wide range of scores. Your one that was on the high end, your highest score, 'cause what you want to do is you want to look at these scores on a relative basis, is, is right risks was you- you're willing to take risks, you had a score of 23, which u- on an- it's out of 25, so on an absolute basis it's high, but on a relative basis it's high, as well. What's fascinating to me is this one that you had the lowest score on was on entitlement. And so this was fascinating

because there was one question, is that you, um, I wanted to get your thoughts here, 'cause a lot of the questions around entitlement are when we get other people's opinions we don't necessarily listen to them, and so I wondered if you sort of when you, when you initially took this quiz of open versus closed did you find yourself that you were a bit lower on the open versus closed as well?

Ryan: Uh, yeah, yeah. And I am very similar to the that you articulated it in the sense that I consider myself to be a rather thoughtful person-

Whitney: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Ryan: ... and I really like to think out things. And then when other people present ideas to me, um, I've had the tendency to be like, oh yeah, I've already thought about that, as opposed to validating their ideas and trying to seek out, maybe things that I was missing in my thinking, that they may have thought of.

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: Um, so yeah, surely that is one that I'm working on for sure.

Whitney: Okay, good, all right. So what I think is kind of cool about that is almost always we tend to want to research something that we're trying to figure out ourselves, and so I think it's validating if you're like, you know, this is something that I want to do better, and it's my life's work to do this, and e- because I understand that if I can crack the code on this I will be a significantly changed and improved person, and I also know you, I'm speaking as if I were you, Ryan, that that will also be true for other people.

I want to just get a sense initially as we wrap up, what are some things that have stood out for you? Some, some thoughts, some insights, what you think are some potential action items, um, going forward.

Ryan: I feel like if I was to summarize everything it is to put your foot down, like take a stand. Uh, you've been, you've been doing a lot of work, you've been somewhat casting, or I've been casting a wide net, now just put a stake in the ground. With the regards to writing the book is, okay, let's, let's figure this at. Y- you're at the point where you need to take this next step forward with it.

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: So you gave me a lot of things to look into and read, so podcasts, um, a bunch of resources. So that's something that, um, you know, as a, I guess, just a more practical level, things for me to do. And I think that's going to shape how I think about making-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... kind of taking a stand with a variety of, of the things that we talked about.

Whitney: Are there any things that come to mind of like specific, concrete, action items that you know, you already know you want to take?

Ryan: Um, well for sure I want to read and listen to all the podcasts that, that you recommended.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: I feel like this, this weekend is going to be, uh, with this writer's conference, is going to be a big weekend for me.

Whitney: Right.

Ryan: Uh, with regards to my book. I've signed up to have agents and writers review my book proposal and the first few chapters, and so I'm going to get-

Whitney: Oh.

Ryan: ... some feedback there.

Whitney: Perfect.

Ryan: ... which'll be great, and, you know it, I don't know what I'm going to get. It might be, your work's terrible, it might be it's really good, I don't know what I'm going to get. But whatever I'm going to get it's going to be beneficial-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... for making-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... this decision. Um, a- a- and s- but then I think, I mean one of the things that you said that's really, I- I think for the most part you've, you've done a great job t- of making me, I guess I feel more confident in what I've been doing-

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: ... hearing what you've had to say-

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: ... which has been good. I, I don't feel like I'm necessarily on the wrong track, uh, which was, I was hoping to hear.

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: And then I like the stance that you're trying to filter me down into being more strategic-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... uh, which is great. I think the one area where you said something that just was dramatically different than what I'd been thinking I- is, with regards to some of my plans for my upcoming online courses.

Uh, so I've been thinking about developing this online course, uh, for first time managers, and what do first time managers need to know. I, I've really been thinking

about it with a short term perspective of I know it's something that can sell and enhance kind of my, my living, um, where I haven't been so certain that my- my- I haven't been as certain that my mindset, if I were to create a mindset online course that that would sell.

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: I- I don't, I think that it could, I- it's just going to take more effort. I mean mindset is a harder sell-

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: ... than improving management. Particularly if I'm selling to organizations, because mindset takes a fair amount of explanation, but saying I could make your managers more effective, you know, it's, it's a little bit easier of a sell, so-

Whitney: So on the manager course, do you already have people, buyers? People who are willing to buy that course?

Ryan: I have a network that, of HR leaders that I've just informally asked them would you be interested in this and they all say yes.

Whitney: Okay, so you don't know yet, really - Okay, all right, so, so here's, here's what I would say, um, on that course, and then I'll go to some bigger picture things, is, is, um, if you decide to do it, do it knowing full well that you are looking at this to be a short term cash flow kind of generating course. I, like, I did this a few years ago, I did a [fundamentals of entrepreneurship course for lynda.com and now LinkedIn.com](#), and it has been a really good course, and it was kind of a one off because it's not what I focus on, and it's made money and that's been good, but just be aware that that's why you're doing it and you're doing to learn some lessons, and it may make money, it may not make money-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: ... but be aware that it's sort of off brand. Um, in terms of homework I would say, um, number one is on the, uh, book proposal, you're going to this writer's conference this weekend, just be aware of what you're learning. Make a decision, um, about which direction you're going to go. I'd like it before we reconvene and I think you can make this decision probably in the next, um, four to eight weeks of, are you going to self-publish, are you going to go with an agent, and just make that decision.

Um, you're going to meet potential agents at this conference, I think you also want to have as an action item is to reach out to a few people around, um, an agent and also be willing to have a few people in your network read the book. I think you'll be surprised. The next, uh, piece of homework would be, is that when you're getting these inquiries for you to speak is find out, um, speak or even your, to use your tool, is to find out who is, where the inquiries are coming in from and just make sure you're really tracking those.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: Third piece of homework, I think is a really important one is to write out an elevator pitch before you go to this writer's conference about what you do, be able to say it in

20 seconds, um, and do something along the lines of what we talked about. I'm a professor at Cal State Fullerton, I analyze behavior, I really focus on, you know, not what people do, but why they do or the mindset that they have in place to do that. Remember the Carol Dweck story, well I really focus on four different kinds of mindsets. But don't s- even tell 'em that much, just start with a little snippet, see what their eyes do, see if they open up, and does that allow you to start to have a conversation. So really experiment with your elevator pitch. Um, and try to really refine that message. Because if you look at someone like a Simon Sinek, who you admire, everybody looks at him and says start with why, you look at Brené Brown, who you admire, everybody says shame and vulnerability, like what are your two words? You've got to drill down on those two words, 'cause if you're going to get to do what you want to do and be as big as you want to be you've got to have two words so that people say Ryan Gottfredson, mindsets. And so you've got to double down on that. And I think that is an important homework, and I think the assignment is as, um, are you willing to really double down on that over the next couple of months of what you write when you talk about what you do and see what happens and how people respond to what you're saying.

I think that's probably enough homework for right now, but I just wonder if there's anything else that you're like yeah, I need to do this, too.

Ryan: Well I think I probably need to do less than what I'm doing so (laughs) to, to be a little bit more focused, uh, i- is helpful. So, that's, I think that's where I need to start kind of dropping some things off, uh, o- of what I have been doing and be a little bit more strategic, so, um, yeah, I- I think that's perfect.

Whitney: Hm-hmm (affirmative). Okay, so you're going to zero in on book, you're going to focus on what's your message? See how people respond to that. And if you're going to do a course, um, I think if you can, right now, from a financial perspective I would do less courses and do more focused on getting this book done.

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When we are continually bombarded with “overnight successes” it’s easy to get impatient, dispirited. Especially with the added pressure of putting food on the table. When we get impatient, we can scatter our energy in different directions so that instead of building momentum in order power up our current learning curve, we stay there longer. And get even more discouraged. Especially when you believe that you’re doing something that will really matter to people. What was fun about coaching Ryan is that he does his homework. Maybe because he’s a professor. After a few months, he checked back in to report.

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Whitney: After we last spoke, you had a bunch of homework that you were gonna do, as the college professor that you are, you're very familiar with homework.

Ryan: I am.

Whitney: And, um, why don't we go through and have you give us an update on what you were going to accomplish, and what, you, you know what you learned et cetera.

Ryan: When we last talked, I had just released my ... uh, stand out resume course-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: Which is essentially my side, a side hustle to my side hustle

Whitney: (laughs).

Ryan: And then, that weekend after we last talked, I attended a writers conference. So one of the things that I've been working on is a book dealing with, uh, mindsets, and how we can utilize our mindsets to be more successful. And I bring that up because one of the main things you asked me to do was make a decision on whether to go traditional publishing or self-publishing.

Whitney: Right.

Ryan: And there are some things that came out of that writers workshop that have been, um, pretty big for me. And then, uh, you encouraged me to look into a variety of different sources, which included whether or not I should go traditional publishing or self-publishing. Uh, you encouraged me to take a stronger stake in the ground with relation to mindsets that I, this is a space that I had an opportunity to, uh, potentially own, in a way-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: -or at least be a pioneer in that area. And I, I would say that I've seen your wisdom in that, and I, we, I'm sure we'll come back to that. And then, um, a better ability to track where inquiries are coming in from, um, and so those, I feel like, were the main things. You gave me several other smaller things, and maybe those will come up as we go along.

Whitney: Fantastic. Okay. So, which do you want to do first? Do you want to talk about the side hustle to the side hustle, what you learned there?

Ryan: Yeah, yeah let's start there.

Whitney: Okay. Yeah.

Ryan: So, um, one of the things that I, I've learned since we last talked, I was finishing up an e-book that I wanted to give away to the people that are on my email list. I originally wrote it as a paper a couple of years ago, and I just thought man I ... let me just repurpose this and then create a free e-book, um, and it would help me learn the process of maybe working with Amazon as well as the process of developing a book, in case I wanted to self-publish.

And so, um, it's, it involves mindsets but it's more directly related to improving leadership. And so between my resume course, and this e-book what I found working on these two things is, or maybe even not working on these two things over the last few months, is because they aren't central to what my main focus is, that is mindsets, I haven't been able to devote the time and the resources in order to make them

successful. So, I, that's where I see your wisdom of really putting a stake in the ground, and focusing specifically on that.

So one of the things that we, was on my mind when we last talked was potentially developing another online course catered towards developing first time managers. While I think I can make money, and have it be a worthwhile venture monetarily, I, I guess I've learned that I'm not going to have the time and the capacity to focus on it because that's not central to my main focus, which is mindsets.

I would say that's my, that's been my big take away from working on, as I maybe mentioned last time is I feel like I'm throwing 100 things against the wall and seeing what sticks. Well I feel like I've kind of learned that unless it's focused on mindsets, it's not going to stick for me, personally, and-

Whitney: Ah.

Ryan: Therefore it's not going to stick for others.

Whitney: That's a big discovery.

Ryan: Well, yeah.

Whitney: That's a big discovery, right?

Ryan: It is.

Whitney: So you can throw 100 things against the wall, but they need to be mindset focused, as opposed to ... something else.

Ryan: Yeah, I would say it's, it's big. It is in some ways a little scary. There's less to hang my hat on. So there's a little bit more pressure to make the mindset stuff work. But I think that that's a healthy pressure.

Whitney: Yeah. So let me ask you a question before we, um, before we move off that. So on the e-book did you end up actually publishing it?

Ryan: So I got it, um, in a form that I can give it away.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: Uh, through a PDF version.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: What I found, and this is me learning about how Amazon works, is, uh, Amazon doesn't like PDFs so I have to get it in another format. If I was to do it all over again, we would have started at a different place to allow, uh, us to transition into a format more appeasable to Amazon.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: So I have it on my, I have it on my website, I'm giving it away as a PDF, but in terms of actually being up on Amazon, that's one of my goals for this week is getting it up on Amazon.

Whitney: Okay, so interesting, just trying to think through some of the learnings that you've had around that e-book is that, you've learned the process of what you would need to do in order to put a book up on Amazon.

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: Regardless of whether or not you think it's the right topic, um, and so going through that process is actually had a number of learnings, is that accurate?

Ryan: Yes, most definitely.

Whitney: Okay. And I, I suspect the same with this course. So you developed the course, and even though you haven't had the capacity to, to market it and sell it the way that one could sell a course on resumes, again, you've been able to start vetting, so how does one construct a course, how does one upload a course, how does one potentially put a course out into the world.

Ryan: Yep, exactly.

Whitney: Okay, so all good, all good lessons, in fact I suspect if you sat down you could probably come up with 20 lessons learned from both of those experiments that on the face of it one could say well they weren't successful, but on the other hand, they were experiments that are going to help some of the other projects that you're working on be successful.

Ryan: For sure, yeah, definitely, I mean, chalk it up for an investment in learning-

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: On both accounts. And, and I think that that's, I mean one of the things that I focus on with my mindsets is you got to have a growth mindset-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: -so you've got to see challenges and failures as opportunities to learn and grow, and that's necessary to be successful, and, so I see these as, that's the way that I'm trying to look at it. It's not that I ... uh, won't, they're not signs that I am not successful-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: -they're things to learn from and improve upon-

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: -in order to be more successful moving forward.

Whitney: Isn't that interesting how because your focus is on mindsets and growth mindsets and open mindsets how you have to walk your talk, it's good isn't it?

Ryan: (laughs) yes. Yep.

Whitney: It's really good. Yeah. Um, okay, so, alright so you did those two experiments and ... um, alright, so let's now go to, um, the publishing of a book, and the status of that, what you've learned over the last couple of months, and where you are?

Ryan: Yeah, so I went to the writers workshop. Going in and the main question that I wanted to answer was what we'd talked about, go traditional publishing or self-publishing as, as I was very open to that. Talking to other authors, um, I didn't feel like I got any sort of direction. People just kind of said, both have their pros and cons, and here they are, and ... and I guess the one thing that they said was, if you want to get to the market quickly, then self-publish.

And, and so, that, that is a pro, but it's not the only pro. And, and so, but what ended up happening is, I was introduced to an editor, who edits books, and has been quite successful, he's been a writer all his life, he was ... I don't know if you've ever read the book "Multipliers" by Liz Wiseman?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: But he was actually featured in the first edition of her book as a writer. So he's demonstrated success, and I told him about my book idea, and he says I think this has a, a future, um, and I said well, I need, I'm at a first draft, and I'm not a professional writer, I could see how you could add value to my writing, and help me really improve my writing and, so I'd love to see, have you read through the book, let me know what you think in terms of, um, it's a, it's likelihood to be successful in the market based upon your experience and, if it's not there yet can we get it there?

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: And, and so, um, we've agreed to work together, so we've been working through revising the front end of the book as we're preparing it to shop it out to agents, and, that's another thing is he has a lot more connections to agents than I do. He said, we don't need to do an overhaul of the book, we just need to make minor improvements throughout. We need to bring in more stories, more anecdotes, things like that. So he's been very helpful in that, and the book is, I feel is taking some really strong shape.

And so for now, my approach is, I want, I want to try to get this in with a traditional publisher and I think he improves my odds of doing that both in terms of improving the book, but also in terms of his connections with agents and other publishers.

Whitney: Okay so he's your editor, he's not going to be your agent?

Ryan: Correct. his name is Bob Yehling

Whitney: Yeah. Okay, fantastic. So, um, since we last spoke then you've made a decision about, um, you're going to publish a book, you're going to go for a traditional publisher, you found an editor, and an editor who has connections with agents, so once it's in fighting shape, he will be able to make some introductions for you, or on your behalf, or jointly I suppose-

Ryan: Yep.

Whitney: -to agents that can shop the book to publishers.

Ryan: Correct.

Whitney: Fantastic. Fantastic. Okay. Alright, so that's the update on the publisher, it sounds like you've given me the update on the mindset of your decision to drill down on that, so you went through these experiments, those have, have reinforced this idea of drilling down on that. So, my question to you at this point is, what does that look like, as of today, drilling down on that?

Ryan: Let me mention that one of your suggestion was for me to look into one of your podcasts that you did with Donald Miller, and then, uh look at his book StoryBrand. Uh, in some ways I now see the book StoryBrand as my new bible. Um, and so, I've read through it once, and then I, I kind of revisit it, but I see it, that's a book that I'm going to continually come back to as I continually refine and improve my, my processes.

So one of the things that I, I've been doing a lot of in the last three months, is I'm doing, been doing a lot of speaking. So, I probably been on pace for about one speaking engagement per week, which is about the max that I feel comfortable doing. And, and I realize, I think that's a good place because now I can start to be more selective. I can kind of pick and choose the audiences I want to be a part of, I can also start asking for more money, or asking to get paid, as many of them have been free speaking engagements.

I wish the benefit of speaking, um, I would see more short term connections come through that. I'm still hopeful there will be long term connections, and I am building, um, a reputation in the community, um, for all the speaking that I've been doing. So, I know that there's good things happening, I haven't seen any immediate returns, other than in a few instances, some compensation, but I am starting to get some, uh, keynote events, which is great. Um, but I do want to think about how do I make speaking a little bit more successful. And-

Whitney: So when you, when you speak, um, after you speak at an event, um, are you getting additional speaking opportunities as a consequence of speaking at that event?

Ryan: I'm always trying to get those.

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: So particularly if I'm speaking for, for free-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: -I'll say um, I will do this, but will you connect me with other people that may want to have me come and speak on a, on the same topic or a related topic.

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

Ryan: Through that I am building my network, I haven't seen immediate returns from that, but I would say I'm still talking to people. Um, along those regards, so I wouldn't say it's not successful, it's ... how do I, how do I capitalize on this.

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: So I feel like I'm in a, a good place, but I also feel like I'm in a place where I need to take a step up.

Whitney: So couple thoughts there. Um, so the fact that you're getting, uh, asked to speak once a week, that is positive, that's a positive sign. How are people finding you? So when someone's asking you to speak, where are those inquiries ... 'cause I would definitely be tracking that on a spreadsheet of, you know, I spoke here, and, here's how they found me. I spoke here and here's how they found me. So, so, let's take the last couple of speaking engagements you've done, how did they find you?

Ryan: Um, let me look them up just so I'm ...

Whitney: Yeah, 'cause whether it's paid or not, 'cause then, then, we can dissect that a bit.

Ryan: So most of the more recent speaking events, for example this last week I spoke at, there's an association for talent development in Orange County-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: You know a networking-

Whitney: Right.

Ryan: Professional development group, and, I reached out to them to present, they had, they brought me in to do that.

Whitney: Okay, so let's talk about that for a second. So you reached out to them, they brought you in to do that, did you get your feedback yet on how you did?

Ryan: Um, no, they did a survey but it was last week, and I should, I expect to get the results of the survey soon-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: I would say I got some very positive immediate feedback - I would say one third of the group came because they wanted to learn about mindsets, the other two thirds were just there to network, and just be there, they didn't even know what the topic was going to be about.

Whitney: Right.

Ryan: For those two thirds of people they said, oh my goodness, I was really glad that I came today, I had no idea I would get so much out of today. So that was, a very positive at least verbal feedback.

I spoke, uh for a nursing class. So in one of my speaking engagements at, uh, it was actually a keynote event that took place at the university that I'm a professor at, it was for a ... state, statewide HR group, and it was hosted at our university. I spoke there, there was a member, or there was somebody at Cal State Fullerton that was in

attendance, she told her friend about me, and her friend is this professor, uh, that teaches in the nursing program, and she asked me to come in and do a guest lecture.

And so, I did that, and then, as I, as I told you I just asked, I'm happy to do it if you will connect me with some of your contacts that might be interested in this. So she connected me with a woman who's over a hospital group that supports over 30 hospitals in southern California, and we are going to be having a conversation, I already had one conversation, but we're going to be having a, uh, a better conversation here in the next few weeks about putting together a training curriculum for leaders across these hospitals.

Whitney: Okay. Alright. So it sounds like you're doing everything right around that. So, you're, number one, you're speaking. And, I, I think I may have said this to you before, but I remember, and this might be apocryphal but, Tony Robbins said when you first start speaking you just need to speak as much as you can, wherever you can, because part of it is just, it's, it's honing your craft, and then getting yourself in front of as many people as possible. So, it sounds to me like you're doing all of that, and that's exactly what you want to be doing as well as asking the question, is there anybody else who would like to hear these ideas as well?

Um, one of the things that I use to know if I've done a good job is are there follow on, you know, does someone's come up to me afterwards and say I want you to speak here. Um, that's an indicator, even if it doesn't end up happening, the fact that, I mean it's better if it does happen-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: -but the fact that someone came up and said "I want you to speak because I heard you speak", so you might even be tracking on your spreadsheet of like how many inquiries did I get on the back of my speaking.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: The other thought that I'm having for you, Ryan, is are you getting footage when you're speaking, is someone filming, um, your speaking?

Ryan: Usually not, I did just, uh, speak for, I don't know if you've gone to any Disrupt HR events, but I, they're these, essentially five minute talks.

Whitney: Oh yes, mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes I've heard of them.

Ryan: It was actually one of the most nerve wracking experiences of my life (laughs), but I, I, we just got footage from that. I haven't looked at it yet, I just got it yesterday, and, and so that's the only, uh-

Whitney: Footage that you have.

Ryan: Footage that I've gotten of me speaking.

Whitney: So, a couple of other thoughts then on the speaking, is, and some of these places where you're speaking for free, um, and it's possible, then ask for the footage, 'cause you want to start building out a speaker reel, and so-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: -I would ask for that. The other thing that I would encourage you to be doing is really think of, just like you're doing all the work to perfect your book and your manuscript, I would do the same thing with your speaking. So you want to make sure that, um, the quality of your, not only of your material, 'cause the material you know is already good, but the quality of your delivery is consistently improving. And so whether that means you're filming yourself and watching the, you know watching the footage, whether that means that you are getting a coach that comes in and watches you speak, so that your ability to deliver your material is, um, is keeping pace with if not exceeding, um, your material itself. Because the difference between a person who works a lot, and works, you know, some, is oftentimes not the material, it's the delivery.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So that would be my one suggestion for you is just to make sure that you're also getting that, um, coaching and really looking to improve your delivery.

Ryan: Great. So, uh, in, and I like that suggestion, um, as I think about implementing that, the question comes, that first pops into my mind is do you have any recommendations for how to identify, let's say if I wanted to get a speaking coach-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: You know, because part of it I see, maybe you want to find somebody local so they can actually attend the events, or is it something where it doesn't matter, all you need to do is get it recorded, and then have them watch it after the fact. Do you have ...

Whitney: Um, I think it, I think it's kind of like the difference between self and traditional publishing, it, it really depends. I think as a starting point because you are local and you are in southern California, I would, I mean, it's a populous area, I would ask around-

Ryan: Okay.

Whitney: Uh, do people know of people who are speaking coaches? I'm sure Toastmasters is pretty big there as well, so I don't think you'll have to look very hard to find someone, do it on a very short term basis, I know over the years I've worked with a couple of different people, and what you'll find is that at different stages of your career, you're going to need different kinds of coaches, and so what you'll want to do right now is just find someone who can, um, evaluate your speaking, give you some tips, have it be a very short term, you know, sort of, you know watch three speeches, give me your tips, and then see what happens from there.

But, but the big message to you is, take your speaking as seriously as you're taking your writing. You know, as, you've got a PhD, you had a PhD advisor. You got a book, you got an editor, Bob Yehling. On speak, on speaking you want to do the same thing.

Ryan: Yeah. Okay, great.

Whitney: Alright, um, I guess the last question-

Ryan: Well let me, do you care, let me highlight one other thing and maybe you might-

Whitney: Yes please, yeah.

Ryan: -have some input, so. One other thing that I just, uh, decided to start doing, and this is the process of, um, I've stopped ... well, I wouldn't say, I haven't fully stopped promoting my resume course-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: -it's still, I, when I find some time here and there I'll, I'll work at promoting that, I'm actually doing a partnership with the guy, uh, next week to, where we're trying to roll out both of our online courses together as a package. But, uh, one of the things that I feel like I, I need to do is my, as I focus more on mindsets is I've taken something that we talked about last time that worked, uh, with an organization and that is, I went into an organization and had all of the employees, well at least in that organization all the top leaders of the organization take my personal mindset assessment. And then I provided them with a report that talked about their collective mindsets as an organization.

So what I've now done, and what is my next big objective, is I want to, rather than market a stand out resume course, I want to market that I can put together a collective mindset assessment for your team, department, or organization. Initially what I've done to try to market that is I've got a, I've got a blog and a weekly newsletter, and so I ran a string of blog posts that talk about the importance of assessing the collective mindsets of the group, what a report looks like, and things like that. I would say, um, from that I've, I've gotten one bite, I would like to say that I would have, I was hoping that I would get more than one bite-

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: Given the size of my email list, which is now up about 1700. Um, but, but I got one bite which is good, but then, so my next approach now is, I've created a list of a hundred people, organizations, or groups that I can either, um, try offer them this service, or else they might be able in partnering with me in offering this to their constituents, if that makes sense.

One of the things that I feel that I've learned with this is, in order for people to want to do this, I've got to have a stronger personal connection with them. It's got to be a closer connection than just firing off a blog post that talks about it.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: And so that's, that's one of the main ideas is, okay I need to take the next step and maybe be a little more proactive in approaching people, uh, with the opportunity. So that's, that's going to be my, that's kind of my next big step in terms of growing the revenue of my side hustle.

Whitney: Okay. So, um, what I would say is, I really like the idea a lot, um, because we all like to take quizzes about ourselves, like we're just ceaselessly fascinated by them 'cause we want to understand ourselves better, so, that makes a lot of sense to me to do, and I think it's a very interesting idea. Um, so to not only have people be able to look at their individual mindset but what's the mindset of a team. Super interesting. Um,

some thoughts that I would have there for you, is, are, um, uh ... to be patient around that, so, couple things.

Number one is really focus on your book right now, because the book is going to be a magnet for people being interested in the mindset assessment.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So that's one thing. The second thing, thought, that I think you might want to consider is, when you speak, 'cause part of what you're trying to do it you're trying to build a data set, is when you speak if someone says, um, "I'd like you to come in and talk to my organization" they've just heard you, they now are ready to evangelize for you because they've heard you, they've been impressed, it's interesting, they want you to come to your, their organization.

What I would do is then say "That's fantastic, what I can do for you, is I can come and speak, and we can do this assessment beforehand-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: -that will allow me to then when I'm speaking, to deliver the results of that assessment. There's a nominal fee for it, it's \$500, um, plus you know the speaking fee for me which is \$1000." Whatever it is, whatever you decide it should be. Um, but then that allows you to start, um, experimenting with it, building out your data set, and seeing what happens, and that's gonna be I think a much, it's a warmer, it's a much warmer lead for you.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: Have you tried something like that?

Ryan: I, I like that idea, and so I would say that it's always best for growing my email list if I can have those in the group take the mindset assessment in advance. Um, but I have, I guess, so I've been having some groups do that, but I haven't thought about putting together a report, uh, a collective report for the group just because they're all from different organizations, but-

Whitney: It doesn't matter.

Ryan: That doesn't say that there couldn't be value in that.

Whitney: It doesn't matter, you could just say, you know, hypothetically, theoretically if you were all in one company-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: Then, uh, this is what it looks like.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: It's still a value to them.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: 'Cause they've taken it on their own. So um-

Ryan: That's a great idea.

Whitney: I think that's a way for you to build that out, and um, as you said, part of it is you're trying to build out your email list as well, so, so, so it accomplishes two objectives for you, it both builds up the email list, it also gives people a better idea of how you can provide value to them.

Ryan: Yeah. Great. Thank you.

Whitney: On tracking inquiries, as people are coming in and making inquiries, what are you finding, what information are you getting?

Ryan: Um, I feel like it's, I'm not seeing a pattern. Uh-

Whitney: Okay.

Ryan: So I, I feel like, some come from, I would say most come from speaking, but that's, that's, and me just asking for referrals from the speaking. And that's maybe because I, I've been doing one speaking engagement a week so I'm doing quite a bit of that. But then I'll get some that pop up from, um, my blog posts, uh, some that'll ... um, I'm trying to think of some examples.

Um, but, may, maybe me stumbling through this is evidence that that's something I need to devote more attention to, and I mean I feel like I've been trying to capture that mentally, but maybe to a better job of capturing-

Whitney: Oh yeah, I would just keep in on your spreadsheet.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: Yeah, it sounds like though, from what you're saying, even not having done a lot of analysis on this yet is that most of the leads are coming now from speaking, so, in terms of the inquiries are coming from people hearing you speak, and then they're interested and engaging with you after they hear you speak, and so ... um, then the question, again I would go back to tracking really carefully, how are people finding you to asking you to speak, so that you're just having a very clear sense of what that looks like.

Ryan: Yeah. Okay.

Whitney: So you can do, when you know it's working you can do more of it.

Ryan: Yeah. Uh, yeah, and I would say from the speaking it's usually me asking for connections and referrals from that. And I will say that I have several new outlets where I'm gonna be, where I've written guest posts that are coming out in the next month, so I'm ... I'll be tracking those as well.

Some of the guest posts don't like to, it's kind of against their policy to provide a link to my mindset assessment, and so I'm not really, I feel like I'm throwing value out there to the world, but I'm not able to capture any of the, any of that value that could be coming back. So, it's made me rethink, do I continue to guest post for those outlets.

Whitney: I think it depends. Again, because, you're right on the short term, it would appear that there's very little value capture, you're not capturing an email address, et cetera. But longer term, um, we know that in order to build a brand, there needs to be repetition, people need to hear a person's name consistently, or there needs to be that consistent, you know, depending on what data source you're looking at, seven times, ten times, before someone starts to decide to buy. So if you feel like those outlets are places where those, the people are real potential buyers of what you have to offer, I would say it's probably still worth it to do it.

Ryan: Gotcha. Okay.

Whitney: What's your, what your elevator pitch at this point, when you meet people?

Ryan: Um, so, to me, I feel like I change it depending on the audience.

Whitney: Okay, so if you're talking to someone who you want to bring you in to speak, what's your elevator pitch?

Ryan: I usually um, will say, something along the lines of ... when most people or most employees, most leaders, whatever, are trying to improve their performance, they focus on their behaviors. But what I found through my research through working with organizations is that actually what drives performance and even the behaviors of the leaders employees in the organizations is how the leaders and employees see the world around them. Or in other words, their mindsets.

So, what I do is I help employees and leaders and organizations as a whole clearly identify what mindsets that they need to have to be successful, and in fact, through my personal mindset assessment, I found that only 5% of people consistently hold the positive mindsets that they need to have to be as successful as possible. So there's always room for growth and, and we'd love to help you-

Whitney: Yeah.

Ryan: -improve your organization through a focus on this foundational driver of success, which is mindsets.

Whitney: Yeah. Um, I would say, that's pretty good Ryan. I think you could improve it, but it's pretty good. Um, I would, um, look at possibly, it sounds like you've been really studying your StoryBrand bible. That one data point that really stuck out to me was that 5%, only 5%-

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: So that was interesting to me, I think I would hit that harder, faster.

Ryan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Whitney: And, uh, something like, um only 5%, based on my research only 5% of all people in the workplace have the mindset that they need in order to be successful. Um, we tend to focus on behaviors, what we really need to focus on is what people, how people think and how they view the world. I have an assessment that allows us to figure out where you are and then I provide you with tools that will help you to figure out how to improve and move yourself into that 5%.

That's, again, that's me riffing. But that's some of the gold that I picked up from what you said.

Ryan: Great. It's perfect. Hopefully you'll put that in the podcast, so I can re-listen to that.

Whitney: It's recording, yeah it's recording, yeah there you go. I guess my last question for you is, um, what have been some of your insights from doing this, from going through this process of being mini coached?

Ryan: There's a huge amount of value by talking to people who have been where you are trying to go.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ryan: And just the, the perspective, it, I mean I would say, what you have said isn't necessarily groundbreaking, but, and, and I've had maybe those thoughts, but then I've also got other thoughts in my mind that battle against some of these ideas that you suggested, but I don't have the perspective to weigh those ideas between each other very effectively, whereas I feel like somebody like you who who's where I want to go, you, you've already worked through that yourself, and you can cut straight to the chase, um.

You know if I would have, if we would have done this, six months ago, or you know, five months ago, starting initially, like I, I probably wouldn't have done the Stand Out Resume course, uh, I, I probably wouldn't have done the e-book. It's not that I regret doing those, because I think I've learned lessons, but, I could have streamlined this, I could have been, you know, at this point in time I could be where I'm going to be three or four months from now, type thing. And so, um, I would say collectively that's been my biggest take away from this,

Whitney: Hm.

Ryan: And, you know, a lot of that is it's been you, but also some of the sources that you've pointed me to.

Whitney: Interesting. It is an interesting question isn't it, of like, you know, would you have done things differently, and you might have, you might not have, but when you did you would have been like "Oh I remember ... I remember Whitney saying this to me, that, um, this may not make sense, and now I get it." Right? So you might have, so, that's what's interesting, right? When we get advice from people is that sometimes we listen, sometimes we don't, but, but then we're able to streamline the process, or certainly iterate more quickly when you're learning.

Ryan: Yeah.

Whitney: Um, okay, well I, I, any last thoughts?

Ryan: Thank you for your time-

Whitney: Oh your welcome.

Ryan: -and your willingness to exert energy on my behalf and give me advice, uh, it's very kind of you and it's, it's great to have the opportunity to, not only receive coaching, but also be, you know, I've seen you roll this out with other people with, on your podcast, and to be featured on your podcast in this way, I, I hope it's of value to your followers and your listeners, and, uh, I would say if people are like me and struggling to get a side hustle going, like, maybe we could connect ourselves and try to learn from each other and bounce back ideas and things like that.

Whitney: Fun. Yeah. Okay.

Ryan: So it's really just been a great opportunity to learn and grow, and, and, I would say one of the things that I've struggled with is, 'cause I've, I've done coaching, I've had people provide coaching for me and things like that, and, it's been very, I would say it's rather difficult to find people who actually, uh, know what they're talking, to me know what they're talking about and provide value, and I'm sure, uh, you do this coaching for others at a certain fee and to be able to get that for free, but it ... you set a bar for me in the type of coaching that I want to receive when I work with other coaches.

Whitney: Oh thank you, that, thank you Ryan, that's very kind. Um, well thank you again for being on the podcast, I am confident that people are going to, um, learn a tremendous amount from you and I really appreciate that you, uh, came on and you are hungry, you are, um, were willing to do the work, and um, as a consequence of your, you know you were doing the work, you're continuing to do the work, I'm confident you will continue to do the work and be able to get the results that you're looking for, so thank you again for being our guest.

Ryan: For sure. Let's do it again sometime.

Whitney: (laughs).

Ryan: (laughs).

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Whatever you might be trying to accomplish - whether going after a new goal or writing a book like Ryan - remember what it feels like to be at the low end of the curve. The launch point of the curve. It can feel like a slog. Progress seems nonexistent. It's easy to get impatient and want to abandon what you're trying to accomplish, or to do what Ryan did at first and try to race up more than one learning curve at a time. But just like you can't surf two waves at once, you can't progress up your current learning curve without committing. Experimenting at first is great, but after a certain point in time, you have to get focused, specific. It's counterintuitive, but we get so much further in the long run when we move forward with one idea at a time.

Practical Tip: Once you know what your idea is. And you will. Play it out. Don't procrastinate. Do everything else but this. Lean into it. Even if it's for two minutes a day. Like we talked about in our [episode 93 with James Clear](#).

If you found this coaching conversation useful, if there are things you liked, if there are things you didn't like, things that you would improve, if you want to be coached – any of those things, or something else - we'd love to hear from you. You can reach me at [wj@whitneyjohnson.com](mailto:wj@whitneyjohnson.com).

Thanks to Ryan Gottfredson for being our guest. It takes a lot of courage to be coached on air. Thank you to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributors Emilie Davis and Libby Newman, and art director Brandon Jameson. And thank you to you for listening.

I'm Whitney Johnson  
And this is Disrupt Yourself.