

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 101: ERIK & EMILY ORTON

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast, I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak, and live all things disruption. Today, our guests are, and I said our guests on purpose because it's not just one person it's two people. It's Erik Orton and Emily Orton, they are the parents of five children. They are New York City based and they have just released a book called *Seven at Sea*.

Whitney: Welcome, Emily and Erik, we're so happy to have you here.

Emily: Thank you so much, Whitney. It's so great to be with you.

Erik: Yeah, Whitney, it's great. Thank you.

Whitney: All right, so let's, let's start, I'm going to turn this first question to Emily, um, about five years ago, six years ago, you did something. Here you are parents of five children, you're living in New York City and you do something highly unusual. What was that unusual thing that you did, Emily?

Emily: The unusual thing that we did is that we decided to leave behind our life in New York City, to disrupt ourselves, disrupt our whole family and go to live on a sailboat with our five children in the hopes that that disruption would give us opportunities to create new memories, um, and strengthen our connections with each other. There, you know, there were other reasons, there were sense of adventure, a desire to have hands-on learning experiences, but most of all, I was in a pretty happy place with the kids, with community and school. And so for me, it really was a disruption of something good and I told them, "We're not expecting to escape. We don't think we're going to leave our humdrum and go to something that's going to make us happier, but we think that it could make us stronger."

Whitney: Interesting. So life was good. This wasn't like you said, about like escaping. It was just, how do we get even happier, is sounds like?

Emily: We, yeah, we wanted to, to get closer. We wanted to s- maybe see what we could do together and I think for me, I was in a happy place, but it's a family of seven so Erik had a different scenario.

Whitney: Which I want to hear about in just a minute.

Erik: (Laughing) Okay.

Whitney: So at this point in time, Emily, how old were your children?

Emily: All right, let's see, in 2014, our oldest was 16, and so then we had 16, 14, 12, just turned 12, 8 and 6 years old was our youngest. Our youngest daughter has down syndrome.

Whitney: Okay.

Emily: She was six years old.

Whitney: All right, so 6 to 16, your youngest daughter has down syndrome. So this is no, no mean feat that you're about to embark upon. All right, so Erik, um, how did this idea first come about and what were you doing at the time, uh, professionally, and just talk to us a little bit about how this idea got hatched.

Erik: I guess going back to the years that led up to taking the trip, I was in what, for me, felt like a very low point professionally. I, I was producing theater in New York and I'd just produced a show that was a complete financial disaster and had closed, um, and lost all this money despite the fact that it was a fun show, a great show, and people seemed to enjoy it. We just didn't hit our marks financially, and so it was short-lived, and, and I didn't know what I wanted to do next 'cause I was embarrassed.

I didn't want to go back to working for somebody else after having been in that role, and so I just kind of decided to tread water for a while and got a temp job working at an investment bank doing graphics work at night. And so I would just commute downtown and I didn't know anybody there, nobody knew what I was doing. And I just worked nights down in the, the Financial District and I would take dinner breaks and walk along the Hudson River and at sunset I would see these boats going up and down and just thought it was peaceful and beautiful.

And, and I think, at the time, what I really wanted was something where I could feel a sense of control over my life again and a sense of moving toward something that was really meaningful and fulfilling to me after having had what for me felt like a really devastating setback. And, there was this sailing school right downstairs from where I was working, and yet, I felt like I couldn't just go in there because sailing felt like it was this thing that other people did that wasn't a part of how I was raised or grew up or what we did. It was, you know, it was for a different set of people and yet it sort of called to me.

And Emily and I chatted on the phone nightly during these breaks and at one point she kind of encouraged me to go check it out and so, I, I took this step across from, you know, from land to this floating dock where it had this school and I went in and I just said, "You know, I'm interested in sailing and can you tell me how this works, what it's all about?" And they were super nice and welcoming and friendly and explained how we could do a class.

And, to do the class, we had to have a minimum of four people and because I worked an unusual schedule and wasn't available on weekends because of other responsibilities, I had to recruit my own class, my own crew so to speak, and uh, I asked Emily and our two oldest daughters, who were pretty young at the time, if they would join me. And, Karina was-

Emily: 11, and-

Erik: So, yeah, 11 and nine, were our two oldest girls at the time, and I asked them if they would join me and they did, and we took this class and it was, it was fun. You know, we, we got a little seasick and, but we also learned to sail a little bit and we got our 101 certification,

American Sailing Association 101. And at the end of that class, uh, we decided to try it and do a family sail, and so I hunted around for a, a way and place to rent a sailboat, which I could do now since I kind of had my beginners driver's license.

And we found a place out in Toms River, New Jersey that rented boats by the half day and we trekked out there and we took the kids out on the water. And, it was until we got out on to the water that we realized that three of the kids had never done anything like this before and were pretty terrified. There was a lot of screaming and crying and I was completely flustered and we were running into things. And literally as speed boats and jet skis blazed past us on either side, they, people would just laugh and point at us and we (laughing), it felt like to us this complete disaster. Uh, by the end, we'd, we'd kind of evened out and we got back to the dock without any incidents, and you know, we, we gained our composure and came home and Sarah Jane, our third daughter, said ... What did she say, I, ... "That wasn't as bad as I thought it was gonna be."

Whitney: (Laughing).

Erik: (Laughing) That was exactly what she said.

Whitney: High praise from a child, right?

Erik: Yeah, yeah, and so that was our first family sail and we were able to pump our fist in the air and say, "Hey, we sailed as a family." And then, from there, it just, I, the season ended, and you know, you don't sail during the winter unless you're really crazy and we're not really crazy-

Emily: It didn't die it just, I don't know ...

Erik: It went underground for a little while.

Emily: Yeah, went underground.

Erik: 'Cause we didn't think, you know, we didn't have, we didn't own a sailboat, we didn't really know how to get access to a sailboat. And so, what I started to do for the next few summers is I would, now that I could sail I would say, "Hey, who wants to go sailing?" And everyone would chip in \$25 bucks or something like that, and I'd go rent a sailboat for half the day and we would, I'd take friends out and that was how I kept current, so to speak, kept my skills up. And, then, I would take the kids out every now and then and we just thought we really, really liked doing this, and we liked being out on the water as a family.

And, eventually we found a sailing club up in New Rochelle, New York, which is about a half an hour drive from where we live in Manhattan, and we looked at the price, and you know, for us at the time it felt a little expensive. It was, but it was basically, I was like, that's the cost what people pay for cable each month. Like, you get a big package of cable TV and it's about the same and I was like ... We didn't have cable, but I thought, I would much rather be doing this and so we started to incrementally invest money and time into doing this.

We bought a family set of life jackets and Emily and I took a navigation course and it just slowly, very, very slowly built from, uh, we built a knowledge base, we built a skill base, and we involved our kids and so they got used to it. And everything we learned ... They all didn't take the classes, but we would teach it to them, secondhand, so it reinforced it for

ourselves, and they learned it, and they became very confident sailors and very comfortable in the water.

And we'd go sailing, probably three or four times a month.

Emily: So these were like 20 foot boats with no motor.

Erik: Yep, very, very simple boats.

Whitney: Right.

Erik: Basics.

Whitney: Well, so Erik, how did you feel the first time you went sailing? How did that feel to you, do you remember?

Erik: Yeah, it was terrible 'cause I, this guy was looking for people to go sailing with him on uh, this little teeny boat that he had up the Hudson River, you know, the Tappan Zee Bridge, and uh, I think he was trying to recruit, recruit ladies to go sailing with him and I was like, "Oh, I'll go." And I brought, uh, this burly buddy of mine. I was, I don't think he was getting the, the clientele that he was hoping for, but we went along and, and we went out on the day. It was super blazing hot and it was, no wind. It was absolutely dead flat and I just got super seasick. And honestly, I threw up five or six times between being on the boat and getting back to land and getting in the car and coming back to our apartment.

I was just like a mess and so, yet I, I just thought, "Well, I, I'm going to have to overcome this if I want to sail." And, uh, so, uh, I don't know, it just, it was something that I knew I wanted to do, but I knew it was not going to be easy.

Whitney: That's so fascinating 'cause there, like hearing you say that you have this longing, you're watching people sail, you want to try it, you go out, you get deathly ill or at least what feels like deathly ill-

Erik: It felt like that.

Whitney: ... and yet you still want to do it. What was going on inside of your mind and your heart that just made this an imperative, do you know?

Erik: Well, if you, if, if we go way back, uh, when I was a, a teenager I used to deliver newspapers as a kid and I would go out in the mornings before the sun was up and when everything was very quiet and I would do my route and I would deliver newspapers. And I just had a lot of time to look at the sky and look at the stars 'cause, you know, I didn't have ear buds at the time and I would just kind of take in nature every morning for a good 45 minutes as I walked my route.

And I just felt the stars were so timeless and I thought about, you know, people in, in Egypt with centuries and millennia sailing up and down the Nile River, and I thought about how people would explore the globe and how in their time, they were looking up at these same stars and it just seemed like this not, not kind of eternal thing, but just this, this timeless activity that linked the generations of humanity. And, that's getting a little bit lofty, but I, I just thought, I want to be a part of that, I want to tap into that somehow and then, you know, I, I never went sailing and that was when I was a teenager. And, then it wasn't until I was married and had kids that we actually sailed, but if I think, if I traced it back to when

the, the idea of very first entered my head, I think that's, that's as, about as far back as I could go.

Whitney: Yeah, so interesting impulse, and then you're at this place in your career which everyone, well most people listening to this podcast is, have had that place. I know I have, where you just think you are completely bereft and you don't know what you're going to do and so that longing of being able to be, connect with something greater than you started, sounds like it just started to kick in again.

Erik: Yeah, that sounds about right.

Whitney: Okay, so Emily, question for you now. Um, when Erik comes home or was this Erik's idea, like when, when did this idea emerge of like, "Hey, let's go sailing as a family for six months." Did you, what, what was your response or do you, or, or, was it your idea? How, how did this happen?

Emily: Wow, it sure wasn't my idea, like I-

Whitney: (Laughing).

Erik: (Laughing).

Emily: ... (Laughing) I don't want to claim credit for that.

Erik: [crosstalk 00:12:43].

Emily: It was not my idea, but it became my dream, I'll say that.

Erik: Yeah.

Emily: And, so when Erik first wanted to, you know, I'm like, "Go for it. Go check out that sailing school. See what they have." And then he said ... You know, the real paradigm shift there was that in his mind opened up and this idea that it was actually possible even for people like him or like us. And then, uh, he needed to find this class, and you know, I was such a cheerleader for that and I came up with names of people he could ask, "Well, have you tried this person? What about that person?"

And for a couple of weeks, he was looking for other people and then one day he said, "Hey, I have this great idea, what if you and our two oldest daughters make up this class size?" And I was like, "Wait, wait, wait, wait. I am afraid of deep water. I don't want to get in the deep end of the swimming pool. I'm just not excited about this."

So, he said, "Well, if you learn how to sail then you will not be in the water and that's good." So, uh, he sort of persuaded me that we could do this, and of course, I mean, here's my husband, my, my best friend, the person that I always want to be in a role where I'm cheering him on and supporting him and it seemed like this was a short term thing that we could do. And the kids were excited and it was something new they could learn and a new experience, and I'm all about learning, so we went for it.

And it was, and it was fine and I didn't fall in the water, and I guess, you know, we had the instructor always with us and it was pretty good and, and, you know, I got my card and that seemed great. And then, uh, I thought that would be the end of it and then he was going on about this idea like, "Well, we have to see if we can do it without an instructor."

Let's go get a boat." And then when that finished, I thought, "Okay, well that's it." Like now we've done it, were, were done, that was fun, and then that wasn't it. (Laughing).

So it just kept going and think as, uh, he went sailing on his own and we missed kind of, uh, those, those times when he was away, when he would go on a Saturday or something and that meant our family didn't have that, that family day. Um, we were wishing we could be together more and then we started going on these small boats. It was pretty incredible to think, I can see the buildings of New York City here from the Long island Sound or whatever we are and I have no cell reception.

I'm just here looking at my kids. There's no noisy motor and we're, we have our eyeballs, you know, on each other and we're doing this thing together, and it was such a wonderful time away from the digital world and all our other responsibilities than we would sing and we would stomp our feet and, uh, we learned how to work together better. Everybody had a chance at the tiller. I was just really, to me, it was really beautiful what was happening in our family, and then we started looking at videos of other families who were living full-time on sailboats and seeing the kinds of experiences they were having.

And I would say maybe that's when my imagination really opened up to what was possible and I started to see how, uh, what an incredible experience it could be for our family. I felt like I wanted to take on that struggle as a family, and then I was totally onboard with the idea and I think together we tried to gather consensus from the kids in a way.

Whitney: So it became your dream when you saw what it could do for your family, which is interesting to me.

Emily: Yeah, well, when we see, like Erik had this idea of connecting to the generations and having this adventure, um, you know, seeing the world. I think for both of us, we both are interested in exploration and family. I think we kind of have them re-, maybe reversed in the order, but how he brought it to me when he presented the idea was he said like, "I think that the seven of us on a boat could be enough universe for me." And I was like, "Really? 'Cause you have a lot of interests." (Laughing). And I don't know if that's true or not," but he said, "Look, it would be great because you wouldn't have to pack and unpack. We would all be together and we would be learning together." I mean, so he knew what to pitch.

Whitney: Wow, Erik. Erik, yeah. Wow, he's, he knows how to sell you, huh, Emily? (Laughing).

Emily: Yeah, exactly.

Whitney: I am very impressed by that.

Erik: [crosstalk 00:17:29] Thanks, Whitney. Thank you.

Emily: So all of those things-

Whitney: I love that, seven is my ... What did you say? Seven is my universe? What was that? That was beautiful.

Emily: It's a, I think the seven of us on a boat would be enough universe for me and I'm looking around the house at our kids, you know, reading books, coloring, and stuff, and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, yeah, I'm in."

Whitney: Oh, that's fantastic. Okay, so let's go to the actual trip. Um, Erik, can you just walk us through the basic details of what this journey looked like? When did you start? How many, where, where were you? How many months at sea? Just give us the quick, quick rundown logistically.

Erik: Sure, so, uh, December 2013, we signed on a sailboat in the Caribbean in St. Martin and we, um, had it surveyed. We had never seen it. Uh, we had somebody inspect it for us and some work was going to be done to get it ready for us.

And so, February 8th of 2014, we flew down and moved aboard. We saw our boat for the very first time and moved aboard and spent a few months in St. Martin, getting it fixed up and, and refined, I guess. And went through a very, very steep learning curve of realizing how much we did not know and how in over our heads we were. We ended up doing what we call a shakedown cruise through some of the Caribbean islands, where we looped south to just check out our boat and make sure that it was good to go. We did that with some friends that we made while we were in St. Martin.

And then from there, we eventually, we went north, sailed up through the Virgin Islands, through, past Puerto Rico into, and we jumped up to the Bahamas, and then over from the Bahamas to Florida, and then we sailed all the way up the East Coast to, up the Hudson River to Manhattan. And we actually pulled up to a dock in our neighborhood where we live and the dock actually wasn't even built yet when we left, but by the time we got here it was ready and waiting for us and we tied off the boat and walked home. That's the short version.

Whitney: What was it like when you got home? What was that like?

Erik: I, I have to say that that was one of the most surreal moments because we would laugh and joke as a family and like, "Wouldn't be so cool to sail a boat right up to this dock from, and just somewhere and then walk home?" And we would joke about that often over the years and it was this sort of run down dock that had been abandoned by the Park Service and was, was nothing. And then, as we were getting ready to leave we heard that they were going to renovate it and to, to, to travel 2500 miles down to the Caribbean and then very, very slowly, at essentially five miles an hour, work our way all the way home and then to come up the Hudson River ... and we got home late, uh, late at night, when we finally docked. It was about one in the morning and we docked, and there was nobody there, there was a security guard and I think he was hanging out with the chef that worked at the restaurant.

I don't know what we had imagined, but there was, our friends had wanted to be there to greet us and that was when we were expecting to get in earlier in the day and then we got a late start that day because of other reasons, and, and we ended up having to sail up the, the Hudson against the tide and that made everything slow. So we got in late and it was just, what we have come to call in our family a quiet victory.

We pulled up, nobody was there. There, there was no confetti cannon or (laughing) anything like that, yet we felt like we had just done something for ourselves that felt very monumental. And we simply tied up the boat like we'd done hundreds of times before and grabbed some backpacks, left most of our stuff on the boat and I explained to these guys, I was like, they were like, "What are you doing? You can't just leave your boat here." And I was like, "Look, we just sailed in from the Caribbean. I'm going to go home and sleep. I've talked to the owner already," cause I had, I'd spoken to him on the phone. I said, "We're going to go home. I'm going to come back tomorrow and I'll, and I'll take the boat."

And so we just walked, you know, a quarter mile home and we just looked at each other in this sort of quiet amazement like this is actually happening. We, we, we did the thing that we said we were going to do and to go from idea to reality at that level for us was really magical.

Whitney: Mm, I, it's just so moving as I'm hearing you talk about it, um, and, and just picturing it in my mind. Everybody who's listening to the podcast, it's such a good book, like really you've got to, you're getting to listen to Erik and Emily, but they're just, we're really on the surface of the water. This goes much, much deeper. I definitely, highly recommend it and as you know I don't, I talk about a lot of books, but I don't pound the table to tell you to buy one. This is really, it's a lovely book.

Erik: It's very kind of you, Whitney.

Whitney: So, I'll give this question to both of you. What surprised you most about life at sea? You know, just some kind of odd little quirk, like "Whoa, I never ... okay, yeah, that, I didn't see that one coming," so I've, that question for both of you, and then, Emily, what did you, what about you, what did you learn about yourself being at sea that you just, as, you know, something that you learned about yourself that you just couldn't have known and now just you feel such a greater sense of self efficacy because of that experience?

Erik: Okay, so to your first question, Whitney, about what surprised us most about life at sea? I think for me, the fact that I was not expecting to make such deep, amazing friendships with people that I meet along the way.

Whitney: Interesting.

Erik: Because I had thought of all of the logistics and we thought through the finances and we worked on our skillsets and we had done the best route planning we could, and, and it was all about kind of a, a, a technical aspect, I guess, a strategic approach. And of course, I thought, you know, we're going to spend time as a family and it's going to be this amazing experience for us, relationship-wise as, as a husband and wife and with our kids.

And what I never saw coming was that the people that we would meet and how, uh, how dear they would come, come to be for us and what meaningful friendships those would be, and, and that it was a, about, it was complete families. It wasn't just a person here, a person there, although we did meet individuals and couples that, that we still love and keep in touch with. Um, but we would meet other families with kids and those are the people that we kind of gravitated towards because it was easiest to hangout. Everybody had somebody to be with and to this day we are close to these people. We, we still visit each other, we, we travel to other countries to, to meet up.

And we just came from five months in Europe where we were sailing with some friends that are, you know, we talk about at length in the book. And they have a new boat in the Mediterranean and we sailed with them there and just drove their van across Europe to help them out, and it was super fun for us. And so, it turned into this relationship tree that's bearing fruit that I never could've imagined and, and never saw coming.

Whitney: That's lovely.

Emily: Yeah, I saw-

Whitney: I actually remember reading that story. Um, I think I know which family you're talking about and it seemed like a wonderful connection that you made. Um, okay, so Emily, what about you?

Emily: So I think, like Erik, uh, some of the things that didn't surprise me were washing laundry in a bucket, cooking in a tiny oven, knowing how to preserve fruit or take care of our health on the go. That, all that stuff, um, I had watched and studied and gotten on forums and learned about. So what one of the things that really surprised me was how busy we were. Like we went out there thinking we're gonna have all this time to be with our kids and I thought that if we had set up our environment like that then we would, it would just make it so much easier to automatically be together, um, it didn't happen like that.

Like, we, we were so busy when we got there, trying to figure out, are we gonna get a water maker, are we gonna get some solar panels? Uh, how are we gonna get to the grocery store? Um, what's, what's our route gonna be? And it didn't automatically come. Even though we had set up our life like that, we still had to make time in our day to, time in our week, time on our calendars to, um, have those anchor points for our family in the morning or in the afternoon and that probably surprised me, that and then we also, I also realized we had, um, what I call destination fever. Uh, we were having such a hard time being where we were, like because we were so concerned about getting somewhere else and, uh, it took us some hiccups that came up in the road that sort of m- made us realize we were gonna be where we were and there wasn't much we could do about that.

And so, we had to reevaluate our mindset and realize, "Okay, well, the point is to be together," and just the fact that we had to, um, deliberately still plan it, I think that really surprised me. I thought it would all just unfold very naturally.

Whitney: So the second question then is like what was the hardest thing or what happened that you made, that made you just go, "Wow, like I did that," and, and it might be the whole trip, but is there one event in particular that stands out in your mind?

Emily: I feel like I really had to level up. I feel, I'm the worst sailor in the family and I knew that this was a big responsibility and if anything happened to Erik, you know, what was going, how was the boat going to run and, um, I tried to be very on point. I tried to think things through, and, uh, one time I dropped, uh, a VHF into the water as we were getting off the boat, I dropped this VHF in the water and it didn't float and I-

Whitney: What's a VHF? What's a-

Emily: Oh, thank you, thank you for asking. Um, I don't even know what it stands for, but it's basically just a little-

Erik: Handheld radio.

Emily: ... handheld radio.

Whitney: Okay, got it.

Emily: ... that if you get of frequency and you can talk to other sailors or to each other if you're apart, and it's basically like a walkie talkie.

Whitney: Got it.

Emily: So I have this walkie talkie that doesn't float and I, I dropped it into the, the water. We're going between our boat, like the big boat we live and this little boat with an outboard motor that we used to get back and forth to land and, um, I saw it go and I was like, "I'm not gonna lose that." And the boat's always shifting.

Erik: We should add that we were on our way to go have dinner with some friends on land, so we were all like dressed for the evening and, and-

Whitney: (Laughing).

Erik: ... we were going out, so you know, to a restaurant, which is not terribly fancy, but we were, we were put together and we were kind of on a schedule.

Whitney: Yeah, right.

Emily: I decided that I was just going to go for it, that I couldn't, you know, I was going to take care of it myself and I just dove, you know, face-first into the water. I'm like, swimming, swimming, swimming, trying to get this, um, this basically, this walkie talkie and it's getting away from me and I don't know why I can't get down any further than I am.

But I finally come up and I feel like, I feel like I am a hero because I have just given 100% trying to save the day and I feel like I'm totally ready to go to Erik and say, "This just happened. I did 100% of everything that I could to fix it."

And then I come up out of the water and I realized, okay, well the reason that I couldn't get down any further was because I am still wearing my backpack, which becomes like a flotation device and it's keeping me up on the surface of the water, so I'm getting nowhere. And I also realized that I had a cross-body bag, and inside of that where my iPhone and a local phone that we were borrowing from somebody we met on the island, and I have now destroyed my iPhone, the local phone, and lost the VHF and now Erik doesn't want to speak to me.

So, to me it was really meaningful because I was giving it everything. I was giving my best and realized that, um, that I could do that and I made a lot of mistakes and we had to sort through it, but I just-

Whitney: That's interesting.

Emily: ... felt awesome (laughing) And I learned, um, on that trip that even though I'm not perfect that I really wanna try, and I always get better, and so, that was sort of marker at the beginning of me giving 100%.

And along the way, I came to realize that, um, I could trust myself more and I could trust my family more, and I didn't have to know all the answers or even all the questions before we started and that we would figure out. And even when things went wrong, like that, we could, we could recover from that-

Whitney: Yeah, I-

Emily: ... and I just, it gave me a lot of peace.

Whitney: Yeah, I love that, Emily, that it was a, a situation 'cause so often when we tell this, the narrative is, with this kind of story, you know, I gave it my all and then everything worked

out okay. And what's, what I love about this is that you gave it all, your all and everything *eventually* worked out okay. But in the moment, it did not, and yet you still felt this sense of I showed up here, like I really showed up and it's okay that it didn't work. Eventually-

Emily: Yeah, I went to dinner (laughing), I went to dinner soaked in saltwater, that's how I showed up (laughing).

Erik: (Laughing).

Whitney: Yeah, there you go, saltwater show up. So, um-

What did you see with one or two of your kids and maybe we'll do all five of them 'cause if they listen to this, we, we want to be equal opportunity parents. But, what did you see-

Erik: We love all of our kids-

Whitney: ... Exactly, what did you see, can you give us a couple of just quick, rapid-fire vignettes about your children and some things that you discovered about them as a consequence of, of having this adventure together?

Emily: Um, I'll start at the bottom.

Whitney: Yep.

Emily: I'll start with Lily who is six years old and, um, I know that there could be a lot of concern about taking a child with special needs on a trip like this and it was amazing to see her learning in such concrete ways, meeting new people. She's so friendly, she thrives when she's in new environments because she's propelled by her curiosity and we saw that at home and, um, we saw it over and over and over again on the trip. And she had lots of opportunities to, um, strengthen all her skillsets from using her fingers to hang laundry on the line to, um, oh my goodness, walking into a ... Oh, we went to that bar in ...

Erik: Anguilla.

Emily: ... Anguilla, yes, Anguilla and she just like met everybody there and was persuading them to give her a little bite of their food. And um, she became a strong swimmer over the course of our trip, and so I, I love seeing her, um, get to see the world, and, and learn about it in this concrete way to see the actual fish, the plants, the places.

Um, for Eli, he had a really beautiful moment. He loves the internet and that was one of his sadnesses on the trip was how little access he had to that, but he was the one when we needed to reach out to another boat full of kids. We heard them over the, the radio systems that the different boaters have, and we wanted to make friends and each of his sisters chickened out to call, just to cold call. We all know what cold calling is like, it's scary and he-

Erik: And it's this public like cold calling 'cause everyone, everyone on a boat can hear these conversations happening.

Emily: ... and he just picked up that VHF, that walkie talkie, and he could barely even hold the button down with his little eight year old thumb and he hailed the other boat and made contact, and um, those friends have been our friends for the last five years. We've traveled the world with them and he still is proud of that like, I'm the one, I hailed them (laughing).

Erik: (Laughing).

Emily: You know, and, and it was such a, like triumphant moment, uh, for him to-

Erik: He watched his big sisters just chicken out and he's so disgusted by them, he's like, "Fine. Give me the radio."

Emily: And he did it and that was, that was a great moment for him. And also, uh, one day when I, I took him out, and we raft the island of St. Eustacia and there were some beautiful snorkeling there, and he swam with me over there, and the first thing we saw when he got in was a turtle and then he was hooked.

And then, we made it all the way to see the different fish, and you know, shipwrecked-type items that were there. He's like, "Wow, Mom, this is amazing. I, I wish we could do this every day." And it just, just these little moments where he woke up to the real world, um, instead of pining for the virtual one, I loved that.

Erik: So we've talked about Lily and Eli, now the next oldest is Sara Jane and I think for her, one of my favorite moments was when we were in the Bahamas and we went to this place called Thunderball Grotto-

Emily: Oh yeah.

Erik: ... which is basically a big, hollowed out dome that inside is filled with water and as the tide rises and falls, it, you could, there's enough of an opening that you could swim under and get inside of this, this dome, this grotto (siren sound). And so-

Whitney: Sorry, Erik, can I just pause for a second. Clearly you are back in New York City, is that accurate?

Erik: Sorry there's a, there's an ambulance coming by.

Whitney: I think it's awesome. Oh, like, for everybody who's listening, they're not on the boat anymore, they have internet access and they're in New York City, so they're, you are getting the color commentary sound effects. All right, so keep going.

Erik: Yeah, the ambulance's is going up Broadway.

Okay, so back to the grotto, so we're in the Bahamas and we swim inside and it's sort of this Raiders of the Lost Ark kind of thing, where there's a hole in the very top, the apex of this dome and a shaft of light comes in it. It's just beautiful. You have this enclosed pool of turquoise water and then the, some other, another family swims in and they have some teenage girls and they decided that they want to climb up to the top and jump from this hole that's at the apex down into the water below.

And it's about 50 feet, it's a fifty foot drop, but there's plenty of deep water underneath it and my girls watch these girls do it and they kind of look at each other say, "Want to jump?" And they say they want to jump and then they look at me and they say, "Dad, you want to jump?" And, I had to say, "Yes," eh, although I didn't want to. And so, they went out, we swam out, and we climbed up to the top of this, this grotto, this dome, and it, it was prickly and pokey on our feet 'cause coral rock is very, very sharp.

And, when you get to the top, because it was so sharp, there's nowhere to kind of sit down and ease up to this. Uh, you have to just, from a standing position essentially just drop through this hole. But now that we're out in the sun and our eyes have adjusted, we can no longer see what is in this hole, uh, because our eyes are letting in so much light. Whereas before, we could look up and we could, you know, your eyes are dilated and you, you can, uh, see what's going on from the inside, but not it just looks like this abyss.

You can't see water, you can't see people, you can just hear them saying, "Hey, go for it. You can make it." And you just, I was just terrified because I mean, I do a lot of things with heights. I'm, I'm pretty comfortable with heights. I'm a rock climber but this was, you know, awful (laugh) and I was like, "I can't stand this," and so I just dropped, I just dropped straight into the water. Like if I, if I wait anymore I'm gonna chicken out, and so I jumped, and I hit the water and landed and I was safe. And then, our second oldest daughter, Allison, she came down a minute later, and then poor Sarah Jane was just up there petrified.

Emily: Alone.

Erik: She could not do it. She was alone and we were done below just calling to her, "Jane, it's okay. You can make it." And she can't see us. I know she can't see us. And she's young and scared. Anyway, for 10 minutes, she's just sitting there and the tides coming in and we're, we can't, once the tide comes in, it closes off the entrance and the exit and we can't just start diving with our kids to get out here, but especially the little ones. And so like, "Jane, you either gotta come, you gotta jump or you, or, or not." And finally, this shadow fills the hole and she drops through, she drops and falls 50 feet and hits the water, and she comes up with the biggest smile on her face. She's so proud of herself and we just cheer for her and we book it out of there. But it was just this triumphant moment of overcoming fear and I'm so glad she did it and I think she is too, so that's our Sarah Jane moment.

Whitney: I have a big smile on my face as I'm hearing that. That's just a lovely story. Okay, so two more.

Erik: Okay, so Allison is our second oldest and, ah, I, I feel like for Allison, the most important thing that I feel like Allison and I went through together was, um, our very ... When we left St. Martin, which had become sort of our comfort zone, we were sailing from St. Martin to the Virgin Islands. It was our first crossing, we were leaving all of our new friends behind, and we were going to sail at night and arrive in the Virgin Islands, and we'd been to the Virgin Islands a handful of times as we prepared for the trip, and so that was kind of us getting to the place that we knew and we could feel comfortable.

And we left on this beautiful, starry night, left at sunset, sailed through the night and we would take watches. There was always two of us on at any point in this and Allison and I were on and I want to say it was about three in the morning, and it was pretty, you know, pretty chill. We would just kind of sit there or lay down and listen to music and just look around every now and then, make sure we weren't going to run into some boat that had, cargo ship that had kind of come up over the horizon.

And then the wind picked up fast and it doubled and then it was, you know, up to like 40 miles an hour I think, 40 knots, and I, we were, we were sailing, we were sailing way too fast and the seas were getting really big and I was getting nervous. And I got up to the wheel. And, then it just started to pour rain, pour, just, just pelting, freezing rain and my teeth were chattering, and I couldn't see the instruments 'cause I was wearing glasses and I, anyway, I was just frightened, and we said a little prayer and, 'cause that's one thing we do in our family. And then, uh, I turned the boat around into the wind and we ... 'cause that

takes all the pressure off the sails and I just, I turn on the motors, we pointed the boat straight into the wind and we let the sails down. And, and, Allison and I just rode this storm out until the sun rose and, um ... Sorry this isn't as much about Allison as I was thinking, but I guess just the fact-

Emily: Well, you went through it together.

Erik: ... we went through this together.

Whitney: Yeah.

Erik: And, and, and I guess, Allison and I, we, we kind of have this shorthand now because we can, we have this, this point of reference of having gone through something that was really scary for us together and, and incidentally, you know, we then had multiple experiences like this throughout the trip where we'd come back to these same kinds of conditions, not always a squall that would come up in the night. But we would, we would hit a storm or we would hit a problem and, and because we'd gone through something that really rattled us early on and we'd figured out what we'd do differently, we were able to respond in a cool, collected way.

And by the time we got back, we, we knew exactly what to do in all of these unnerving and scary situations and what ... and now I look back on what happened at that point and it was, it was not a bad situation, but man it was terrifying at the time. And just to see, to go through that with my kids, espec-, and Allison, who's one of our stronger sailors, it, I think it really did something to her as a young person that just prepared her for, for life, for adulthood, and to, to know that she can overcome challenging things and that she can, you know, even if you don't know what to do the first time, you can learn from it and, and get better and learn what to do when it comes up again.

Whitney: Yeah, I have this image in my mind of the two of you standing with the wind going in your face kind of just on the, the boat facing it, you know, and you intrepid, and you will be okay. I think, it's a really powerful image that the two of you got to have that experience together, so okay, let's do your last child.

Emily: Yes, Karina, our oldest, and, and maybe Erik will want to chime in as well. I think the role that she plays in our family is, she's the generous conscious for our family, and even before we got out on the boat, we had talked about it a lot and we were sitting around our dinner table talking about it and this is, at the time, 14 year old Karina said, "Do you guys really have the guys to do this or you just going to talk about it?" And that was an instance in which she held our feet to the fire and, and sort of held us accountable, I guess, and we're like, we got to get on this.

Also, we knew we wanted to be out and back before she was going to go to college, and so, um, on this whole journey, uh, she was playing that role. When we were in St. Martin and having our learning curve and sort of being too busy to spend time as a family, she's the one who said, "Hey, didn't we come out here to be together as a family? You guys are always gone."

And (laughing) I feel like, of course, she went snorkeling and of course she helped with, um, cooking meals, and of course, she made friends and it would, you know, teach, she taught all the other kids, um, on the other boats how to play the ukulele. She taught them how to bake some of our favorite items. She's just a real, uh, teacher; and we were coming up the inter-coastal waterway and I said, "Look, we're going to be home soon and people

are going to be asking you this same question you're asking us, like 'Well, what did you learn?'"

And I asked her, "What has it been for you on this, this boat trip, this sailing experience?" And she didn't even have to think about it for very long. She just said, "I don't think this has changed me. I think it's made me more myself. I've come deeper into myself through these experiences, you know, faster than I would have if we hadn't come." And, I mean how profound can a 17 year old be and I was like, "Wow, I think that's, I think that's really it for me as well in a lot of ways." Like it amplified who we are and how we would act under these like new and sometimes dramatic circumstances, and we did come deeper into ourselves. And I just, the examples of Karina are usually, to me, examples of her wisdom and her patience and her clarity as sort of that guiding force of our family.

Whitney: I love that, "Are you gonna do this? Are you gonna do this or not?"

So, as we start to wrap this up, um, so Erik, you know, this is 10 years ago, you were at a place in your career where you found you were having this sort of inward journey, um, figuring things out, where are you today? Um, you know, it's 10 years later, where are you? Emily, where are you? What are you thinking? What's on the horizon? Uh, what are you excited about? How have things, how have things changed? I know that's asking you a very big question to sum it up pithily, but, but give it, give it a shot.

Emily: I think things have changed a lot. We say in the subtitle of this book that it was life-changing. It was life-changing to me. Um, the, some of the things that I've learned, like I talked earlier about that, uh, that confidence. Um, we really leaned hard into the rookie advantage, um, tried to be humble and open to learning, and um, we figured a lot of things out. And I like to say we came out of there with three kinds of confidence. Credibility, we did the thing that we said we were going to do. Competence, because our skills developed and this sense of calm because especially for me, who as a mother am always worried about who's doing what and well, what's going to happen, um, I began to just let things emerge.

Just as we would come up, um, the Bahaman chains and island after island, we'd be able to find what we needed. Um, that became a metaphor for anything we were going to face in life and really, really being able to let it emerge and know that the details would come as we got closer. Uh, so that, that changed everything for me internally and it has made, I think, our life more peaceful while it simultaneously become more adventurous.

We have tried new things, new kinds of industries and new kinds of travel, and I even have gone so far as to become scuba certified. So I went from the beginning being afraid to get on a boat in the water to now, I'm certified up to 60 feet deep, and that feels like a major triumph for me. I've gotten in the water with sharks. You know, I'm ... and you don't have to get in the water with sharks to live a full and meaningful life, but for me, it was about things that I was afraid of. I'm not scared anymore, a lot of those things.

And we, um, we got so much relationship capital out of that trip, so some of the things that have changed is that our oldest daughter is now in her fourth year of college and she's used these kinds of things that we learned in her own life and she's like, "I can do hard things and I've got to do the thing I say I'm going to do." And, um, she's just doing a great job, paying her own way, running her own life, uh, a total grownup, uh-

Erik: Doing her own travel.

Emily: ... her own travel. And our second daughter, um, she also went off to college and she's currently serving in a mission for our church in Japan, and all these are things that have come out of this experience where like I know I'm going to be a rookie. I'm not going to know and I'm not going to speak the language well or I'm, I'm ... What she has said to us, Allison is like, "The main thing for me about this trip is that I'm comfortable being uncomfortable." And she's leaning into that in her own life, and anyway, we're seeing it more as the younger kids are growing up.

But for me, something that's really different is that, at that time, all my kids young, I was very, um, focused on being with them and now, our youngest is 11. We only have three kids at home and I'm seeing like it's very much, it's time for me to step out of the way. It's time for them to be interacting with other mentors, coaches, in-person, online, um, and I'm okay with that. I know that they'll always need me as their mom to just tell them how much I love them and how much I believe in them, but they really want to sink their teeth into some more difficult experiences.

So for me, my role as mother is the same, but sort of my tasks are shifting and it's, it's kinda cool. I love seeing them grow and go.

Whitney: Mm.

Erik: And, and I think to that point, Emily, we chose to do this to, when we did it for a very specific reason. We wanted to do it before the kids left home because we knew we'd never have that time again with them all under our roof, and that's, that's happened. I mean, our kids are now out in the world on their own and they're, we're launching them one after the other, and they come into their own and they feel capable of making their way out in the world, which is what we wanted. And yet at the same time, we still feel close and galvanized as a family.

Whitney: So, Erik, Emily said that she, um, screwed up the courage and now can, is certified to scuba dive 60 feet, how, how are you different? What are you doing? What, what are you taking on as a consequence of this experience that you've had over the last, uh, well, 10 years, but yeah, over, over that course of time?

Erik: I mean, I look back at the, the years of my life since we've come home from the boat and, and I'm, and I feel, I feel like the luckiest guy in the world. I feel like I'm getting to live my dream life right now because I'm doing all the things that I've wanted to do and was too afraid to do. Um, and I, some of them are, like Emily said, we got scuba certified and we spent some time in Hawaii and learned to surf. I really, really, since I was a kid, wanted to climb El Capitan in Yosemite and was able to kind of get myself together enough to go and do that last year, which was a huge life achievement for me.

And being a writer is what I've been about since, since I've left school and to be able to be in the position now where I'm essentially writing full-time and getting to be with my wife and kids and we, and we travel. And you know, we don't travel fancy, but we get to go all the places we want to go, and we get to have amazing experiences and, and, and, and I think before, I lived with a, a lot of burden in my life because of worry and fear.

And, like Emily was saying, one of the things that I think we've been able to do is, we've just become very, very comfortable with a high-level of uncertainty and, and that's not for everybody, but it's, it's serving us well, and we've been able to convert worry into wonder. We still don't know how things are gonna turn out, but we now have confidence in ourselves that we can find the solution. The time to find the solution may not be right now because it may not, it may be too soon for the, for the solution to present itself. We have to

get a little bit closer to this problem still before it's going to show up, the solution's going to show up.

And, and so we don't worry about things too much and we have a high degree of trust that, that we'll be able to figure it out when we need to. In the meantime, we can just, uh, enjoy the ride and I think we're doing a lot more of enjoying the ride than we ever did before.

Whitney: So one of the things that I think would be really helpful because in hearing you talk, it almost sounds like you're independently wealthy and I, I know-

Erik: (Laughing).

Whitney: ... that you're not. So could you, 'cause I think, I can just hear some of our listeners going, "Well, that's fine for them because they have lots of money." Um, and so, could you just talk really quickly about how you're, what's that equation look like. Not, you know, the actual money, but like how are you making money and figuring out ... You're making me think a lot of Tim Ferriss' *4-Hour Workweek*, so if you could just maybe talk us through, do you do freelance writing? What do you all do so that you can have this both/and sort of life?

Erik: Well, let me go back to the very beginning if you don't mind, Whitney, because I think the answer to your question starts there, and by the way, we are huge Tim Ferriss fans and his book had a big influence on us.

Um, I think going back to that moment when I was stepping into the sailing school for the very first time, I felt like I can't do this because rich people sail is basically how I felt about it.

Whitney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Erik: I can't sail because I'm not rich enough and, and stepping in and asking the question helped us bust that myth that, no, you don't have to be rich to sail. You know, the classes were expensive and we had to pony up to make that happen-

Emily: Erik took on a second job so that we could pay for the classes. I just would say like, we had what is statistically an average income in New York City and our family was a lot bigger than average and-

Erik: Un-statistically large.

Emily: ... and it was really tight and when we were trying to shop around for a boat, I was so frustrated. We never owned a home and so it was the first time trying to get a mortgage, and I thought, they're not going to take into consideration, 'cause we were a single income family, they don't take into consideration that I'm making all our meals from scratch. I cut everybody's hair. I, you know, all of the, all of the money that we don't have to spend because I'm making it happen and that doesn't count amongst our assets, you know, and, and what they thought we would be capable of, of paying back if they gave us a loan.

And, and I feel like, you know, we, we lived really close to the bone. In, in some ways, we really like, uh, you know, we retrenched and sacrificed in some areas because we don't mind eating lentils but in other areas we got to have these luxurious experiences like being out on a 20 foot sailboat with our kids three times a month. And it was just that we chose those things on purpose, our ... You know, there's a lot of things our kids didn't participate in, um, community theater or classes or whatever, but then they got to go live on a boat for

a year. So there were trade-offs all along the way, and I'm, and I'm glad you're pointing out that because I think it's really important to realize that we bootstrapped the whole thing.

Erik: And our publisher was really specific about that they, they wanted to make sure that people didn't just roll their eyes and say, "Oh yeah, when you have enough money, of course you can take a year off and go sailing." And, and that just wasn't us, you know, that's not who we are now.

When we went out, we, you know, we, we scraped together enough money to, to make it happen, but we were, a lot of people think that these experiences cost a lot more than they do. Uh, we like to think ... The boat was, you know ... and we talk about the numbers and the boat, so if anybody wants to know like details about the finances, they can read the book, but you know, we bought the boat, but living on the water is not inherently expensive. It's like, it's like living in an RV that floats, and, and so you can live very cost-effectively on the water, which is what we did.

Doing this trip was probably one of the smartest financial moves we've ever made because it, it, it prepared us to do things that we never would've done before. Because I came home, and incidentally, I asked for leave of absence to, to go do this trip and they said, "You know, we wish we could, but good luck," and, and I had to quit my job, but we went anyway.

And once we were getting close, I said I'm gonna be back and they wanted, they hired me back and so I kind of had my, what I refer to as my, my dead end cubicle job back and, and I lasted about three weeks. I went to work and I couldn't believe that I was doing the exact same thing in the exact same chair on the exact same floor of the high-rise where, as when I left and I, and I was so prepared to do something new and I dove into a whole new industry, took on a whole new line of work, made a lot more money than I ever thought I could after the fact.

And yet, I went through ... and this will probably be another book that, you know, that whole journey coming home, I was, I was prepared to do new things that I never would have done before. And so, I was actually making really, really great money once we got back off the boat and-

Emily: I'd say you more than tripled your salary.

Whitney: So what do you do now?

Erik: Nothing. Sorry (laughing).

Emily: So then, so then, Whitney, we did it again. He was, he was working, um, this new job, which like do you want to tell her.

Erik: I was, I was in sales. I did sales for a solar company.

Whitney: Okay, okay, got it.

Emily: Yeah, he was doing sales for a solar company, um-

Erik: 'Cause I knew a lot about solar after living on the water.

Whitney: Right.

Emily: And then, he was promoted so quickly they had him like opening new areas and running offices, just really fast, and he was doing really well. And then he was asked to come be ... Um, he also worked in theater, that's our main thing. That's why sales was so different and he was asked to run a theater in Massachusetts, and he was trying to do all of that at the same time. And once again and what happened to our family and what was happening to him, and he, and he, uh, ultimately decided "You know what, we, I'm so busy, I don't even know how to spend the money I'm making."

We had just had stuck it in the bank and we decided to quit all of the jobs, rent an apartment in our building that was free and sit down write this book.

Erik: [crosstalk 01:05:08].

Emily: We took another risk. We're like, you know what, we're, this is the thing we feel like is important to do. We want to share this story, and so, I think, we were so worried. I think all the way through the trip on the boat, the sailboat, but we've been less worried since, as we'd done similar, drastic things.

Whitney: Yeah, yeah.

Erik: So yeah, Whitney, so right now I, I don't have a job. We've been working on this book full-time and we launch it, and if the book goes well, great, then you know, we can, we'll keep writing other books. But again, going back to this idea, we know how to earn money, we're not so worried about how it's going to work out down the line because we trust that when we get closer, the answers will, will emerge and we'll be able to solve those problems when they arise. But right now, they're not, they're not problems, we're, we've been living off savings for a while and that's fine.

And um, and, but we, the old me would have been up at night, up at, you know, pacing-

Whitney: Right.

Erik: ... and worried, but now, we just know that it's not a problem that's here and now. We have a place to live, we have clothes, we have food to eat, we, you know, we're, we're comfortable, we're happy.

Whitney: Yeah.

Erik: And, um, when it comes time to, you know, when it comes time to earn more money again, we will.

Whitney: You'll figure it out. It's so interesting.

Erik: We'll figure it out.

Whitney: So the thought that I have as we wrap up is that, you know, you went on one hero's journey, but in some respects, it almost feels like going out on the boat was the prelude to the real hero's journey. It's like, it's like a hero's journey embedded within a hero's journey and it's just very exciting and thrilling and, and I, I really hope that ... I, I know I was inspired by hearing about what you had done and what you are doing and I think many of other people will also. Are, are there any final words that you'd like to share as we, as we finish?

Emily: I think, Whitney, what you're doing is so important. As we were coming up with this dream and nourishing it and feeding it, being able to tap into mentors like yourself and some other people that we identified. We just gave our hearts to you and them, and we constantly thought about the good side of disruption and how we wanted to fail better and how we wanted to spend our limited time on this planet. And it just became crystal clear to us, um, that it isn't a dress rehearsal and it, the time is right now, and so, I think that's part of why we wanted to share this story.

Hearing other people's stories nourished us so much that we could, uh, do these, this thing and these things and strengthen our children that, we want to just encourage other people to, to know that, they can figure it out. That it will emerge and that, um, whatever that idea is that's making them a little nervous and calling to them is, is a good thing. And, and even, especially what I love about these stories, I, even when you fail over and over again, you're always failing forward and failing better and failing faster, and we leveled up in every way.

Whitney: Yeah.

Emily: And, um, yeah, so that's, that'd be my closing thought.

Whitney: Mm. Thank you.

Emily: They'll figure it out.

Whitney: Erik, final word to you.

Erik: I would say the, the, the thing that is really ... come to my mind about how we, about how I'm different and how I, I look at the world now, is we, we ask our- ... Everyone that says, "Well, what could go wrong?" Are you looking, you're looking at a risk in the eye. You're looking at a challenge in the eye. You say, "Well what could go wrong? What's the worst that case scenario?" And we think that through, we plan for that, and we've really, it ... and we still do that, but we also say, "What could go right?" Because that's very, very hard to do, to, to honestly answer that question, to look at this same situation and say, "What is, what could right?"

So often we get caught up in everything that we have that we don't want to lose, when in fact, the, um, the upside, the, you know, opportunity cost of not doing something can be so, so high. When you, but we don't oftentimes let ourselves, uh, comprehend what good could come of something and we, and, and we, we give, you know, we give, the opportunity cost becomes very high to stay where you are. And, and for somebody who thinks and, and speaks and talks about disruption, you know this better than anybody, that to, to not think of what this sort of uncertain future could, could bring to you and to others, and to not go there sometimes is, is, um, is a real loss.

And so, um, to, to think that through, what could go right, what could come of this that would do, that would be good and even better than what I have even if you're in a good spot, how could it be better.

Whitney: I love that. Yeah, what could go right. I think that's the perfect way to end this conversation. Emily Orton, Erik Orton, thank you so much for being with us.

Erik: Thank you, Whitney, it's been a pleasure.

Emily: Thank you so much.

“What could go right?”

Isn't that a magical question? And it's one we rarely ask ourselves. It's good to plan for the worst case scenario, and the Ortons clearly did that, but it was delightful to hear how surprised they were to find that though they planned for things to go wrong (which they did throughout the trip), there was also the wondrous surprise of things going beautifully right.

I loved hearing the Ortons talk about their children and how each of them changed and experienced different things during the trip. I especially loved hearing how their oldest, Karina, was the one who kept them honest - “Are we going to do this or not?” Maybe it's because I also have a truth teller child, but our children are such a gift in the things they say to us. Because they see our underbelly and love us more than anyone in the world, when they issue that call to us, we need to listen. They have nothing but our best interest at heart. They are 100% invested in us. We just have to remember that.

As we were getting this episode ready, Macy Robison, our podcast manager mentioned an interesting statistic she'd heard from Tim Ferriss. We'll [link to the article in the show notes](#) - but in that article, the author points out that by the time he left his parents' house and went to college, he'd already spent most of his days together with his parents. At the rate of seeing them about 10 days a year now that he's in his 30s, they don't have many days left to be together.

In that light, buying a boat and sailing around the Caribbean sounds pretty wise. The Ortons set out on this adventure to maximize the time they had together while living under one roof. Often, that ticking time clock is a catalyst to move us toward disruption. We feel that pressure of life being short, of paying attention to the relationships that matter most, and we feel compelled to act.

Practical Tip: No matter how old or young your children are, plan to do something with them today. If you need further inspiration, go back and listen to [Episode 60 with Laura Vanderkam](#).

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

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.