

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 143: SIMON SINEK

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast. I'm Whitney Johnson. I think, write, speak and live all things disruption, providing you with tools to move up the S Curve of Learning in your career and life.

This podcast has continued to grow as you've kindly shared your favorite episodes and takeaways on social media and have taken the time to leave 5-Star Ratings and Review on Apple Podcasts. So, I want to take a moment and read our review of the week from Joey Turner.

I can't say enough about the insightful guests Whitney continues to interview. This is the perfect podcast to help spur entrepreneurs and leaders to stay in the fight and continue to learn. Thanks, Whitney, keep up the good work.

Thank you, Joey! I'm hoping that today's guest will fall into that insightful category for you. He is certainly in that category for me. To kick off 2020, I'm talking with Simon Sinek. Simon is best known for popularizing the concept of WHY in his 2009 TED Talk, the third most-watched talk on TED.com, with over 40 million views. He is the author of multiple best-selling books including Start With Why and his latest book, The Infinite Game.

WHITNEY Welcome Simon Sinek, we are delighted to have you on the Disrupt Yourself podcast.

SIMON Thanks for having me.

WHITNEY And first of all, shout out to our mutual friends Garry Ridge and Karen Beattie for connecting us. I'd like to start with 'why'. Something that occurred to me is a few weeks ago I was at the Drucker Forum and Amy Edmonson, who many of our listeners know because she was recently on the podcast, was telling me the story of the Chilean miner rescue. She said that every single morning they framed the day and their efforts with their 'why'. It seems like, well why would they need to do that because they all knew what they were trying to do? They were trying to save people's lives, but she said they did it anyway.

And so what I thought what we could do as we start today is let's start with your 'why'. What is your 'why' so that we can frame out our conversation that way.

SIMON My 'why' is to inspire people to do the things that inspire them, so together each of us can change our world for the better.

WHITNEY I love that.

SIMON It's how I start every day and it's how I judge myself, it's what I strive to do.

WHITNEY So what do you do Simon? Every morning do you write it down, do you say it out loud? What does it look like?

SIMON Well in the early days, I used to have it written on a piece of paper next to my desk and on my bedside table. It was something that I saw every day and would refer to it when making decisions.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON Over the years it's become more ingrained, but I still keep symbols and reminders all over the place to remind me of my 'why', because we're all susceptible to short-term pressures and being distracted or becoming sucked into the weeds. We all need little reminders.

WHITNEY So what's one of your symbols that you use, that you're comfortable sharing with people?

SIMON Well I write the word 'inspire' on all kinds of things and the color orange has become symbolic for me as well. So I have lots of little orange knickknacks and things around me. They're all little reminders.

WHITNEY What about orange? How did you hit upon orange?

SIMON Well it's the color of optimism, right?

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON It's bright and forward-thinking.

WHITNEY Well it's a great color. Okay, so, with that, now that we've framed out the conversation that your 'why' is to inspire people to do the work that inspires them. I'd love for you to share with us where you grew up and what you thought you wanted to be when you grew up.

SIMON So I had a pretty amazing childhood. I grew up all over the world. I was born in England, moved to South Africa, back to England, then to Hong Kong and then to New Jersey. It was a great way to grow up. My sister and I kept finding ourselves in these entirely new cultures and we learned to be adaptable and we learned how to function when we were the misfits.

When I was very young I wanted to be a special effects supervisor.

WHITNEY (Laughs).

SIMON I loved the idea, totally inspired by Steven Spielberg movies. I wanted to be in special effects, but that was a childhood dream. In college, I sort of wanted to go to law school and become a criminal prosecutor.

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON I dropped out of law school because I realized it just wasn't for me. Then I went straight from law school into marketing.

WHITNEY All right. I want to come back. Have you met Steven Spielberg?

SIMON I have met him, yes.

WHITNEY Okay. Did you get to tell him that? That, that was your childhood dream?

SIMON Not really no. But I did get to tell him that I mentioned him in my Bar Mitzvah speech.

WHITNEY Oh. That's very sweet.

SIMON (Laughs).

WHITNEY And what happened? What did he say?

SIMON He was very charming and gracious.

WHITNEY I think that's lovely when we have this experience with someone that we've admired and we're able to tell them that we admire them because I think that sometimes, when people are really impacting people's lives they don't actually know what they're doing. So I think it's lovely that you shared that with him.

SIMON That's very true.

WHITNEY One thing that I was really struck by when I heard you speak at WOBI in Madrid that you talk about in your book, *Start With Why*: at the very end you kind of tucked it back there. But you had this moment where you were in the depths. And can you share with us what happened? What was that experience that you had? The origin story of your ideas that you talk about today?

SIMON Well my ideas were born out of pain. I fell out of love with my own work and I had no passion to go to work every day. It really just became a job. I was embarrassed by this because superficially things were good. I made an okay living, I had great clients, we did great work. But I didn't want to do it every day and it was really kind of a dark place. I felt lonely, I became paranoid. It was not a great place and it wasn't until a very dear friend of mine came to me and said, "I'm worried about you. Something's different." Did I come clean and tell her how I really felt?

It was releasing all of that energy that really allowed me to redirect all that energy into finding a solution. The solution I found was this thing called 'the why' which completely changed my life.

WHITNEY Do you remember the first time you shared it with someone?

SIMON Yeah of course. It was the end of 2005 when I first started talking about it. I started publicly talking about this concept of the Golden Circle and the 'why' and what it all meant at the beginning of 2006.

WHITNEY Where were you?

SIMON I was in New York.

WHITNEY Public? Small group?

SIMON Just with my friends.

WHITNEY Okay.

SIMON I shared it with my friends and my friends would invite me to share it with their friends and I would show up in people's living rooms and just stand in the living room and talk about the thing called 'the why' and help people find their 'why' for a hundred bucks on the side. It really was very organic this whole journey.

WHITNEY They'd say, "Simon, come. You've got to talk to my group of friends. They're trying to figure out their 'why.'" It was just starting to build momentum on its own, it sounds like.

SIMON That's correct. That's exactly what happened. And people just kept inviting me to speak and I just kept saying yes.

WHITNEY So when you think about your 'why' today, you want to inspire people to be inspired to do the work that they want to do; I just completely bungled it. Let me look again at my notes. You want to-

SIMON Inspire people to do the things that inspire them.

WHITNEY Okay good. So when you look at that today, what's one of your biggest challenges as you're trying to inspire people? What's challenging you as you're trying to do that?

SIMON That's a difficult question. I don't think in those terms.

WHITNEY Oh okay.

SIMON I don't think about the obstacles. I think about the opportunities. So I'm not looking for the things that are challenges. I'm looking for the things that are possible.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON So as you're asking me the question, I'm sitting here literally saying, 'I don't know.' I'm sure there's millions of them. But the opportunity is, I see ways to get to people. It's one of the reasons I'm so interested in work cultures and talking about changing the way we work. It's because that's where the people are. Even during the Great Depression when we had 25% unemployment that means 75% of people still had a job.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON So it seems inefficient to go door to door. It's way easier if we can get to people at work, which is why I've always focused on business.

WHITNEY Oh that's interesting that you just said that, that you just see the possibilities. Alan Mulally is someone you admire and I admire as well. I was having a conversation with him, and was like, "Okay Alan, what do you do when you feel like you're failing?" And he's like, "I'm not even registering. Like that does not even compute for me when you say the word failure." Cause he's like, every single thing that doesn't work is just a data point for what we can do better. And when you just said that, you made me think of him. You don't see the obstacles, you just see the possibilities.

SIMON Because if you look for obstacles, you'll keep finding them.

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON And if you look for opportunities, you'll keep finding them.

WHITNEY Yup.

SIMON You know there's a great quote by Henry Ford. He said, "If you think you can or you think can't, you're right."

WHITNEY Okay let's pivot a little bit. There is a story that you told in *Leaders Eat Last*, and it was a pivotal moment you felt like in our history. And I'm going to quote a little bit from what you said here. You said we were "becoming more comfortable with shorter life spans, disposability was a symptom of our excess." We wanted things we could throw out and then there was one thing we started to view as disposable. I'd love for you to tell us what that one thing was? And then tell the story about Ronald Reagan, if you recall it because I think it's a really powerful story.

SIMON Oh sure. In 1981 there was an air traffic controller strike and Ronald Reagan fired them all. It was a pivotal point because never before in history had mass layoffs been done at that level. And unfortunately, leaders set the tone and that one action sort of gave cultural permission for leaders in companies to do the same thing. Prior to that action, the use of mass layoffs to balance the books on a regular basis didn't exist in the United States.

 And it didn't happen overnight, but CEOs started to have the cultural approval and started to build a momentum for such a practice. Where now it's normal, you know? Either we or someone close to us has been laid off. Everybody has direct or one degree of separation with a layoff.

 It's completely normal in business today, but it didn't exist in America prior to that in 1981.

WHITNEY So interesting.

SIMON People have become disposable now in our businesses, where we use people's livelihoods for accounting purposes, which is really astonishing.

WHITNEY Yeah. It is astonishing. And well, I think one of the reasons that story struck me so profoundly is that I'm a fan of Ronald Reagan and because people that we admire do things and sometimes there are these unintended consequences of the things that we do and it's also deeply concerning how we do see people as being so disposable. I suspect he never intended for that to happen and yet it did.

SIMON This is the problem with leadership, right?

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON Which is, that our actions are rarely in a vacuum.

WHITNEY Yeah. You're quite the student of history, especially American and military history. Are there any books or conversations that you had that kind of led to that? Is it partly because you lived abroad much of your life, so you have an outside perspective? Do you have thoughts on that?

SIMON It was because of the United States Air Force.

WHITNEY Oh, say more.

SIMON Very, very early on in this phase of my career in 2006 when I first started talking about this concept of 'why,' the Air Force got wind of me and they invited me to the Pentagon to speak to a bunch of officers about the concept of 'why'. I only first publicly talked about the concept of 'why' in 2000. By May of 2006 I was at the Pentagon having a meeting. It was the most surreal thing.

WHITNEY (Laughs).

SIMON It was just surreal. I think it's very indicative of their culture. They have a very early adopter culture in the Air Force. They have a culture where they expect ideas to come from anywhere and it's a very different culture than the other branches of the military. I'd never really spent much time with folks in the military and this was my first interaction with them, and I got along with them and they kept inviting me back.

I started up these deeper conversations and started to really learn about military culture. They kept inviting me to speak to bases across the country and like any kind of friendship, the more time you spend with someone, the better you get to know them and the more you like them. And that was the start of a very deep and loving relationship I have with all the branches of the military now.

WHITNEY I love that. Okay so we're still in your second book, *Leaders Eat Last*. You made this statement, "Numbers of people aren't people, they are numbers." You cited the Stanley Milgram experiment and it's such a fascinating thread that runs throughout that book. We won't talk about it now, but I recommend all of you go back and read that book if you haven't read it. But something that I observed at WOBI Madrid is that after you spoke, there were hundreds of people waiting for you to sign their book. Maybe a thousand. You now have the third most listened to TED Talk with over 47 million views. What do you do, real time, in your life, today, tomorrow, yesterday so that people don't become numbers?

SIMON Well, I mean we have to get to know people. We cannot lead a company from behind a computer screen and I think technology may help us be more efficient, but leadership is not sitting at a screen replying to emails.

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON You have to roam the halls. You have to get to know your people, you have to talk to them. I like interacting with people and I encourage the leaders on our team to do the same. It's particularly hard for us because we're a virtual team and so we have to work extra hard at staying in contact with each other. The more you get to know people and understand their lives and their stresses and their strains and their ambitions and their dreams, you start to see them as people. You start to know, who they are and it's important for us to spend the time to get to know our people.

WHITNEY So what will you do today, for example, where it's early in the day? What's one or two things that you will do today to get to know the people that you work with, so that they stay people and don't become these abstractions that you talk about?

SIMON Well, we don't use email very much.

WHITNEY Oh, you don't?

SIMON We do video conferences and phone calls a lot and so we're constantly talking. So you hear tone of voice and you have small talk. These things all help. I like to travel with a colleague when I go on my trips. It keeps me human.

WHITNEY Interesting. Okay. So you just stay present with people as opposed to abstracting via email and maybe even through a slack channel. There's some good tips I think for all of us. I'm thinking about my business. What do I need to do? Make sure I hop on the phone and not send yet another email.

Okay, let's go to your next book. So, in your most recent book you talk about the infinite versus the finite mind. Can you just high-level overview talk to us about what that means?

SIMON So in 1986 a philosopher by the name of James Carse wrote a little book called *Finite and Infinite Games*. And in it, he defined these two kinds of games. A finite game is defined as known players, fixed rules and an agreed upon objective, like baseball. There's a beginning, middle and end and if there's a winner there has to be a loser. Then he defined infinite games. Infinite games are defined as known and unknown players, the rules are changeable, and the objective is to perpetuate the game and stay in the game as long as possible. In other words, there's no finish line.

We are players in these infinite games all the time. There's no such thing as being number one in your marriage.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON There's no such thing as winning global politics. There's no such thing as winning business. But if we listen to too many leaders, they talk about being number one, being the best or beating their competition. Based on what? Based on what metrics? Based on what agreed upon timeframes?

We get to choose whatever metrics and timeframes we want. So you can be number one however you want to be it but it's a fool's errand. The problem is when we play with a finite mindset in the infinite game, we hurt trust, we hurt cooperation, and we hurt innovation. So we have to play for the game we're actually in and in business, business is an infinite game. There is no finish line.

WHITNEY So one of the questions that I have had a number of people ask me when I posted it on LinkedIn and said: 'What question would you ask Simon if they could talk to you?' A number of people asked the question: if I want to play an infinite game, I'm a CEO, for example, of a venture backed company and I'm trying to play an infinite game but I've got investors who are still more focused on the finite game. Or if I'm a manager, what does that look like? What one or two suggestions would you make to people who are trying to make that shift in their perspective or that shift with those around them of moving from the short game to the long game?

SIMON Well you raised two different scenarios there. I have an investment and my investors are finite players. Well why'd you take their money?

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON You know, unfortunately I get this question a lot. 'I have so much pressure from my investors to make short term decisions that I know are bad for my company.' Well why did you take their money? Did you take their money because they were the best partner? Did you take their money because they offered you the most? I think we have to be more cautious and more careful about where we take our investments from. We want an investment from people who believe in our vision and have the patience to see our vision come to life, not people who have short-term horizons to meet their own objectives that have nothing to do with our companies but will use our companies to meet their objectives.

Do we interview VC and PE companies to find out what their objectives are and where they see our company playing a role in their objectives? And if they have three to five-year horizons to meet their liquidity then guess who's going to feel the pressure for that? So, I made my bed, how do I sleep in it?

WHITNEY (Laughs).

SIMON Now the other question you asked is what if you work for a company where the leader has a finite mindset and you're the employee in the company. This is probably the most frequent question I get.

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON The answer is, you can't change people. You can't control that which you cannot control. The only thing we can control is ourselves. So the opportunity there is to become the leader you wish you had. To show up every single day to create an environment in which the people that you work with, whether they're subordinate or superior, or peers, is to come to work every day, inspired to be there, feel safe there, psychologically safe and return home fulfilled. That they feel like we have their backs and that we would support them and we're there to help them grow.

These little teams become higher performing and people enjoy working there more. And then one of those people will move on and join another team and they'll take everything they've learned and they'll become a great leader. And then one of those people will move on, join another team and they'll become a great leader and before you know it, we've changed the direction of the whole company.

WHITNEY I love that. Okay. So here's a question for you. So let's say, I'm listening to you right now, which I am and I'm inspired, which I am and I'm like, okay, I know I oftentimes have this finite mindset. I want to have a more infinite mindset. And you are coaching me. What one or two things would you say to do today to shift a little bit more in the direction of being infinite?

SIMON Well, number one is why are you in business in the first place? I mean, yes you may have a 'why', but what's your just cause? Remember 'why' comes from the past, it's the foundation.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON But a just cause is the future. It's where you're going. It's the vision of the future that you're trying to build and you're using your company to help build that future. So many vision statements are complete nonsense, you know. To be the biggest, most profitable company offering the highest value. Well that's not a vision, it's just a goal that is an arbitrary metric to measure that success point. And what happens if you get there? What happens if you meet that arbitrary goal? Do you shut your doors? We're the biggest now close shop.

WHITNEY (Laughs).

SIMON Then you have to be enduring.

WHITNEY Yup.

SIMON So the question is what are you hoping to achieve? What's the vision of the world you're trying to advance and you're using your work and company to help advance it? You need to know what that is. And even if you don't have the vision yourself, you can still find the vision. Only two percent of the world's population are visionary. Not everyone is Elon Musk or Richard Branson. But you get to find a vision. You have to find a vision. So maybe it's a vision that somebody else articulated that inspires you, that you want to commit your energy and your work and your company to help advance. Whatever it is and wherever it comes from, you have to be able to state it with words.

WHITNEY Okay, so what's your just cause? Advice number one is find a just cause. What's yours?

SIMON To build a world in which the vast majority of people wake up every single morning inspired, feel safe at work and return home fulfilled at the end of the day.

WHITNEY Okay, fantastic. That's step number one, is what's your just cause. I can adopt your just cause as well.

SIMON If it inspires you, Absolutely!

WHITNEY Okay and number two, what's step number two?

SIMON Well, it's not number two. These aren't a hierarchy.

WHITNEY Okay.

SIMON They don't have to go in order. Another step is to build trusting teams.

WHITNEY Okay.

SIMON We're human animals, we're social animals. Trust is essential to us and if we're to build an organization or live a life in which we can maintain an infinite mindset, we need to foster deep, meaningful relationships.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON Whether with our colleagues or with our friends. So building trusting teams is all about creating, deep, meaningful relationships. It's about investing in people.

WHITNEY All right, so question for you. You talked a little bit earlier about your building trusting teams, so you've got people who are on your team, they all have bought into or agree with the just cause. It's now become their just cause, is probably a better way to say it. What are some things that you're doing to build a trusting team, in addition to talking to people, videoconferencing, occasionally traveling? Any other things you're doing specifically?

SIMON We try very hard to operate with empathy.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON If something goes wrong, this is very Alan Mulally as well, it's not that you are the problem, it's that you have a problem.

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON For example, here's a normal business scenario. Your boss walks into your office and says, "You've missed your numbers for the third quarter in a row. We've had this conversation before, if you don't pick up your numbers in the fourth quarter, I don't know what's going to happen." If that whole scenario repeats with empathy, your boss walks into your office and says, "You've missed your numbers for the third quarter in a row. We've had this conversation before. Are you okay? I'm worried about you."

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON So we try very hard to operate with empathy. We show up with curiosity. What we think happened may or may not be what actually happened, it's up to us to find out what happened. We tend to err on the side of patience. We try and remember that these are human beings. That doesn't mean that people get away without pulling their weight, but we understand that when there's a challenge that sometimes there might be extenuating circumstances and it's our responsibility to figure out what those are and try and offer support if we can.

WHITNEY Fantastic. Okay. So that's how you build trusting teams. Another thing that you talk about is the importance worthy rivals. In Spain I heard you say you had a worthy rival and you wouldn't tell the audience who it was, which was fantastic because everybody was trying to figure out who it was. I know now who it is because I read the book. I'll give everybody a hint. It's someone who's been on this podcast, so you can figure that out. You also need to read this book.

But just so you know I thought you were going to say either Malcolm Gladwell, Dan Pink, Seth Godin or Tim Ferriss and it wasn't any of those people, but I thought I would share with you who I, in my mind, see you as being your rivals and people that move you ahead.

SIMON You know everybody has their own idea about worthy rivals.

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON You don't have to have just one.

WHITNEY And why are they important?

SIMON Because what they do is they reveal to us our own weaknesses. They make us uncomfortable.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON They tap something into us that doesn't feel good.

WHITNEY Mm.

SIMON That's why we get angry when they succeed. I mean we've all had the experience at work where somebody gets promoted and we get angry. Think about that for second we get angry at somebody else's good fortune.

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON Odds are pretty high that there's something about that person that is tapping into something else that's making us uncomfortable. So instead of taking a hard look at ourselves, instead we redirect that energy into a competitive energy. As I learned the hard way, it's just not healthy, because it focuses our efforts in all the wrong places to do all the wrong things. We become obsessed with beating them rather than trying to improve ourselves.

WHITNEY You said something, "It's easier to channel uncomfortable energy into a competitive spirit than it is to do the self-reflection."

SIMON I think that's true.

WHITNEY It's really powerful. The other thing that you said was, "The goal is not to beat your competition, it is to outlast them. The only real competitor is yourself. You have to do it better than you did before." So what's the thing you're going to do better in the next couple of months than you did before?

SIMON Everything is constant improvement.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON It's not just one thing, it's everything.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

SIMON Every time I speak I want to be a better speaker. Every time I write something I want to be a better writer. Every time I do an interview, I want to be a better interviewee. It's not one thing, it's whatever I'm doing.

WHITNEY Hmm.

SIMON It has to be better than the last time I did it and it's the same for a company. How do you make your product better this year than it was last year? How do you make your culture stronger this year than it was last year? How do you make your leaders better equipped to lead this year than they were last year? It's constant, it's everything.

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON I think you know if I only build one bicep, I'm going to have a very weird looking body. It's not about picking a thing, it's about the whole thing.

WHITNEY Yeah.

SIMON That's what makes it complicated. You have to work the whole body, you have to sleep, you have to eat well, you have to nurture deep, meaningful relationships and that's how you become healthy. To do all those things all the time is very, very, very hard work.

WHITNEY I was wondering if you could read one paragraph for us as we start to wrap up.

It's in the Afterword of *The Infinite Game*, it starts with, "If we choose to live our lives."

SIMON If we choose to live our lives with a finite mindset, it means we make our primary purpose to get richer or promoted faster than others. To live our lives with an infinite mindset means that we are driven to advance a cause bigger than ourselves. We see those who share our vision as partners in the cause and we work to build trusting relationships with them, so that we may advance the common good together. We are grateful for the success we enjoy and as we advance we work to help those around us rise. To live our lives with an infinite mindset is to live a life of service.

WHITNEY Just lovely. Simon my last question to you is you wrote this beautiful inscription to your Grandmother. Could you just read that to us and tell us why she inspires you?

SIMON I wrote, "Dear Grandma. Because you lived as if there was no finish line, may we all learn to live such an infinite life, love Simon." And she did. I mean, she lived her life, to the absolute fullest. She was a rare breed, a sense of adventure that made the rest of us exhausted. She always was up to do anything and try things and do things. It was totally inspiring.

The book wasn't finished when she died, but she knew that I had inscribed it to her, so I did tell her. I thought I would make it a very personal thing by putting it in my handwriting. So what you see in that inscription, is actually my handwriting. I wanted it to be from me to her.

WHITNEY Just lovely. Simon Sinek you have changed the world. You've changed my world by inspiring us to start with 'why'. Thank you for being with us.

SIMON Oh, thank you Whitney. Thank you so much for having me on the show, and thank you for giving me a forum to share my ideas. I really appreciate it.

WHITNEY You're most welcome.

I find it so refreshing when people walk their talk. Hearing Simon talk about leading his organization was inspiring. The importance of empathy and relationships with the people he works with - how little they use email, and the effort they put in to facilitate face to face interaction. For an organization whose mission it is to inspire people to do the things that inspire them so together each of us changes our world for the better, they seem to be on the right path.

That said, one of my biggest takeaways from this interview, happened behind-the-scenes, and revealed a blind spot of mine. On the morning of the interview, we had some connectivity issues. Because this interview was booked at the last minute, because well you know scheduling, our producer Macy wasn't able to be on the call. I was nervous. I felt rushed. I'd prepared well for the interview, but because I was flustered, I didn't feel like it went well. At all.

Imagine my complete surprise when Macy messaged me later after listening to the interview said she enjoyed the interview, sharing with me several highlights.

What was the disconnect?

In the seven accelerants of disruption, I often refer to entitlement as being a curve killer. That when we are entitled, we don't see others as individuals, but as objects.

This is something I'm continually working on. Even when people are unkind. Or things feel unfair. It's hard, but I'm seeing improvement.

But here's where the insight came in.

As Macy and I were trying to account for the disconnect, she pointed out that because I admire Simon, I'd unintentionally turned him into an object. I'd stop seeing him as a person. Up until that moment, I thought that I could only turn someone into an object if I thought of them as 'less than'. But thinking of someone as 'more than' does the same thing. Every person we interact with is a person. Even when we admire them.

A slightly painful, but important lesson, one I'll continue to process in the coming weeks.

Practical Tip:

At the start of this new year, this new decade, what is your just cause? Your why is your foundation, but what are you hoping to achieve? And as Simon says, "Whatever it is and wherever it comes from, you have to be able to state it with words." Sit down this week and find the words.

Thank you again to Simon Sinek for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Melissa Rutty, manager / editor Macy Robison, content contributors Emilie Davis and Nancy Wilson, and art director Brandon Jameson.

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.