

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 144: CLAIRE DIAZ-ORTIZ

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 in your life.

In this episode we are speaking to Claire Diaz-Ortiz, an early Twitter employee and digital media strategist who is the author of the new book *Social Media Success for Every Brand*.

We invited Claire on the podcast in part because I am a big fan of Donald Miller's StoryBrand concepts--how to clarify your message so that people will listen---we interviewed him in Episode 95, and Claire's book builds on his ideas. But mostly because Claire has on several occasions provided spot on social media advice here at WLJ Advisors that has been hugely helpful, and I wanted you to be able to learn from her.

You may be wondering, what does social media have to do with personal disruption? What I have found for myself, and what I have learned in conversations with you is that once you get clear on what S Curve of Learning you want to be on, you wonder how do you find people who want to be on that same curve. Or as Simon Sinek would describe it, who we just had on the podcast, how will you find people who share your why. Social media is an intellectual pheromone. It helps you find people who care about what you care about. So, in today's episode, you'll not only learn about Claire and have an opportunity to find yourself in her story, you'll also learn how to use media that is social to help you find people who are on your same S Curve.

Before we do that though, I'd like to take a moment and share the review of the week. Here's what Clarisse had to say.

Whitney, host of the Disrupt Yourself Podcast, highlights all aspects of business, disruptors and more in this can't miss podcast! The host and expert guests offer insightful advice and information that is helpful to anyone that listens!

Thank you Clarisse! So grateful for your review and to have you as a listener. The best way for this podcast to grow is when you share episodes and what you've learned with your friends and family and colleagues, and when you leave 5-star rating and reviews on [Apple Podcasts](#). So thank you. It's because of you, more people are listening. And now, it's time to listen to Claire, her story and her practical advice on social media success. Grab a notebook. Here we go.

WHITNEY Claire Diaz-Ortiz, welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast.

CLAIRE Thank you so much for having me. It's so much fun to be here.

WHITNEY First question for you is, where did you grow up, and what did you want to be when you grew up?

CLAIRE I grew up in Berkeley, California, the Athens of the West. And I always wanted to be a writer. But my dad was a journalist, and he said that he wanted to cut off my hands so that I would never become one.

WHITNEY For real.

CLAIRE Yeah. I mean, he loves his work, but he just feels like it's very, very challenging to be a writer. And he did not want that for his children. (laughs)

WHITNEY So, that is interesting. And is he still a journalist? Or is, is he still alive?

CLAIRE Yeah. He's still a journalist, he's, you know, written best-selling books. He's a very accomplished journalist. But he does not think it is a recommended path for anyone. (laughs)

WHITNEY Here you go. Rebellious act number one from Claire. So you wanted to be a writer, and here you are, now a writer. And you know what's interesting? I have never heard of Berkeley described as the Athens of the West. Ever.

CLAIRE Yes. It is the Athens of the West. And now I live in Buenos Aires, the Paris of the South. I'm very, I'm very into those, the places of places things. I was, I was once in Irkutsk, Russia, and that is the Paris of the North.

WHITNEY (laughs) The Athens of the West and the Paris of the South? Is that what you said?

CLAIRE Yes.

WHITNEY I totally see that with Buenos Aires. Okay.

CLAIRE Mm-hmm (affirmative).

WHITNEY And we're going to talk more about Buenos Aires in a few minutes. All right. So, you wanted to be a writer, you go to college. What did you study in college?

CLAIRE Um, my undergraduate was in history. And then I, I did my undergrad quickly. So I finished it in three years. So the fourth year I stayed on, and that's when I did a master's in cultural anthropology. And, I really, really, loved both those degrees. I thought they were amazing. And in terms of anthropology, I, I think another life path for me would have been to do a doctorate in that. Because I just fell in love with it.

WHITNEY Interesting. So, let's talk about history for just a second. What did you specialize in any particular era, specific geography that particularly captivated you?

CLAIRE Yeah. So I did my whole thesis and, and I got honors from the university in feminist study. So their women's studies program, they call it feminist studies at Stanford. And so I completely, yeah, was focused on US women's history.

WHITNEY Who's someone in US women's history that you especially admire?

CLAIRE Too many people. I think someone that I believe is one of the modern markers of US women's history who we will look back on with a lot of reverence is Oprah Winfrey. And I think it's interesting because I think there is a tendency to kind of dismiss Oprah in terms of history and in terms of academic work, because she's so mainstream. And I think we'll see a shift in that in the coming generation.

WHITNEY So that is just fascinating. I was just thinking this week or the, the past couple of weeks, I was like, if I could have someone on my podcast, like, stretch, stretch, stretch goal, it would be Oprah Winfrey.

CLAIRE Hm.

WHITNEY Because I do admire her, and I remember, like, 10 years ago, I entered this contest to go on this spa vacation with Oprah and her pals. And I didn't get accepted. But I did all this work to, you know, apply to it. So, big admirer. But to think of her as this pivotal figure in women's history is really powerful, and I want to think about that some more. Okay. So, you grew up in California. You've lived all over the world. You now live in Argentina. What is something that you've learned from a meta perspective, um, of living really in two cultures going back and forth, your husband's Argentine, that's applicable to people working inside of an organizational corporation? I mean, I think we all go back and forth between cultures but we don't know that we do. What have you learned that you think, skill that you have developed that would behoove all of us who are trying to work inside of organizations, crossing cultures when we don't realize that we are?

CLAIRE Yeah. I mean I think it's very clear to me, the sort of number one thing is the constant, constant reminder to try to not make assumptions. Because you simply do not know. I mean, I think of this so often, you know? I live in a culture here where, you know, in general, things are more lax in terms of timing, right? And I live with a, a man, my husband (laughs), who is particularly adept at being lax with timing, right? And this is a constant, constant stressor to me. And I think that one of the things I've really come to understand over time is that it's just a perfect example in my life of how, you know, I make assumptions about what timing and what that means. But the assumptions are completely different in this cultural context. You know, one of the things that I find most surprising is when I take my kids to doctor's appointments here, no one actually expects us to be really on time. And I find that fascinating, coming from this context of growing up in California, it's like, you're supposed to arrive at a doctor's appointment 15 minutes early, right? To, to make sure you don't miss it. To be there on time. And it's just kind of a small

example of something that I see constantly. And I, I think that, you know, remembering to not make assumptions simply because you do not know what someone's background is. You do not know where someone has worked before, or what their cultural background is, and how that has informed the way they're approaching our work. And so trying to understand that is a huge step to being able to, you know, appropriately mediate your response to something that you, you might find offensive or might find strange at first. When in reality, it might just be perfectly normal to that person.

WHITNEY Right. And my, so for example, my showing up late to a meeting with you, you're going to interpret differently than your husband showing up late to a meeting with you. Because he's from Argentina, and you and I both grew up in the Bay Area of California. So there's a different cultural context, is what you're saying.

CLAIRE Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's important, also, to realize that now we live in this really globalized society, so sometimes you don't even know what the cultural context is, right? I mean, that happens to me all the time in Argentina. It's, you know, I feel like all, it's not like every business meeting starts late. Some of them do, and some of them don't. And you kind of don't know. I, I think one of the, the funniest things about lateness, I always, uh, remember with, with shock, was my wedding. I got, I got married in Argentina in 2011, we got married at this lovely church. And our wedding invitation had 9:00 PM on it. And, um, so, you know, the, the American guests who had come down to Argentina for this wedding walked into the church, you know, right before 9:00.

And they see someone getting married at the altar, they think, "Oh my gosh, we're late for Claire's wedding." They race up to the front and realize it's not me. Right? And then, you know, they're like, "Wait, what's going on? I don't understand, did we miss the wedding? Are we a couple minutes late? Maybe it started early," you know, they make all these assumptions. And then it of course turns out that in Argentina, something that most people do is you actually put on the wedding invitation the time a half an hour before the actual time. And so our wedding was supposed to start at 9:30, actually. And it started at 9:30. But on all of these invitations, it said 9:00, to try to get the Argentines there on time. But the Americans were just baffled. And they're watching another wedding take place before ours, just thinking, "Where are we?" (laughs)

WHITNEY You were an early employee at Twitter. How did this happen and what's something that you find was formative for you, having been an early employee there?

CLAIRE Sure. So, I ended up as an early employee at Twitter because I was an early user of Twitter. So back in 2006 I had started a blog with my best friend. We were traveling around the world at the time. I had this really crappy but amazing online editing job that kind of paid my way, and she, I'd gotten her the same job. And so, we spent basically nine months traveling around the world and at the time I was, I was writing what I thought would be my first, my first book about my travels. Which was a book that never got published, really. And in the course of that journey, we started the blog. And if you were blogging back in 2006, you were probably using Blogspot, blogger.com, which we were. And eventually the folks who started Blogspot found our blog and started promoting it. And it was during 2006, that year that some of the employees at Blogspot decided to take a two-week sort of period of time to, to incubate a little side project and see where it went. And that side project was Twitter.

And so when they went ahead and launched Twitter, they said, "Hey, why don't you guys get on the platform and, and, you know, start, start using it?" At that time I guess we had, we had finished our, our year of traveling and we were at that point (laughs) living in Kenya in this, in this orphanage, starting this nonprofit. And so we joined Twitter. And so it was really, you know, by me being an early user on the platform and showing that it, it could actually work to,

you know, raise funds and gain awareness about this small nonprofit that I ended up, then, eventually at the company, um, as an early employee, with the, with the mission to try to see how this platform could be used to proactively make positive change. And the role I had when I, I started, I, I joined at about 50 people and my first three months I was doing my, my thesis for my MBA. But then I stayed on after that. And after, this was after, excuse me, after (laughs) those three months I stayed on after that.

And the role title that we came up with was, you know, a nod to Rosabeth Moss Kanter's corporate social innovation. Because I was really passionate at the time, and I still am, about how social innovation is kind of the, the new way to think about social responsibility or sometimes social impact. So that was really the goal early on, was to see how this platform could be used proactively, and how Twitter as a corporation could kind of push that agenda forward.

WHITNEY So, everybody who's listening, if you follow [Claire on Twitter, she's @claire](#). Like, that's how early she was. So, that brings us now to a book that you have just written, where I want to spend the bulk of our time. It's a book called *Social Media Success for Every Brand*. It is terrific. Terrific. Anybody who's trying to figure out social media, you must read this book. Now, Claire, when you wrote it, you said that this is the hardest book you've ever written. Why is that?

CLAIRE It's interesting. Because it's definitely not the longest. I think I'm looking at it right now, the book is 159 pages. What I found was that it was just so framework heavy. I knew going in that I had a framework, and that I had something clear that I wanted to explain and put it in a format that was easy for people to understand. But I think the complexities of what it looks like to have a framework in your head and then to put them down on paper in a clear and concise way was significantly more challenging than I ever expected. And I, you know, I, traditionally when I, when I write books, I, I find that going away by myself in some torp, in some type of sort of like, remote book vacation is the way I can get that really bad first draft out. But with this, it took me going away multiple times to even get anywhere close to it. Just because I felt like my brain was hurting sometimes.

WHITNEY (laughs) So it pushed you. And that's a good thing. So, um, what's the gist of this book?

CLAIRE So basically, uh, when I left Twitter about five years ago now, the thing I really started doing was working a lot with startups and advising them in terms of branding and marketing. And I kept having a version of the experience I'm going to share with you now. And that experience was this. A few years ago, a startup asked me to come in and help them relaunch their product. Now, they had this really interesting product, but they had basically kind of blown it when it came to marketing. They'd put it out into the world, nothing had happened, no one had bought it, and now they didn't know what to do, right? And, you know, they'd raised funding from investors, and they had some great team members, and they wanted to save this thing. But they knew that it depended on marketing. And so they brought me in and I spent a couple months coming up with this really kind of in depth marketing strategy for them to really relaunch this product. And after about a couple months, I delivered this very long, you know, assessment and plan forward. Strategic plan about what we were going to do. And we all got together and we had this big meeting about the plan.

And we sat down for this, for this meeting, and I could tell kind of early on in the meeting that it was clear that not everyone in the room had really read all that much of my plan. You know.

I, I kept saying things like, "Well, look, let's look at, you know, point number 17 on page 33." And, you know, someone would say something like, "Oh, I think that's a good candidate for next quarter." Or, you know, end of the year, that kind of thing. And so as this sort of conversation stutters along, um, I hear (laughs), you know, over the phone, this is a conference call, I, I hear one of the, the co-founders kind of sit up in his seat and say, "Well, you know,

Claire, I, I just, I have an idea." And it's kind of clear he's about to make his big point. And, you know, he says, "Claire, I just think that if you could get Mark Cuban to tweet about us, we would go viral. And then everything would be great." And, you know, Whitney, this is a version of something that pretty much every startup I have ever worked with since leaving Twitter has said to me. Because I think there is this crazy mistaken idea that social media is really only good for, quote on quote, going viral. And that, thus, that is your only strategy when it comes to being on social media.

And so for me, you know, I immediately reacted against this. I said, "No, no, you know, I think we should blah blah blah." And I went into this long sort of convoluted explanation. And it was only after kind of this experience and me thinking through it in my head that I really realized that, you know, a clear solution needed to be found. And one of the solutions that I had been using with clients at the time was something called the StoryBrand marketing framework, which my friend Don Miller created some years back. It's pretty much the clearest and best way to convey your concise marketing message to the world. And it was a framework I'd been using with clients, but the thing that had always tripped up clients, even when they understood the StoryBrand framework was, okay, but now how do we apply this easily to social media?

You know, I, I'm a social media expert, so I sort of figured out how to do that, but I realized it wasn't something that other people had figured out. So when Don came out with his book a few years ago, sharing kind of this, um, StoryBrand marketing framework to, to the masses, I said, "Hey, I think, you know, I think the social media part of this is missing." And that's when we kind of came up with this idea to, to turn this StoryBrand marketing framework of Don's into, into a, a social thing as well.

WHITNEY Okay. So, pause for two seconds. All of our listeners, if you have been listening for a while, you will know that we interviewed Don Miller on the podcast. So you can go through and understand what he means when he talks about StoryBrand framework, and we'll include that in our show notes. Um, so that you know what it is. And I don't know if you want to give, like, a two second version of it that, of it, and then we'll, uh, dig deep on your five part model around social media, Claire.

CLAIRE Sure. I mean, the two second overview is that this StoryBrand marketing framework is all about understanding that your customer is your hero, your brand is not. And so it's trying to figure out a way to better speak to the needs of your customer. And that's really what it's all about. And so what we did in this book, what I did in this book, but Don wrote the foreword for, is we used the StoryBrand framework as kind of a jumping off point for something I call the SHARE model, which is this model for succeeding on social media.

WHITNEY Okay. So will you talk us through it really quickly?

CLAIRE Yeah.

WHITNEY SHARE. S-H-A-R-E.

CLAIRE Right. So, the SHARE model.

WHITNEY You're, you're all going to have to read, you're all going to have to go read the book. But she's going to give you a little bit of a teaser, and this is really, I mean, it was worth her head hurting, and I know why it hurt.

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY Because there's so much information in here. But Claire, if you can give us the ten thousand foot view of the SHARE model. If you can share with us the ten thousand foot view of the SHARE model, please, please go ahead.

CLAIRE Of course. So the SHARE model, S-H-A-R-E. So the first step in the SHARE model is Story. And this is coming up with a clear and concise message for your brand. And this really pulls from the concept of, of StoryBrand. And in StoryBrand, they call it a brand script, which is basically the things you are going to say about your brand to the world. And so when it comes to social media, there's one really, really important thing to remember about story, and it has everything to do with cocktail parties. Do you like cocktail parties, Whitney?

WHITNEY (laughs) I like parties. With lots of water and conversation.

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY Maybe not so many cocktails, but I do like parties, so please go ahead.

CLAIRE Okay. Well, when you're at a cocktail party, it doesn't matter what you're drinking, typically your goal, quote on quote, if you have a goal at the cocktail party, is to stand out in a kind of positive way, make a connection with someone, and then maybe, if you're both into it, you know, share business cards to follow up at a later date, right? In, in contrast, your goal at a cocktail party should not be to run in and rush up to your ex-boyfriend's husband's daughter's wife and try to immediately sell your healing essential oil, for example. And we all sort of intuitively know this about cocktail parties, but no one seems to know this about social media.

And that's why when you get on social media, you get bombarded by, you know, what I call push marketing messages from people selling their stuff to you without creating any type of engagement or connection beforehand. And so that's why in this step of the SHARE model, the focus is all on something that I call the engagement ladder. So the idea here is that social media is about brand marketing. And brand marketing is the kind of marketing that increases awareness about your brand and increases engagement. And this runs in contrast to something called direct marketing, which is marketing that leads directly to a sale. So most of social media marketing is brand marketing, so it's marketing that is supposed to increase awareness or engagement. So when you think about how you as a brand can, you know, do well on social media, or do well at that cocktail party, all you really want to do is try to create some engagement to get someone on what I call that engagement ladder.

And then over time, on social media, you're going to pull that potential follower, now current follower, up that ladder. So you might, you know, entice them to first follow you on social media. And then that next step might be to like something you post on social media. And then that next step, up, up the ladder might be to retweet or reshare something you have posted on social media. You know, and then you keep taking them up that ladder so that, you know, the next rung up that ladder might be them clicking over to your website, um, from a LinkedIn post or from your LinkedIn bio, let's say. And then the next step up the ladder might be, you know, them, them signing up for your email newsletter. And then, you know, as you get higher and higher up the ladder, then you're getting closer to that point at which that person is, is actually engaging in direct marketing and is actually buying something.

So, when it comes to social media, this is the real most important thing, is thinking about social media like an engagement ladder and thinking about it as getting someone on that ladder and then trying to move the person up the ladder. So that's all the first step. And that's a big, meaty first step in the SHARE model. But that's S.

WHITNEY I love that. I love that. The thing that comes to mind when you say that is, like, u-, using your, your metaphor of a cocktail party, of meeting someone, sharing with them just enough, opening up that loop so they're like, "Huh. They're intriguing. I want to know more."

CLAIRE Mm-hmm (affirmative).

WHITNEY And so then they want to know more, or whatever knowing more looks like, but that's, that's what, that's what I think you're saying, right, that, "Huh. I want to know more." That's the whole purpose of the S.

CLAIRE Absolutely. And so when you go, so you're done with S, so now you move onto the H of SHARE, which is How. And the most important thing here is this social media evaluation that I have in the book. So, you know, something I hear a lot from folks is, they say, you know, "Oh, I might have this new product, or I have this new service, and I went and started, you know, doing my social media marketing about it on Facebook. But, you know, I didn't get any response." And, you know, I'll say, "Oh, well, what's your business about?" And they'll say, "Oh, I'm an executive coach." And I'll say, "Oh, well that's interesting. Why Facebook?" "Oh, I don't know. I just thought Facebook."

And so the social media evaluation, what it's going to do is it's going to tell you what your priority social media platform should be based on what kind of industry you're in and what kind of strengths you have as an individual or as a business. And that's really, really important. Because, you know, there are four major social media platforms. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. But they're very different beasts. (laughs) And it is not to many people's benefits to be very active on all of them, and most of us don't have the bandwidth anyway. So it's really important to take the social media evaluation and figure out what your priority platform is. And that's the most important part of this second step, H.

WHITNEY And there's a link to that in the book, right, Claire?

CLAIRE Absolutely. And so now we're on A. So, the A is all about your Audience. And the idea here, this really goes back to that kind of tenet of StoryBrand marketing in general, is that your social media marketing should be about your audience, not about your brand. And probably the most important thing to remember about this step is that the best thing you can do as a brand to, to generate, to make it about your audience, is to generate engagement by being empathetic. And so the way you show empathy to your customer is you talk to them about things they want to hear and you try to solve their problem. And so in this step I teach you a number of key ways to, to do that. And to make sure that your brand's social media account is really reframed, so it's about your customer and not about your brand.

WHITNEY Perfect. Okay. R. S-H-A-R, Reach.

CLAIRE R. So, to, it, Reach the idea is that you want to amplify your brand on social media, and doing that is about expanding your reach. And I say the most important thing about this step is that it does not matter how many times Mark Zuckerberg or, you know, Jack Dorsey change the algorithms for these social media platforms. One thing will always be true. And that is that more engaged accounts will always have the ability to reach more people. So when you think about reach and you think about increasing your ability to touch more people, it's actually about increasing your engagement. And so you want to really focus on current followers and getting engagement with current followers on which ever platform you're focusing on before you start worrying about getting more followers. And that's something that most people get wrong pretty much every day of the week on social media. Most of us spend a lot of time thinking about how to get new followers, and not a lot of time focusing on the ones we already have.

WHITNEY Hmm. Love the one you're with.

CLAIRE (laughs) It's so true.

WHITNEY (laughs) Okay. E. Excellence.

CLAIRE Yeah. So then the last step of this is all about fine tuning your social media marketing efforts to reach long term excellence and in, in, in this step of the model and in this stage of the book I tell you some, you know, fantastically terrible social media marketing mishaps on social media. And what most of these sort of branding social media marketing mishaps have in common is that it's really easy as a brand to forget that social media is a real time information network that really favors transparency and authenticity. And sometimes we, we forget that. We put our marketing brains on, and we think that, you know, that means we can sort of return to the press releases of yore. And in fact, you know, social media is real time, and is all about authenticity and transparency. And that's the way you're always going to win.

WHITNEY Hmm. So good. Okay. So, one of the things I asked you to do beforehand, so, lest everybody think Claire is more brilliant than she is-

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY [crosstalk 00:34:19], you know, people pay her tens of thousands of dollars to go in, do an audit, maybe a hundred thousand, I don't know for sure. But I know it's definitely tens of thousands to audit and be like, "Okay, here's what you're doing right. Here's what you're doing wrong." And then she'll have a team and, or, other teams, people like Macy Robison, who's our podcast marketing manager who's also a [StoryBrand guide](#). So we love StoryBrand here at WLJ Advisors. But Claire, you, I asked you to do a quick, um, look at our social media profile and give us two or three things that we could be doing differently to build better awareness and, and perhaps be more engaged with, um, our audience. To be more excellent. And I, I'm looking forward. I don't know what you're going to say, but I'm excited to hear what you have to say.

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY What are two or three things that we could do, do better?

CLAIRE Okay. So I think I have a couple more than two or three. But I will start by saying, uh, you guys are pretty much, you know, a, a model social media marketing case, in lots of ways. So, here's what-

WHITNEY Okay, well, pause for two seconds.

CLAIRE (laughs) Yeah.

WHITNEY Shout out to Macy Robison, who runs all of our marketing and content. High five, Macy, right now. We're high fiving you. Um, okay. Keep going.

CLAIRE Macy is amazing. We love, love, love Macy.

WHITNEY Yeah. Okay. So, she's probably blushing, but that's okay. Go ahead, Claire.

CLAIRE Okay. So it definitely seems like you have, have taken my social media account evaluation to figure out your important accounts. Because this is what I would have recommended, and this is what you are doing. You are focusing on Twitter, and you are focusing on LinkedIn. In your

industry, this makes a lot of sense. You do executive coaching, you write books, you are a thought leader. It makes tons of sense that these would be the priority platforms for you. So I want to start with kind of what I'm seeing on Twitter, and some of my suggestions.

So I've got four, is it four? Yes. Four main suggestions for Twitter. And I would say my most important main suggestion is that I want you to have more public conversations with other thought leaders on Twitter. So Twitter is basically your best one to one tool out there, in terms of being able to connect or get connected with other thought leader-y type people. And, but what's, or, I should say, but, what sometimes people don't realize is that that's not just for your own personal benefit, it's also for the benefit of your followers. So for example, I, you know, see, you guys do a good job of maybe pulling out a quote from a podcast you do or with, with another individual. Or maybe just finding another article that, you know, someone else wrote on HBR and pulling that out in a quote.

But what I'd like you to do is, instead of just using their handle in a tweet, I would actually want you to then, you know, maybe send out that initial tweet, you, you already have done, which is, you know, a great quote from that person mentioning them and then linking to the article or podcast. But then I would want you to follow up with basically direct communication to them. Because as you know, as a thought leader with a lot of followers, you get a lot of mentions about your work on Twitter every day, for example. But it's when someone is talking to you directly that you're more likely to respond. So I would want to see you talking directly to other thought leaders so that other people can listen in on those conversations, because that's one of the biggest, biggest benefits of Twitter. To, to, you know, the laypeople of the world who, who want to hear what their thought leaders want to say. So.

WHITNEY That's so interesting. You know who does that really well, Claire? Shout out, is Tom Peters.

CLAIRE Oh.

WHITNEY He's really good at having those conversations.

CLAIRE Oh, interesting.

WHITNEY Like, great, great role model. Okay. Awesome advice.

CLAIRE Okay.

WHITNEY Keep going.

CLAIRE Okay. So a way to potentially do that would be, I know some people do versions of this, but you know, they do, like, a Follow Friday, a maybe, you know, 10 leaders I like this week, a disruptors of the week type thing. I mean, there are a bunch of different sort of tweaks or ways you could do it. But doing something like that and doing it regularly would probably be really useful.

Um, another small point. Something you do super well on LinkedIn, which I'll talk about later, that I want you to do more of on Twitter is to ask more questions. You get lots of engagement on the questions you ask on LinkedIn, so do some of that on Twitter. Uh, number three is a small point, but you are sharing lots of really interesting articles. A lot of them are coming from just a few sources. Like Harvard Business Review. I would expand the news sources just to get more, uh, interest from people who don't necessarily know the few you're tweeting about, if that makes sense. That requires more work on your time, on your end. But that would be useful.

WHITNEY [crosstalk 00:39:10] Yeah. Yeah. Right. Right. But more breadth. Yup, that makes sense.

CLAIRE And then one other big point, and this is something I talk about in the book, is the idea that you do want to do some more pattern disruption. So, classic pattern disruption, one of the examples I use in the book, is, you know, Marshall Goldsmith, our, our favorite, um, executive coach (laughs), he has, you know, a few million followers on LinkedIn like you do. One of his most engaged-upon posts from last year had nothing to do with executive coaching, nothing to do with leadership, it was actually just a picture of his family at Thanksgiving. Right? And so I think if you did occasional personal stuff on Twitter, it would be really engaged with. And so I would, I would do some pattern disruption with personal stuff. Like, a personal selfie or a personal something.

WHITNEY Hmm.

CLAIRE With some type of message behind it.

WHITNEY That's so good. Can I pause for two seconds?

CLAIRE Yes.

WHITNEY I loved in the book, okay, everybody, you have to read it. Claire tweeted when she had her babies. Like, it's awesome.

CLAIRE Oh. (laughs)

WHITNEY So that's a great example of a pattern interrupt. And, you know, and we like disruption here. Okay. Keep going, this is amazing.

CLAIRE Totally. Okay. Let's move on to LinkedIn.

WHITNEY LinkedIn, okay.

CLAIRE So I've got four main points here. Okay. One of the things on LinkedIn is, well, I'll go with a similar point I just made on Twitter. I want you to be more personal as a pattern disruptor on LinkedIn as well. I think, again, it would have similar effects as on Twitter. On LinkedIn you have way, way more followers than on Twitter. Um, and so it would be really interesting to see what would happen if you went really personal on occasion.

So, the thing on LinkedIn that I want you guys to be more careful with is to make sure that in your posts, you're talking to the people you are writing about by always making sure you're, um, tagging them. Because I see that not happening a lot, and that's not something, sometimes people forget to do that on LinkedIn because it's harder to do. And you, yes, it's not as intuitive. But please make sure you're doing that, and then you can go the second step and even, like, tag someone in a comment if it's something you want them to respond to. So I want you to call out those other people. Um-

WHITNEY Okay. So, pause for two seconds. I hope everyone who is listening is taking copious notes and/or, and/or you're going to take the transcript. Because if you will take everything that Claire is telling us to do, read her book, your brand awareness is going to increase significantly. And I know from talking to many, many, many of you this is very important to you. So I hope you are paying very close attention. And if you're driving, turn it off and turn it back on when you are somewhere that you can write notes. Okay, keep going, Claire.

CLAIRE So the other thing I would do on LinkedIn for you is to also start using hashtags some. LinkedIn will, when you're writing posts, it will suggest a lot of, a lot of times really general hashtags. And

those are actually working well for a lot of people. So I would experiment with that. You guys aren't doing a lot of hashtags now. I would also look into a little bit more curation.

WHITNEY Hmm.

CLAIRE Um, curation is sometimes harder on LinkedIn. Again, it doesn't feel as intuitive as on Twitter. But I think it would be interesting to see how your audience responds to more curated content, because from what I'm seeing, all your content is really engaged upon, which makes me think that your audience could handle a little bit more content.

WHITNEY Hmm.

CLAIRE And yet, the way, if you want to add more content, I'd want it to be other people's and not your own.

WHITNEY Hmm.

CLAIRE Just to kind of allow for a little bit more of that kind of, yeah. Um, and then, finally, I would say, I mean, the questions you're doing on LinkedIn and the videos you're doing on LinkedIn are both working really, really well. So I would definitely just know that, so that you kind of spend more thought energy into, not necessarily doing more of it in terms of the actual output, but just remembering that that's important because those are really working.

WHITNEY Hmm.

CLAIRE And I think, this is part of a larger point that is always true on social media which is that if something is working for you, you really need to double down on that. Because these platforms change. And the reality is that what's working for you today is not going to be what's working for you in a year, and so you do need to be able to kind of learn how to pivot and learn how to kind of follow those guiding lights. That doesn't mean, as I say, though, like, necessarily creating a lot more output. It just means thinking about the quality on that, you know? Like, Whitney, when you do a video, you get lots of comments. So just make sure that, you know, prioritizing that video for LinkedIn each week or whatever it's going to be is a real priority. And the same thing for those questions. The questions are getting you a lot of comments. So, you know, just prioritize the quality on it and don't write throwaway questions because you'll keep that engagement really high. So.

WHITNEY Okay.

CLAIRE Those are my suggestions. (laughs)

WHITNEY Claire.

CLAIRE But, I mean, it's really like, what you're doing is really awesome. I was kind of, there aren't really any red flags at all. And I was, yeah, amazed. But again, you and Macy know all this stuff, also. (laughs) So, so maybe you're not going to even explore this.

WHITNEY Well, I, so, so again, thank you. That was so generous of you. When I asked you to do that, I thought, "Oh, she'll make one or two suggestions." And you really took the time to do the analysis. So, thank you. Incredibly generous. And, I just very much appreciate it. So one of the things I'm excited about while we're continuing on the theme of generosity and we start to move toward wrapping this up, is that we are going to give away three signed copies of [Claire's book](#). Um, for all of you who finish listening to the podcast, send us a quick note, tell us you wrote a

podca-, a, a [review on Apple of the podcast](#). You will be eligible for the giveaway. So excited for you to read this book.

Okay. The other thing that I find really interesting about you, Claire, is you've written, how many books now? Seven books? Six, seven books?

CLAIRE Yeah. Well, I guess nine, but one of them was a gift book, so we, that's a different thing. Yeah.

WHITNEY Okay. Nine books. But who's counting? But, the thing that's interesting to me is that you collaborate a lot. A number of these books you've either coauthored or, or there's been significant, um, sharing of, of intellectual property around this. And I'm just curious, um, because a lot of people, and I include myself in this question, um, we want to collaborate. Um, and I, but we don't quite know how to do it. Have you taken the time at all to analyze how you decide who you want to collaborate, what a good collaboration looks like? Do people approach you, do you approach them? Any, any universalizable suggestions or thoughts for us on that? Because when we do have good collaboration, things, magical things can happen.

CLAIRE Right. So I, yes. I have a, a wise, wise response that is not my own. In 2017, I published a book called *One Minute Mentoring* with one of my great mentors, Ken Blanchard, who wrote the *One Minute Manager*. And he and I had been connected, I don't know, maybe five years before that time, and we had developed this really strong mentoring relationship. I was the mentee, he was the mentor, and we decided, you know, hey, in the process of trying to figure out if we could, we were introduced with the idea of maybe writing a book together. And then it was really through that kind of, um, process that we realized we really had this real organic relationship. And mentoring relationship. And so we decided to write on that.

And something he always said to me in the early days of that process was something he had learned from one of his great mentors. And this was the idea that you should never put content before form. And so what he means by that is, you know, the, the form is the way you interact with someone, the values you share, the, um, mutual admiration or interest that you have, and then the content is what the actual project is or how you might collaborate. And so what I really learned from him was to make sure to emphasize the form before you think about the content. And certainly before you emphasize the content. And so I think that's really important. I really like connecting with people. That's one of the things I just love doing. And so I try to remember when doing that that it's always first about, you know, figuring out if, if there's a shared value match before you even think of kind of content ideas, if that makes sense.

WHITNEY Yeah. So, so you and, sounds like you know people for a while. You've had lots of conversations with them. Maybe worked on a little mini project together, just to start to figure out how you see the world, do you enjoy working together, do your styles, um, square with one another. Is that accurate?

CLAIRE I think that's really accurate. And I think when you don't do that, you can of course sometimes have great success and you can sometimes have, have great failures. (laughs) And both can be equal learning experiences, but I think probably a-, any of those failures are going to teach you to maybe spend a little bit more time before you jump into a project with someone the next time.

WHITNEY Yeah. Okay. I have two final questions for you. So, um, penultimate question is, how can people find you? We've been talking about this engagement ladder. How can people find you, and to the extent that they want to become better connected, more acquainted with your work, with what you're doing, what's the best way to do that?

CLAIRE Sure. So, I'm, I'm always active on Twitter, except when I'm not, I like to say. And I'm [@claire on Twitter, C-L-A-I-R-E](#). And my website is [clairediazortiz.com](#), and yeah, it would be great to connect.

WHITNEY Okay. All right. So, we've just talked about this wonderful book that you've written and you, and your expertise in, in the brand audit. But, um, because this show is about disrupting yourself, um-

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY I would love to hear about, um, what is next for you? What kind of disruptions, personal disruptions, are on the horizon for, for Claire?

CLAIRE Yeah. So it's interesting. I, I think I've sort of thought about what I am good at doing, but then the way I want to do that thing a lot. And for a while I wasn't able to spend a ton of time thinking about that, because after I left Twitter about five years ago I immediately had three babies really quickly. And for me I needed a lot of time, I realized, um, to, to, to get to kind of the, the functional mom state with many of those before I could kind of think about my next career pivot.

WHITNEY Mm-hmm (affirmative).

CLAIRE But, you know, I realized that I'm this marketing and branding expert, and I really like advising startups. But what I also like doing is investing in those startups. And so for me, seeing kind of how much I have enjoyed my angel investing over the last four or five years has been very much kind of the impetus to make me think, okay, how can I, you know, pivot this into more of a full time role in investing? So I can still be supporting startups as a branding and a marketing person, but doing it more from the investor side than the advisor side. So that will be, I think, an interesting, uh, path to, to journey down in this next year.

WHITNEY Hmm, so exciting. So, are you doing a combination of, where, and, maybe you don't know yet. So you're probably exploring a number of different things where you will provide branding and marketing expertise in exchange for a combination of cash and equity, you're starting a fund, or is it just, you don't know yet exactly what you're going to do?

CLAIRE Uh, yeah. It's ye-, yes and.

WHITNEY (laughs)

CLAIRE There's a lot of sort of different options on the table.

WHITNEY TBD.

CLAIRE I was, I was, I was hoping to, hoping to know by now. (laughs) But one of the things I realized is that these, these long pivots sometimes are, are part of the journey, more so than, than, than just the, the, you know, yeah.

WHITNEY The pivot itself. Yeah.

CLAIRE Yeah.

WHITNEY Yeah. It's the learning that takes place. And, and, you know, and I think, I don't want to discount, I think it's important for us, I think about parenting. You know, talk about a

disruption. Right? Talk about stepping back from who you are into who you can be. I think it's one of the most massive disruptions any of us ever undertake, is that decision to become a parent. And, and all the lessons that are learned. And it is a huge step back in so many ways. And yet, what a slingshot, right? What a slingshot it's probably been for you, and for your husband, et cetera. Um-

CLAIRE Well, I, I must finish, Whitney, by saying, you know, Whitney, you are, you're one of my dear mentors, and I always remember something you told me at some point in the last year about the importance of, you know, slingshotting backwards to slingshot forward. And I, I think that's such a, just an interesting insight, and it's something I've felt a lot in sort of the, the motherhood journey and, you know, the now kind of reinvigorated new career upcoming journey.

WHITNEY Yeah. I'm so excited for this investing that you're going to do, and the marketing and branding. Okay. So, final thoughts, Claire. Any, any last messages, ideas, that you would like to share with our listeners?

CLAIRE Yeah. So, something I'm really excited about these days that is random and new to me is this idea of info sponging. Do you know a lot about info sponging, Whitney?

WHITNEY I have, I've never heard of it. So tell us. What is it?

CLAIRE Oh my gosh. Okay. It's amazing. So the idea is, is that you are a sponge and you get information from different areas that helps inform your decisions. So, for example, I can't figure out the problem to a current startup and so I go to a newsstand and I read a design magazine. And somehow that informs something about this, you know, SAAS startup that I'm trying to figure out a problem for. And so I've gotten super into it. I think it's a very interesting creative work hack.

WHITNEY Oh. I love it. You know what I want you to do? I want you to start an info sponging club.

CLAIRE (laughs)

WHITNEY And you can be the captain, and I want to be a member. Doesn't that sound like fun?

CLAIRE Done. Yeah. Yes. You have people from different industries, with different random interests.

WHITNEY Yeah.

CLAIRE And see how they can combust in a positive way.

WHITNEY Oh, I love that. Oh, info sponging. Okay. That's the term of the day. All right, Claire Diaz-Ortiz. Thank you so much for being, joining us on, (laughs) I can't even talk I'm so excited. Let's say it again. Claire Diaz-Ortiz, thank you for joining us on the Disrupt Yourself podcast. It's been a lot of fun.

CLAIRE Thank you. So, so, so much fun.

Things can change quickly, so when something is working well, remember to do it. Double down on it. What's true for social media algorithms is also true when disrupting yourself.

Claire has brilliantly pulled the thread of her strengths, her ability to write, connect with others and learn more about them, through every pivot in her career. I wasn't surprised to hear that she is a student of history. Claire has a keen sense for what works and what doesn't, and is able to translate her ideas and the ideas of others into a form that people can understand. As she prepares to pivot and disrupt herself again, she is once again leaning into her strengths - working with startups, her expertise in marketing-- to slingshot herself into angel investing. Is there a way that you can do the same? Lean into a strength as you start this new year?

If you're trying to use social media to grow your business or build a brand, I hope you took my advice and grabbed a notebook. Claire's analysis of our feeds was spot on and we've already experimented with some of her advice. We're looking forward to implementing more of her advice in 2020 so that we can further engage with you. I can't recommend Claire's book enough. If you'll leave us a rating and review on [Apple Podcasts](#) or [Stitcher](#) and email us at wj@whitneyjohnson.com that you did, you'll have a chance to win a signed copy of her book.

Practical Tip:

Whether you're focused on social media or trying to grow your brand and reputation in other ways, Claire gave some great advice when it comes to engagement. Focus on the followers (or customers) you already have before worrying so much about going out to get new ones. What is one thing you can do this week to provide massive value to the audience you already have?

Thank you again to Claire Diaz-Ortiz for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, 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.