

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 153: PLANTING CHERRY TREES

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast, a podcast where we discuss strategies and advice for how to climb the S Curve of Learning in your professional and personal life, disrupting who you are to slingshot into who you want to be. I'm your host Whitney Johnson and today our guests are me and you.

Right now, we find ourselves in uncharted waters.

A pandemic, political wrangling, a volatile stock market. Most of it we've experienced before. But it feels a bit like we've sailed into the Bermuda triangle of uncertainty, even chaos.

These macro events coupled with the micro anxieties that accompany our everyday human lives might make us fear we are sinking.

There's no question that the past few weeks have been disconcerting. Most of us are finding it discombobulating; pretty normal to be feeling that right now. Our way of life is without a doubt being disrupted.

But as novel as the novel coronavirus is, there is nothing new about trouble and challenge. I think that when we succumb to fear and the paralysis or overreaction that it can stimulate, we are more likely to abandon the ship than to have it simply sink on its own.

Take the stock market, for example. I find myself somewhat sympathetic to stories of folks emptying their accounts and stuffing their money under a mattress. The truth is though, we who invest decide what will happen to the market. Will the market continue to drop precipitously? If we liquidate our positions and stuff our money under the mattress, yes, it will. If we invest, it will recover and climb.

To paraphrase economist [John Maynard Keynes](#), "The social object of investment is to defeat fear."

That fear, I believe, is fear of the future, and even in some ways, fear of the unknown present. Should we throw caution to the wind? No, of course not. But should we stop investing? To do so seems tantamount to thinking that the future is not uncertain, it simply doesn't exist. There is no future. A little drastic.

The future has always been uncertain. If WWI accompanied by the Spanish Influenza of 1918/19, followed a decade later by the Great Depression and then yet another, even more destructive World War didn't sink the ship, I see no reason to believe the present stormy waters will. We can choose to abandon it. But let's not.

Said more pithily, and paraphrasing western colonizer [Brigham Young](#), we need to "keep planting cherry trees."

So, that's what I want to talk about with you today. How do we not abandon this ship, how do we not get tumbled by the waves of disruption, but rather sail them wisely and well, landing on the safe harbor of who you want to be. Of who we want to be.

To be clear, I don't want to minimize the impact of these disruptions on individual lives and families. Hard things are happening. But history is a great instructor. It reminds us that we've been disrupted over and over again, but because of those challenges, we have more resources to stay connected, continue working, etc. Resources are meant to be used.

Thomas Troward said that "life ultimately consists in circulation, whether within the physical body of the individual or on the scale of the entire solar system. Circulation means a continual flowing around..." So, let's keep the resources circulating and at work. Let's keep living.

So how do you keep living? How do you keep growing? How do increase the odds that this current large-scale disruption, can help you become a better version of yourself? Can help your company become a better version of itself?

This is where our seven-point framework of personal disruption comes in---

As an Institutional Investor-ranked analyst at Merrill Lynch, I found myself innovating an approach to momentum and growth that started with stocks and then I applied it to people. In later working with and investing alongside legendary thought leader Clayton Christensen at Harvard Business School, I adapted the concept of disruption: companies don't disrupt, people do, which we eventually codified in the book *Disrupt Yourself*. When you are willing to become a silly, little, thing, like the telephone was to the telegraph, when you are willing to disrupt you—to disrupt yourself, you can take over maybe not *the* world, but you can take over your world.

In this episode, I want to review the framework of personal disruption within the context of our current crisis. It is a seven-point framework, and typically I refer to the seven steps as accelerants. And they are. But right now, when we are on a ship, that while we know deep down, or at least I believe deep down that it won't sink, but feels like it could - they are guardrails. 7 Guardrails for the present; 7 accelerants for the future.

We will take each in turn.

Guardrail #1 - Take the right risks.

If you are familiar with the framework, you've heard me talk about taking on competitive vs. market risk. So, competitive risk, you know there is a market, but there's also a lot of competition because everybody knows there's a big opportunity. So you have to figure out - can you compete and win? With market risk, there's none of that. You don't know if there's a market. But if there is, then there's no competition. When you take on market risk, the odds of success, according to disruption theory are six times higher. Typically we talk about market risk, playing where no one else is playing in the context of a business. But here's what I want you to think about right now.

In your brain, there is competitive risk taking place. There are these two competing factions in your brain - fear and hope.

Fear is rampant. It is trying to hijack your brain. It's trying to make you shut down. Do we need to be cautious? Yes. But fear and hope, they can't co-exist. We can invest or we can be defeated by fear. We can compete or we can create.

The best thing to do this when your brain being hijacked is to decide what you want to be true. What are you going to hope for? What you believe to be true? And then you just say it to yourself over and over again.

We know from the research that we are largely controlled by our subconscious mind. It's why you could easily find yourself listening to this podcast and nodding your head, but still not do anything differently. What you do control is your conscious mind, what goes into your brain. We also know that one of the best ways to reprogram your brain is

either through a vivid emotional experience, an epiphany of sorts, or through repetition. Listening, saying, reading something repeatedly. The neuroscience says it works. My experience says it works. When you breathe and eat an idea, you ingest, it becomes you. So, you might say something to yourself as simple as, “I am hopeful for the future.” Or “I don’t compete, I create.” In fact, why don’t you say them right now? “I am hopeful for the future.” “I don’t compete, I create.” I promise you, that if you will say those things. In fact, I’m pretty certain if you just did, you will feel just a little better. A little different. A little happier.

If you want to do more work on this first guardrail, you can listen to [Episode 80](#) or [100](#) of our podcast. If you want to think about this in a business context, you can listen to [Episode 143 with Simon Sinek](#) or [Episode 149 with Gabrielle Blair, the founder of Alt Summit](#).

Guardrail #2 - Play To Your Distinctive Strengths

This is what you do well that people around you don’t. Like the koala. So the koala, it’s this cuddly little animal that sleeps up to 20 hours a day. So one could have serious doubts about its ability to survive, except that it eats something that no other animal eats. What does it eat? It eats the eucalyptus leaves, which is its distinctive strength.

In our book, *Disrupt Yourself*, we provide a whole battery of questions that you can ask yourself, like, “What compliments do you dismiss?” And “What exasperates you?” to figure out what your distinctive strengths are. But given our present situation, there are two things in particular that I want you to think about.

The first - our strengths, your strengths - tend to be something that you’re not aware of. They’re so easy for you, they’re so reflexive that you don’t even know that they’re there. They’re blind spots. We talk about blind spots being something negative, we can’t see our blind spots. But we’re also blind to our strengths. What can happen right now, when things are in a bit of a crisis, you may feel stripped bare. In order to manage through, there’s going to be this vein of gold that will appear. Those are your strengths. Use them. Double down on them. They are the way through. The way in which you can best contribute. And not only not get tumbled, but stay afloat, and then surf into your future.

The second thing I want you to think about for this guardrail, is really, your ability to love. You don’t have to do it well. You don’t have to do it perfectly. But there are people in the world - and this is why it’s a distinctive strength - that can only be loved by you. It may be taxing. It may be inconvenient. As Ann Voskamp said that “Love is a willingness to be inconvenienced.” It may require you to listen. When you hold another’s fear or concern for a moment, it is lighter. And so is yours. I love this quote from Marion Scoles. He said, “There is a luxury above all others in this world, and it is the exquisite luxury of doing good to our fellow creatures.” Isn’t that beautiful? The exquisite luxury of doing good to our fellow creatures.

So, what I want you to remember around this guardrail is that you tend to overlook your strengths, but they will surface, become more apparent when in crisis. They will show their face. And then I want you to love the people that can only really be loved, like the Velveteen Rabbit, by you.

If you want to do more to this, listen to our [solo Episode 120](#). You can also listen to [Tom Rath, his Episode 147](#) on contribution. [Episode 151 on listening](#) and [episode 130 CV Harquail](#) on Playing to our Feminine Strengths (which by the way men have too!)

Alright, so you’re playing where no one else is playing, you’re taking on market risk, you’re playing to your distinctive strengths. Those are the first two guardrails. The third guardrails is to embrace your constraints.

Right now, every single one of us has constraints that we couldn’t have imagined on January 1, 2020. Now we are all short on something. There’s something that we don’t have enough of, or even more that we don’t have enough of. I, for example, have discovered that a large portion of revenue for our business in 2020 is now postponed indefinitely. Our business model involves keynote speaking. It involves workshops. It’s wiped out. That is a constraint. What do we as business owners do with this?

On a more personal level, we need to avoid kissing people on the cheek when we see them, shaking their hand, hugging them. Whether introvert or extrovert, we are social creatures, like we just discussed - there is an exquisite luxury of doing good for other creatures. What do we do with this constraint?

The answer is. I don't know yet. But what I do know is that. We can figure it out.

In 2007, Entrepreneur Magazine and The Corporate Board screened 95,000 companies. They compiled a list of the 500 Fastest Growing Business in America. What they found is that only 28% at most of these businesses had access to bank loans and lines of credit. Only 18% at most were funded by private investors. And only 3.5% were funded by venture capitalists.

The other businesses likely wanted funding. They likely could have used funding, but they couldn't get it, so they started anyway. Because it was do or don't eat. And you're typically highly incentivized in that situation.

Here's what is stunning. Here's what I want you to pay attention to. 61% of these companies turned a profit after the first year.

When we pull ourselves up by bootstraps, when we use the resources that are available to us, we can accomplish our goals--and we may even do better when times are tough.

Of the Great Recession a decade ago, my mentor Clayton Christensen said the following - he said it would have "unmitigated positive impact on innovation" because "when the tension is greatest and resources are most limited, people are actually a lot more open to rethinking the fundamental way they do business."

Hence, [the Kaufmann Foundation statistic](#): "51% of the Fortune 500 companies began during a recession or bear market or both." By the way, it's why immigrants are more than twice as likely to start a business as native-born American, and 40% of the Fortune 500 companies were founded by first-generation immigrants or their children. They have learned how to embrace their constraints. To create a life out of what in many instances seemed to be nothing. For our long-time listeners of the podcast, you will also note that many of our guests are also immigrants. A disproportionate number. Why? Because you know how to disrupt yourself.

One of the best processes I have ever seen that helps you turn your constraint into a tool of creation is from Adam Morgan and Mark Barden in their book *A Beautiful Constraint* which I've adapted.

Before I tell you what it is, I want you to think about what your biggest constraint is right now---

Is it that you are concerned about your health---and/or the health of everyone in the world?

Are you concerned about financial future?

Is it that you can't go anywhere?

Is it that you have to go somewhere?

Are you trying to manage a team while working at home?

Or working at home, you're trying to manage your children?

Whatever that constraint is---now think about the four-step process:

Step #1. Move from victim to neutralizer to transformer.

When we have a constraint, we initially tend to adopt this victim mindset. We believe that this obstacle stands in the way of our ability to realize a dream or ambition. So we go into denial around the constraint. Or we reduce our ambition.

When you move from victim to neutralizer, you recognize that this thing you are trying to get done is too important to allow the constraint to stop you, so you start looking for work around strategies. How am I going to get around this?

In the transformer stage (I love that word!), you start to believe that this constraint could be the very thing you needed in order to come up with an even better solution to your problem. The obstacle is the way. The constraint becomes a tool (a necessary tool) of creation.

Step #2. Reframe to can-if. Think about how improvisational comedy teams work. In a skit, the players, they never contradict one another. Every actor builds on what the previous actor said or did. Instead of saying, “No, but,” they immediately proceed to “Yes, and.” When you come upon a constraint, instead of “I can’t because,” focus on how the problem can be solved. Begin every statement with “I can, if...”

Don’t you love how I just left you hanging? It needs to be resolved! So let’s move to Step 3!

Step #3. Seek new sources of abundance. If you lack resources, find a way to access them elsewhere. Move beyond the resources you control or are given. What other resources are available? Including those of external partners, resource owners, even competitors, and then figure out how you can barter with them to obtain the resources you need.

Step #4. Activate emotions. If you cannot connect the need to transform your constraint with an emotional reason of why it matters, you will not have the grit you need to persevere when your ideas don’t work. And you need the full range of emotions--you need fear, frustration AND excitement and love. Emotions are most potent when they are in contrast--you are terrified something won’t work and you are thrilled by the possibility that it will. It’s this tension that prompts us to make a plan and act on it. It’s a lot more than just positive thinking. That’s part of why what is happening right now is so valuable. Frequently, under normal circumstances, we’ve got the positive thinking, but we don’t quite have the fear. Which we know from the research, we’re more motivated by what we lose than what we gain. So, now we have the fear--marry it with the excitement, the love—and you can transform your constraint. That’s where you’re going to have the hope. That fear spurs you on, but you have the excitement that can transform, you have the hope.

So---

Step 1. Move to from victim to transformer. From why did this happen to me, to how did this happen to help me? How can this obstacle help you? Beginning with help you be a better version of yourself? How can what’s happening in the world right now help you become a better version of yourself?

Step 2. Reframe from “I can’t because,” to “I can, if.” I can invest in the future, if...” What’s the thing you need?

Step 3. Once you know what you need, who has it? And a lot of it? Then ask, and this is key - What do you have a lot of? And who needs it? One of the things that most us have right now that we didn’t have three months ago, is time. So how can you start to barter? Think about that - what does barter look like today versus three months ago?

Step 4. Activate emotions. There must be a reason why it’s worth it to you. Without this emotion, you’re going to be a victim of circumstances. You’re going to become a victim of what’s happening in the world right now. Or at best, you’re going to go to the workaround stage. Tap into your positive and your negative emotions. Why does this matter to you? You know why you are scared? Now ask, why are you excited about the future? Hold both of these things together. It’s combustible. Powerful.

If you want more on constraints, you can listen to [Episode 140](#) of our podcast — there’s an entire 30 minutes on this topic. You may also want to listen to [episode 146 with Angela Blanchard](#). Or [Episode 131 with Jonathan Mendonsa](#). And for a more corporate discussion of embracing your constraints, you can listen to [Kaihan Krippendorff, Episode 134](#).

All right. We’re going to go to guardrail #4 - battle entitlement. And of all the accelerants this I the hardest. This is the willingness to believe that each of us is neither more nor less important than anyone else---that we really are all created equal with inalienable rights like liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

So, the first way you can battle entitlement is to ask yourself, in any situation - to what extent am I treating people like people vs. objects? There are some questions you can ask to get you thinking about this.

If I for example, I am out and about because I can be, and I am not worried about my health, but I'm potentially a grenade of infection because of where I've traveled to recently, am I treating others as an object or a person? If am I not out and about because I don't need to be, am I acknowledging the sacrifice of those (like health care workers) who have to be out and about? Or, if money gets tight in our businesses, cash flow isn't quite flowing - do we just lay people off, or do we do everything we possibly can first to share in the pain? Because again, life ultimately consists in circulation.

The second way to battle entitlement and again, especially during this time right now -- as we alluded to a moment ago is to shift from the why to the what questions.

We don't know really know why bad things happen to us vs. someone else. But the reality is that question - even asking why in the first place - doesn't serve us. Because it makes us a victim. It's much better to ask what am I going to do? How will I make meaning of this? These are the questions that can transform us--that are the stuff of personal disruption.

The third way to battle entitlement is to focus on what you are grateful for. 2012 was a bad year for our family. Work was not going well. Financially things very dire--we had made a bad investment. My younger brother had taken his life--and my husband was diagnosed with cancer. He is ok. It would have been easy to become bitter. To be angry. Including at God, by the way. To be entitled. "Why did this happen to me?" Except if I believe we are all created equal, why wouldn't it? I learned that year that the only way I was going to survive was to be grateful.

I love this from Eric Hoffer, a depression era migratory work. He said, "The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings." What we know is that what we are grateful for, we get more of.

So recapping---

Number 1 — Am I treating the people around me as people or objects? I love this from Melissa Smith, the CEO of WEX, she said, "Sometimes it's the little things you do that have a pretty big impact on people's lives."

Number 2 — Move from victim to transformer. Ask the question what. What meaning can I make? What can I learn? What can do I to help? How will this experience transform me? Who I am? I have yet to meet a person who has a why that isn't at some fundamental level about being a better person.

And then the third thing to think about from a battling entitlement perspective during this time period right now, is to ask yourself - What are you grateful for? Charles Dickens said, "There is always something for which to be thankful."

If you'd like to do more work in this area, you may want to check out [Tasha Furich's work - episode 103](#). She really goes in depth on the what vs. why questions, or [Jim Ferrell's podcast interview - episode 141](#). He's from the Arbingner Institute and explores this question of people vs. objects.

Guardrail #5 - Step Back to Grow.

We crouch before we jump. We bring a fist back to punch. Personal disruption involves moving sideways, backwards, even down. Sometimes you jump. Sometimes you are pushed off your Mario Brothers platform. Either way, whether you jump or are pushed, this can be a slingshot forward.

Right now, many of us are taking many steps back. As I've shared with you, I won't be speaking as much over the next couple of months. It's a step back. It's a constraint. But that also means that I have, and you may too, more time available to you than you've have had in a long time. I am usually on the road 50% of the time. For the next two months I won't be traveling. Which means in the absence of one thing, there is an abundance of another. Of time. What will I do, what will you do with that time? Will we fritter it away? Or will we use it to contemplate, to evaluate, to

create? Everything is created in our mind before we create it in the physical world. With extra time, and extra cognitive space, you can create something. What will you create?

Here's just one small thing I'm finding that I'm creating.

We have a distributed team--I have known for some time---in my brain, logically. We need to have a standing weekly. Let's all touch base meeting. We will do that. Oh, yes we will. It will make us more productive. But not until now have I said, "I need to do this meeting." Not so much to be organized, although that certainly will be an upshot. We will be more productive as a consequence. But because I know that a leader leads. They are available to talk about what is happening. To provide guideposts. To say I don't know more than you know. But here's what I do know, and we're going to get there together. So we've moved from a nice thing to a moral imperative. Something I'm doing slightly differently. Because I took a step back, to reflect, to contemplate. Which may very well be, I hope it will be, I believe it will be a slingshot forward.

What I love about disruption theory, is that if you can draw in your mind - you go on the y axis, it's growth or change, and the x axis is time. Up until now, maybe we were moving along, we'd started at a 10 on that y axis of growth and we were moving along and kind of bumping the over one up one, over one up one.

With this disruption in the marketplace, it may have pushed us back to an 8. To a 7. But the step back, we have an opportunity. It's huge. It may be once in a lifetime. To become more deliberate. For you to think. For you to create. So that you're no longer moving over one, up one on the grid paper of your life, you've moved to over one, up three. And, while we are at it, why not over 1, up 10? Why not? Really, why not? In moments like these, it's easy to think that the world is going to end. There won't be a future, so why plan for it? As a person of faith, I do believe that in the END all will be well. But even if you are a nihilist, to not plan is a missed opportunity. Because right now, we have time. Today. We have time to create tomorrow.

So here's what you can do to get started --- to trust that you will create your future. Write down three things you are going to do before the day is over. And then do them, no matter what. If you can trust yourself to create today, you can trust, you can invest in your future.

If you'd like to do more work here, on the business side, the idea of creating and planning, listen to [Marco Trecroce, CIO at the Four Seasons, Episode 150](#). And on the more personal side, you can listen to [Episode 133 with Tiffany Shlain](#) who wrote a book called [24/6](#).

All right. Guardrail #6 - Give failure its due.

Over the next few months there are going to be things that do not work. You were moving down one path. There will obstacles unforeseen along that path. Which of course has always been true. But now more than ever.

What I'm learning though, over the last couple of years in particular, is that it's not the failure, the things that don't work, that is the challenge for most of us. Through all my difficulties---including having that VERY rough period financially that I mentioned--partly due to my not understanding how to manage our money (Yes, I know - I could pick stocks, and make money for other people, but manage our own? Well, cobbler's children have no shoes.) What I'm learning, recognizing, is that we all fail, all the time. We do. Think about it. We all fail all the time. So that's not the problem! It's the shame that we attach to the failure that is the problem. So---over the next couple of weeks and months and actually for the rest of your life - be kinder to yourself. Be kind to other people. When they are doing things, like pulling a contract that they didn't need to pull. Or you could have split the pain evenly. Try to be kind. Because they wouldn't ask you to take all of the pain if they hadn't been massively triggered. The other thing that I am learning is that one of the most important things I can do if I am going to slingshot into who I want to be, is to know when I've been triggered. To know when I am feeling shamed. And then figure out how do I love myself? Because the entitlement I talked about earlier. Remember how I said -- people, not object. Not above or below. That includes you. You loving yourself.

Now I have a suggestion for you. I learned from [Brooke Snow on her podcast](#). She said to do this. Do a mantra. 5 minutes a day. "I love and accept you Brooke." I know. Right now. Oh, that Whitney, she has disrupted herself, right off her rocker. But before you laugh. Try it. Guaranteed that when you are about to do something unkind to someone else. Or do something irrational. It's not because of the other person it's because you don't actually love and accept yourself. And you feel shame. And you want it to go away. All of this external upheaval is going to force you to examine yourself. There's going to be rubble. There will be cracks. Places to look at and see yourself. Are you going to pick up that rubble, those rocks and throw it at other people? Or do you look at it, examine, understand them, set them down. And then step up onto it. See the world, yourself a little more clearly. A little more kindly. A little more gently.

As you go through this next while---when find yourself stuck, stopped. Things not working. It's probably less about the failure and more about the shame. It's shame that limits disruption, not failure. So do the work you need to do to ditch it. I love this quote from John Milton. He says, "The mind is its own place. It can make of every Heaven a hell. And of every hell a Heaven." So let me say that again - the mind is its own place. And can make of every success a failure. And of every failure a success.

So now that you're thinking about this, and you're saying - okay, I'm going to do some work. I'm going to ditch that shame. And maybe you don't have shame. Some of you don't, and I'm so happy for you. The world needs people who don't have it. But for the rest of us, here's what you can do to rebound even faster. I want you to look for the ROF-- the return-on-failure.

So here are the questions you can ask yourself:

Number one - Why did the failure happen? What process wasn't in place or could be improved?

One of the things that we're finding with our team is that things go wrong. Well, they go wrong with every team right? But when we asked the question, not why did you do that wrong, but what system wasn't in place because systemically something had fallen apart. So when we can examine that, it's so much more constructive.

Second question you can ask is, well, was the failure due to a lack of effort? Like was the person just not trying or did they try something new and have it not work? Very different questions, very different answers, very different outcomes.

Number three - is the person, are you failing because you're trying to do the wrong job? You're on the wrong S curve, or are there unrealistic expectations partly to blame? Could expectations - yours or someone else's - be managed differently?

Fourth question, how will you recover from this failure? Actually, let me rephrase. How quickly will you recover from this failure?

And number five, what important truths did you discover? This goes back to that what question, what did you learn? Now that you've invested in his failure, how are you going to get your return from this investment? How are you going to get your ROF? Whether you see an experience as a failure or success is a choice. It is always, always your choice.

All right. So if you want to do more work on giving failure, its due there to episode that you definitely want to listen to. The first is with [Maren Kate Donovan](#) and the second is with [Brené Brown](#).

Guardrail #7 - Be Driven By Discovery

When you disrupt yourself, you are playing where no one else is playing. You're taking on market risk, which means you're in search of a yet to be defined market. What's unique right now, is that we're all playing where no one else has played - at least in our lifetime. It's uncharted waters, and we're explorers. Like a Captain Cook. Remember though, that even though he mapped nearly a third of the globe, he didn't map it all at once. He mapped at one port at a time.

You can also be sure that any explorer, whether Captain Cook or Ibn Battuta that we talk about today, if we zoomed in on their day to day life, they were likely terrified. They were sailing without a map. They were walking their way through an enormous continent that they had not seen. That's what we're doing right now - sailing without a map, walking a world we haven't seen. Whatever your plan was, it's going to be different. You will discover something new. What we

know though, is that 70% – this is what we know from the research – of all successful new businesses end up in a different place too.

So on this topic, on the business side, there are two episodes that I want you to listen to. [Episode 126 with Rita McGrath](#), who is the architect of discovery driven planning. And [episode 116, my conversation with Antonio Nieto Rodriguez](#), who thinks about the world, and our life as a project.

So 70% of all successful new businesses end up in a different place too, which of course, means we're going to end up in a different place, and definitely now we're going to end up in a different place.

The executive search firm, Korn Ferry did a study to come up with the leading predictors of C suite success. Technical skills were important, they found. But the leading predictors were the ability to walk into the unknown. To deal with ambiguity. To discover. To take a step forward, to gather feedback and adapt. That's what we need to do right now. We need to take a step forward, gather feedback, and adapt again, to be driven by discovery.

I thought I was pretty good at this, this whole driven by discovery thing. I mean, it's one of my accelerants, of course I'm going to be good at it! Until I [interviewed Brené Brown for our podcast](#). I was prepping, I was reading all of her books, and she said in one of her books, "Here's a test that I want you to do." So I said, "Okay! I'm going to do the test. I'm preparing for this interview. Let's do it."

She suggested that we go to people and ask them – what do I do when I'm feeling vulnerable? Meaning, what do I do when the outcome is uncertain? When there is risk of emotional exposure in some way? Basically, when I'm discovery driven? When I'm playing where no one else is playing, what do I do? She said, "Go and ask your truth-tellers.

So, I did. I asked my husband. I asked my daughter. So what did I find out?

Well, they told me that I get hypercritical. That I micromanage – well, actually, my son said you nano-manage. Which, okay – neither of these is good, right? I'm hypercritical and I micromanage? I nano-manage? So, I definitely have to work on those, but these are indicators. These are reminders. These are things that tell me – you are walking into the unknown right now. Which is what we're all doing.

So you are going to have your own things that you do. Your own things that your truth-tellers are going to tell you that you're doing when you're walking into the unknown. But now you know if you're being hypercritical – "Oh! I'm having that feeling of being scared." If you're nano-managing – "Oh! I'm having that feeling of being uncertain." Remember how we talked about the failure piece – be kind, be compassionate, be gentle? Now you've acknowledged them. Now you're aware. You've got to do something about them. But then, you keep moving, keep going, because when you're scared and lonely, it means you're on the right path to disrupting yourself.

So here's what I want you to do. Once you've taken a step back to reflect, like we talked about in the guardrail #5, now it's time to take a step forward and make a plan for today. Then, at the end of the day, you will have gathered feedback. Did you do the things that you were going to do? Maybe there were two things, three things. Keep it very simple. Very minimalist. Did you do them? Did you not? If not, why not? Now adapt. And then make a plan for tomorrow.

We all make plans for the future, but choosing a disruptive course, choosing to see disruption as an opportunity to create a new future, not to compete with your past means you choose the unknown. You play where you've never played before. You take the wheel because you are driven by discovery.

So this is the framework of personal disruption. You, number one, you take the right risks--you create, you don't compete. You play to your distinctive strengths, knowing that right now, one of those is your ability to love, and then you go love those people that can only be loved by you. Number three, you embrace your constraints--for a disruptor, a constraint isn't a check on your absolute freedom, it is a tool of creation. Number four, guardrail number four, you battle your entitlement. Remember, people, not objects, what not why questions, and gratitude. There is always something for which we can be thankful. Number five, step back to grow. As you are forced to take step back, perhaps many steps, how are we going to slingshot forward? Number six, give failure its due. It's shame that

limits disruption, it's not failure--look for the ROF. And number seven, be discovery driven--take a step forward, gather feedback and adapt.

Seven guardrails as you navigate today, seven accelerants into tomorrow.

As we wrap up, I want to restate the John Maynard Keynes quote---“The social object of investment is to defeat fear.”

So, dear friends. Invest in the future. Keep things circulating. Flowing. Disrupt yourself today. There will be opportunities for new growth; we will emerge from this historic moment better prepared for the challenges of the future. Which will come.

Sarah Ban Breathnach said, “Both abundance and lack exist simultaneously in our lives, as parallel realities. It is always our conscious choice which secret garden we will tend.”

Keep planting cherry trees.

If there's a cherry tree that you'd like to plant in the heart and mind of someone else, will you forward this episode on to them?

In the meantime, here are two immediate investments we are making. The first is in our podcast guests. A number of the people that we've interviewed over the last few months are authors. They have spent months, if not years - it may be their life's work to put their ideas on paper, to organize their ideas, to invest in us. It would be easy to pull these episodes, to say they aren't relevant. But they are. Because their ideas are about continuing to circulate, to live, about how to disrupt who you are to slingshot into who you can be.

So, over the next few weeks, we're going to have some unplanned, some new, some discovery-driven episodes in order to be able to address what we're experiencing right now, but we're also going to continue to air the episodes of the authors that we had interviewed previously to share their ideas and to invest in them and you.

The second thing we are going to do to invest in your future, is to make three signed copies of our book *Disrupt Yourself* available. So when you leave a comment in the show notes and say, “I am planting cherry trees for my children's children,” you will be eligible for one of these signed copies.

Thank you for being here, for listening, for sharing--thank you to our sound engineer, Whitney Jobe, to our production managers, Macy Robison and Melissa Ruddy.

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

Today.