

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPISODE 160: BATTLE ENTITLEMENT

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast, a podcast where we provide strategies and advice on how to climb the S Curve of Learning in your professional and personal life, stepping back from who you are to slingshot into who you want to be.

In Episode 80 of our podcast, we started a series, on our seven-point framework of personal disruption. In Episode 100, we did a deep dive accelerant #1, take the right risks, we moved to play to your distinctive strengths in Episode 120, to embrace your constraints in Episode 140, and now we are to Episode 160, we are talking about battling our entitlement—the S Curve Killer.

Of all of the accelerants, I find myself having the hardest time pinning this one down because I'll think I have a sense of what it is, what it means to battle entitlement, what it looks like in other people, what it looks like in myself. And I wrote about it in *Disrupt Yourself*, but the more I live, I live a little bit longer, and then I say to myself, "Oh, it doesn't just look like this now. It looks like that too."

So in listening to this episode, here's what I would like for you to do. I'm going to share my current thinking with you on the process and then it's over to you. I want to hear what you think entitlement is and what you think it looks like to battle it as you climb your own S curve of learning. So right up front, I want you to be thinking and processing and know that I want to hear from you, for you to share your thoughts, either in the show notes and the comments, or you can send me an email at [wj@whitneyjohnson.com](mailto:wj@whitneyjohnson.com).

All right, so I realize that the word entitlement is fraught, and there might be a piece of you that's going to just stop listening right now because who wants to listen to an episode about battling our own entitlement, but stay with me because if entitlement is a curve killer and I believe it is, if then we can wage and win our battle against it, then it becomes the biggest booster. It becomes the most important and powerful of the seven accelerants.

So let's start with definitions. What do I mean when I say battle entitlement? Well, this is where we battle our belief. We wrestle to the ground and we win against this insidious belief that we are fundamentally more or less valuable than another person. That we are of greater or lesser worth than someone else or anyone else. It's believing that we are all created equal, endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights, including the pursuit of happiness.

Regardless of where we are on that S curve of learning the launch point, the sweet spot, the high end, regardless of who we are, we need to take up arms and we need to battle our sense of entitlement.

Let me tell you a story. On February 1st, 2003, the Space Shuttle Columbia broke up as it returned to earth killing the seven astronauts on board. When they investigated, they learned that a large piece of foam had fallen from the shuttle's external tank, breaching a wing of the spacecraft, basically creating a hole in the left wing, which allowed gases from the atmosphere to seep into the shuttle, leading to the loss of sensors and eventually the shuttle. It was a tragedy. And it was avoidable. The problem with the foam had been known for years and no one had done anything about it. Why hadn't they done anything about it? Because they were smarter than the average bird. Because according to Paul Hill, former head of mission control operations at NASA, they were entitled, here's what he had to say, in [episode 105 of our podcast](#):

**PAUL**

Columbia was one of those mistakes that had been building in the community for years. And part of it is the same as a similar cultural erosion that happened before Apollo 1 and Challenger. And that is, we started making more and more decisions with less and less technical rationale because we started gaining confidence. When I say we, I mean as a community, right? It wasn't like these three leaders over here, or these engineers. It was a community evolution.

And we started buying into the fact that, you know, we're pretty good at this. You know, we've been flying shuttles for 10 years, 20 years. We manage higher energies than most people can even wrap their minds around. And we do it mission after mission, like falling off a log. We're good. Everybody knows we're good. And so, you know, sometimes when we see problems we can decide whether or not it's a big issue without really having to put a lot of work into it because we're good. I mentioned that already, right?

So we started making more and more technical decisions like that, and we would use words like, "our engineering judgment," "engineering experience-base tells us." And what we really meant was intuition or guessing, and we gave ourselves credit for it because we were in this very difficult profession, had been very successful at it for a long time. And most other people were, were in awe of our ability to do it. Not that we have the only jobs that people feel that way about.

The first time I even heard this described in more philosophical terms was from Marshall Goldsmith in his book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. I also, as you know, I've had the privilege of hearing him describe it person. And that's the paradox of success. And NASA's experienced in manned space flight is a perfect example of that at work. In fact, in Columbia's case, it was that foam coming off of the tank wasn't capable of doing damage that, even if it hits something it couldn't cause any kind of critical damage, but it also wasn't capable of hitting anything, and we had no data to back that up at all.

Hadn't done any analysis, no tests, no anything. Intuitively, it made sense because it's just this foam that was about the size and density of a loaf of bread. How could that possibly knock the most critical or most complex machine that we've ever built out of the sky? Of course on the other hand in junior high you could probably do the arithmetic that would say, you know, if I hit you in the chest with a loaf of bread at 700 miles an hour, it would probably do dramatic damage. We likely would have thought of it that way, had somebody posed that question for the shuttle except for the fact that we had also, we also had concluded it's not capable of hitting shuttle, which as, as you know, is not true because it did happen.

And the real irony is foam had been hitting the shuttle for decades. That's how we had chipped the tiles on the bottom of the shuttle. And we knew it. And yet somehow in our brains, the entire community failed to make that right connection. And we did it for all wrong reasons, largely because we were buying into our own success, and we stopped doing the same things in every decision that had made us successful all along, which was being very methodical and making sure we can answer "why" on every one of our conclusions, not just "Well, because we're good." Because you're good is never the right answer.

Entitlement is the sneaky, sneaky saboteur of your S curve climb. It's not a matter of if, but how. It comes in many guises, like when life isn't fair and when you decide that the universe is in your debt because life wasn't fair and at some point it won't be fair for every single one of us. And we decide that we are owed. That others should somehow pay for what we don't have. That is being entitled. We all have our feelings hurt, but to wallow in anger and resentment or discouragement, it causes us to not move up, but to slide back down our current curve - maybe even be pushed off.

Then there's a flip side. When everything's working, things are humming, but right at the very moment when we've got the cognitive, the emotional, the financial bandwidth, the bandwidth period to further progress, to help others progress, we find ourselves tempted and resisting, saying, "I've built all of this. I deserve my cake. This is the way things will and should always be." Personal disruption is about moving our ego aside.

After sitting through one of our half day workshops, one senior leader shared, "You know, I've been in my role for about nine years. I realize now that I need to step out of this role so that I can give one of my star employees the opportunity to step up." In other words, this isn't the way things should always be.

Another senior leader shared that he had a very talented up and comer in her twenties and she was pushing for a new opportunity. He was resisting. "Too young, hasn't earned it." He then texted his team and said, let's make it happen. He said, "I realized I was saying no because I was being entitled." So he stepped back from his ego. This can be hard to do, especially when you've been successful, because what we've seen in the research is that the more successful we are, the more we actually think we deserve our success.

Here's a quick test. Have you ever been trying to get somewhere - driving perhaps, and you say to yourself or out loud, "Why did they pull into my lane?" That's being entitled.

Or, have you ever shown up late to a meeting - ever? Guilty! When we show up late, we are saying that we are more valuable than everyone else in the room. We are saying that we think we're special. Again, battling entitlement - it is the hardest accelerant of personal disruption. You may never master this, but if you're aware of it, if we're aware of it, we will grow faster and we will move up our S curve of learning more quickly.

Peter Drucker observed that, "You will achieve the greatest results in business and career if you drop the word achievement from your vocabulary and replace it with contribution." The essence of Drucker's idea was that you change your focus from me to we. You swing the spotlight from you and you shine a floodlight on the people around you.

As in basketball and hockey and soccer, you focus on getting the assist, not just being the final goal score. Or as Tom Rath, Amazon's bestselling author of all time, [shared in podcast episode 147](#), quote, "Contribution is a sum of what grows when you are gone." End quote.

So what we're going to do next is talk through three specific kinds of entitlement, cultural. Intellectual and emotional entitlement, and their antidotes will then ask the bigger question, which is why? Why is it so important that we set aside our ego, that we battle entitlement in order to climb the S curve of learning?

So let's start with cultural entitlement. We all need to feel we belong. A sense of belonging. The ability to reaffirm our values gives us the confidence to climb a curve. But if that sense of belonging becomes so clique-ish that we refuse to look beyond our borders and think poorly of other cultures or ideas, then instead of an upward climb, we're on a downward slide.

Being culturally entitled prevents us from looking at the world outside our culture. We see the world through a single lens and we believe we've got everything figured out.

One interesting perspective on this is from Luvvie Ajayi, the New York times bestselling author of, *I'm Judging You*. In episode 33 of our podcast, she talks about doing something called a privilege walk, a walk that helps us see how there are things. There are opportunities that we get in this life that have nothing to do with anything we've done. Here's what she had to say.

**LUVVIE**

So a lot of people hear 'privileged' and feel like it means that they haven't worked for anything they've gotten. And I always want to get people to switch that idea that privilege is more of the things that we were...that we have or that we were born with that we have nothing to do with. So, I wrote about it in my book in terms of talking about the privilege exercise that I did in college that kind of changed my idea of how much power I walk into a room with, but also kind of humbled me. And so, I was a counseling center paraprofessional 2 ½ years in college and our first semester of training was all about us getting to know who we are and the space that we take up in the world. And one of the things we did was a privilege exercise. And the exercise that...actually, I've actually done it at different conferences - it's really heart changing. I've done it with groups of 50; I've done it with groups of 20.

Everyone stands in a straight line across a room and you read off statements and people either step forward or step back. So a statement would be like 'Step forward if both your parents have college degrees. Step back if people can't pronounce your name. Step back if you've ever worried about where your next meal is coming from. Step forward if you feel you can walk safely at night by yourself.' You know, things like that. So, after 20 or 30 statements are read off, you stop and you look around the room and see where you are in relation to other people. You see who's behind you, who's in front of you, who's next to you. You see if you're surprised by any of it. Did you expect to be further up? Did you expect to be further back? I was thinking because I'm a black woman, I was going to end up in the back pack after this exercise was done. I was thinking, "Yes, for sure I'll be in the back." When the exercise was done I was in the middle. I was surprised why, because my class privilege, because I'd never been poor. I'm Christian, I am straight, I am able bodied. All of that pushed me forward—further than I thought I would. And it clicked in my head that "Oh, I walk in a room with way more power than I was giving credit for." The person behind me who was white ended up behind me because she was poor, she was lesbian, atheist, and had a chronic illness. So, that exercise perfects the idea of privilege. Because we think privilege means you're lazy; you haven't done anything. No. Privilege means you are in a starting line that you didn't even walk to.

So I always say that it's important for us to one, acknowledge what these privileges are in our lives. That's important.

**WHITNEY** Yeah.

**LUVVIE** Once you know it, that's a good thing...way to start. But also using the privilege that you walk with to pull people closer to you, people who are further behind. So, if I'm the most powerful person in the room, my job should be to make sure I'm speaking up for somebody who's less powerful than me.

Recognizing our privilege and the ways in which it might lead to feelings of entitlement is an important part of successful personal disruption. Most of us think that we are open to swimming in new waters, but frequently what we think is being open to new people and ideas is more a refinement of what we already think. When new ideas don't reinforce what we currently think, we literally reject them.

One of the best ways to battle our sense of cultural entitlement is to transplant ourselves to a new culture. Think back to biology. Do you remember high school biology? You'd grow cells in a Petri dish, and after a few days, those cells would use up the nutrients, produce byproducts, some of which were toxic, so you'd replay the cells into a new Petri dish. We live, we work in a cultural Petri dish. It's comfortable, we belong, but if we want to avoid stagnation, even toxicity, we may need to transplant ourselves to new cultures.

A practical means of doing this is just to open up your network. A closed network reinforces your sense of belonging, but you also hear the same ideas over and over again. An open network can be uncomfortable, but you're more likely to have breakthrough ideas.

Let's look at the science. There was a study that looked at 18 million research papers written over a decade, and they divided them into low and high impact papers. For the low impact papers, which basically means they got cited, not very much - 100% of their sources were the usual suspects. Sources inside their networks. For the high impact papers, 85 to 95% of their sources were from inside their network, but five to 15% were novel. People in ideas outside their network. When the academics were willing to transplant themselves intellectually, they were two times more likely to have a high impact paper. Open up your network, and you're two times more likely to have an impact.

Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas speaks about this the *Other*. These are people outside of ourselves whom we encounter directly and are impacted by. It's our interaction with them that disrupts us. When we come face to face with an "other," we are confronted by their difference from us, and it's the recognition of these differences rather than the similarity that causes the disruption for us. It forces us to re-examine ourselves. Levinas says, "I am not free to ignore the meaningful world into which the face of the other has introduced me." He also asserts that the request of the other in this initial meeting is that we not kill them. There are literal examples of this, but the figurative ways we kill each other are more applicable here. Backstabbing, undermining, taking credit that rightly belongs to someone else. The opportunity for us though, is this - in front of the face of the "other," I always demand more of myself.

One quick way to think about cultural entitlement is to watch your pronouns. In her book *Writing to Change the World*, Mary Pipher says, "When we're in trouble with pronouns, we're usually struggling with us versus them issues. Pronoun choices indicate who we stand with, who we stand against, and who we choose to call us."

Think about the people you interact with, people who you consider to be the "other," what pronouns are you using? Who is them? Who is us? And how could you use your words to transform them into us?

So the antidote to cultural entitlement is to transplant yourself to new cultures, literally and figuratively, to recognize that when you encounter someone who is not like the other ones, that that's an opportunity to demand more of yourself and then watch your pronouns.

Here's a story that illustrates this. Brooksley Born was the first female president of the Law Review at Stanford, the first female to finish at the top of the class and an expert in commodities and futures. She was brought in by the Clinton Administration to run the commodities and futures trading commission, the CFTC, a little known regulatory backwater.

Soon after assuming the reins, she became aware of the over the counter OTC derivatives market, a rapidly expanding and opaque market, which she attempted to regulate. But her attempts to regulate derivatives ran into fierce resistance from the then Fed Chairman, Alan Greenspan, Treasury Secretary, Robert Ruben, and Treasury Secretary, Larry Summers, who all prevailed upon Congress to stop Born and limit future regulation. Or as the New York Times described it, they shut her up and shut her down.

In retrospect, their resistance wasn't surprising. Social psychology research indicates that we as human beings are prone to search only for confirming evidence and ignore disconfirming evidence. In the case of Born, it was the 90s the markets were doing well. The country was prospering. It's easy to see why no one wanted to hear what she had to say. Throw in the fact that the disconcerting evidence was coming from a disconfirming person- she wasn't like Greenspan, Rubin and Summers - they were even more likely to disregard the data.

In addition to what is called confirmation bias, there's also something researchers call the endowment effect. We think our things are more valuable because they're ours. If I ask you to buy something, you may be willing to pay \$3, but once you own it, it's worth \$5. It feels more valuable. Same thing happens with our ideas. Your ideas are more valuable because they're yours.

One of the ways you know you might be struggling with intellectual entitlement is if you find yourself annoyed, defensive, or dismissive of a person or their ideas. In other words, you can have a growth mindset, believe that you can grow and change and improve, but you can still have a closed mind. We complain about silos, about fiefdoms in the workplace, in society, even at home. The only way to tear down these walls is to openly and listen and truly consider the ideas of others.

Here's some questions to ask yourself. Have you ever had a great idea and others wouldn't listen? How did you feel? In what situations do you find yourself defensive of your own ideas or annoyed and dismissive with the ideas of other people? Do you immediately brush off ideas from someone in a different pay grade? Write off people who are at the low end or launch point of the S curve of learning? And does disdain for ideas spill over into how you treat people?

One of the best ways to combat intellectual entitlement is to do the work of building consensus around your ideas. Have the humility to get others on board. Think about it - whenever you have a new idea, you're asking one of your colleagues to jump to a new S curve of learning. It isn't their curve. It's yours. To get them to jump to this new S Curve or idea, you need to de-risk it or better yet jointly create a new S curve - one that is both of yours - to be successful ideas don't have to be your ideas.

You may have heard of Napoleon Hill. He wrote a book called *Think and Grow Rich* after interviewing a hundred of the most successful CEOs of the Early 20th Century - the Steve Jobs, the Jeff Bezos, the Bill Gates of his day. Here's what Hill had to say, "The accumulation of great fortunes calls for power and power is acquired through highly organized and intelligently directed, specialized knowledge." Then he said, and this is important, "the knowledge does not necessarily have to be in the possession of the person who accumulates the fortune."

Being successful requires intelligently directed knowledge, but it doesn't have to be your knowledge. In fact, the more you want to be a talent magnet, and a person people want to work for people, a person that people want to be around, it likely won't be your knowledge.

So the antidote for intellectual entitlement is to listen to people who are on the launch point of the S curve, for example, a different pay grade, if you will, to practice getting buy in for your own ideas and to remember that being successful isn't necessarily about having the best ideas, but rather intelligently directing them.

That's intellectual entitlement. Now let's talk about emotional entitlement and what it looks like.

At the launch point, it's most likely to look or sound like, "I want this job. I want this opportunity because of what I can learn." We're asking, "What can this job do for me? Not how can I contribute?" Or it might be, "This is hard! This shouldn't be so hard," or "Why haven't I been promoted yet?" In the sweet spot, it may look like, "Things are humming! I'm the hero, but now instead of figuring out how to delegate so that other people can become a hero, I just want to be the hero some more." The high end, it may sound like "I've worked hard, I've paid my dues, and therefore this is the way things will and should always be."

Regardless of where you are on the S curve, emotional entitlement is when "it's all about me." Or "it's all about you," including, for example, when we don't hold people accountable for their work, we want to be well-liked instead of running our business or team well. When we don't hold people accountable, we slip a noose of entitlement around their necks. Or when a child, as in my child did this at one point during high school, pleads to stay home from school because they haven't studied for a test. There's a piece of me that wanted to say, "Yes, he'll like that. It will feel good. I will be his friend." When we don't allow the people who work for us to experience consequences or our children to experience consequences, we wrap a noose around their neck and around ours.

It's counterintuitive, but in that moment when we don't hold someone accountable, we're treating them not like a person, but an object. We're forgetting that just as I'm the hero of my story, you're the hero of your story. So is the person to your right and to your left.

David McCullough Jr., in a high school graduation speech in Wellesley, Massachusetts, Wellesley High School in 2012 the speech went viral and [I'll include a link](#), he had this to say: "The great and curious truth of human experience is that selflessness is the best thing you can do for yourself. The sweetest joys of life come only with the recognition that you're not special because everyone is."

I'm also reminded of when we had [Donna Hicks on the podcast in episode 92](#). She's a conflict resolution expert at Harvard, and she said that when people are in conflict, it's usually because they feel that their dignity has been violated. They have been told in some way, you don't matter. When you treat others like people, not objects, when you treat them with dignity, you are battling your entitlement.

Something that I've found helpful in battling my own emotional entitlement is to focus on what vs. why questions, as we discussed in the [podcast episode with Tasha Eurich in 103](#). There's a tendency for us to believe that thinking about our self means that we're self-aware, that we know our self. Incidentally, her research suggests that the more special we feel we are, the less self-aware we are. Meaning when we ask why questions looking for why something happened, what are the causes of our thoughts? This isn't actually being self-aware. It's actually a victim mentality where we rationalize, justify, and explain away. It's an emotional black hole out of which we may never emerge. To battle this kind of emotional entitlement. We ask what questions? What's going on in my head? What am I feeling? What's another way to see the situation? What can I do to get along with my boss? What can I do to help the people I work with? What can I do better? "Why questions stir up negative emotions. What questions keep us curious," says Eurich. Why questions trap us in the past? What questions help us create a better future. Making the transition from why to what can be the difference between victimhood and growth. It's an important antidote to

emotional entitlement. People, not objects. What, not why. And then one other suggestion around this is to give people praise.

In Gretchen Rubin's book, *The Happiness Project*, she says, the following, "People who are critical are often perceived as more discerning. We think of someone who criticizes us as smarter than we are. Although enthusiasm seems easy and indiscriminating, it's much harder to do. Enthusiasm, then, is a form of social courage." Giving positive reviews requires humility. When we praise people, we're battling our sense of entitlement.

Now, recapping, we've talked about cultural entitlement, about understanding the S curve you were born into, and the importance of jumping to new curves. Intellectual entitlement, the importance of recognizing that when you have an idea, you're in effect asking a person to jump to a new S curve, so how do you pack a parachute so that they're willing to jump? And we talked about emotional entitlement, treating people like people, not objects.

Before I tell you a story that encapsulates these ideas, here are five more general tips for setting aside our ego.

Number one, humility. This begins with receiving feedback, letting go of our addiction to being right. Dr Judith Glaser said that whenever you argue with someone and when your brain floods with adrenaline and dopamine, you feel dominant and invincible. So, the next time you disagree with someone, you argue again because you are addicted to being right. When someone gives you feedback, say, "thank you."

Number two, correct prior poor entitlement actions. Since most of us have spent our entire life becoming very skilled at being entitled, one simple thing you can do is think for just a moment about people you're close to, whether family or friends - what is something that they do for you day in and day out that you've come to expect them to do? Now take a moment and imagine what would happen if they stopped doing it. How would you feel? How would your world come undone? Just a tiny bit. Now that you've got that in your mind, say thank you to that person for doing the thing that they do.

Number three, learn phrases like "I'm wrong." One entitlement battler shared, "I was raised in a family where I never heard my father or mother say they were wrong. I want to change that. When I'm wrong, I try very hard to say that I am." So use words and actions that reflect, "I'm sorry, I'm wrong. I'll try not to repeat it."

Number four, beware impatience. When you find yourself getting impatient or annoyed with people or even a situation, this may be a signal that you are preferencing your emotions and needs above others.

And number five, guard against rationalizing. This is a key enabler of entitlement. Be aware of your unique self-justification mechanisms. Usually, there is some element of "I am more important," embedded within the thought process.

Those are five general tips. Say thank you when you get feedback, say thank you to people it would be easy to not say thank you to, learn to say I was wrong, beware impatience and guard against rationalizing.

Let me now tell you a story that beautifully illustrates this battling of entitlement, this setting aside of ego.

Ken Widmaier's first job out of college was at the Marriott Hotel in Chicago in the housekeeping division. He was determined to make his mark, so he made sure that the rooms were clean and if they weren't clean, he would track the housekeeper down. Eight months in, the manager says, you've done such a good job. Your boss is getting promoted. I'm going to promote you, but don't tell anybody. It's going to be announced at our next department meeting.

Ken's on Cloud Nine. Department meeting arrives. There are about 75 people. His direct boss, the promotion is announced and everyone claps. Now it's Ken's turn. He stands up, he walks to the front of the room thinking, "This is my moment!" His promotion, it gets announced and no one claps. Most people booed. They booed. Stunned, embarrassed, one of the worst days of his life, he's going to quit. But as he reflects, he realizes - 75 people can't be wrong. I must be doing something wrong, and if I don't figure this out, I am not going to be successful or happy. He tears up his resignation letter. He goes back to work. He seeks his employees out. He finds out that people hide from him, that they feel used like a tool. He determines this time not to make a mark, but to change. He commits to find five positive things a day about his staff, real things, substantive things.

A year later, he's promoted again. Same department where most people had booed. Now they clapped.

Today, by the way, Ken Widmaier is the chief operating officer of a hotel management company that manages Marriott Properties.

As we wrap up, I want to now share with you why I think that setting aside our ego, why battling our entitlement is so important. In *Disrupt Yourself*, the book, I talked about battling it, but I never talked about why. Why is entitlement such a strong deterrent to climbing the S curve and therefore battling it so much a booster or accelerant?

Well, here's what I am coming up with, or here's what I'm thinking right now and here's where I want to hear what you think.

In accelerant number one, in the personal disruption of framework, we talk about taking the right risks. About playing where no one else is playing. The importance of creating not competing, that one of our greatest longings is to create, to create our future, to create ourselves. When we're entitled, we're not creating, we're competing. Because what is entitlement? It's the belief that someone else is fundamentally more or less valuable. It doesn't mean that we don't have distinctive strengths because we do. A hand just like a foot can do certain things uniquely well. But is a hand or a foot more valuable?

It does mean that when I start to believe that other people matter more or less than I do, I'm competing. I'm competing with them to be better than them or to stay better than them. And when you and I do that, we stop creating. We stop looking at the possibility of who we can be.

I recognize that there are all sorts of philosophical underpinnings to this statement. I get that, but this is what I believe. When I'm entitled, when you're entitled, we're competing. When we're entitled, we're seeing other people as objects. When we're entitled, we stop creating and we stop allowing other people to create.

Let me give you a couple of examples. First, when I see another person as a "less than" object, I start to believe that I know what is best for them. My advice monster comes out, as Michael Bungay Stanier cleverly describes it. This can happen with people in a developing country, with people who report to you, with your children. When we start thinking, we know what is best, we treat them as an object. Or as Liz Wiseman would say, we diminish them. They become an object to help us feel smarter. But what if we instead ask things like, "What's the challenge for you here? What do you want? How do you want to solve this? How can I support you in solving this?"

Because in that moment, when we ask those questions, we are believing and we are conveying to them that we believe that we are equally valuable. In giving space for that person to create their future, you are creating yours as well. One that includes both of you, parallel play S curves, where you both have the power to create.

The second example is when you see the person as a "more than." Like when I interviewed Simon Sinek for our podcast, his work has influenced my thinking, which is wonderful. We all have people that we admire, but when I started seeing him as more than, he became an object. Which apart from the, "I want to know this person because

they can help me get what I want." And we've all had people do this to us, so you know what it feels like. But I digress. When you see people as "more than" you're competing with who they are, and we not only take away their space because we want that space, trying to play where they are. Rather than, again, asking that question, "What are you going to create? What does that look like?" Because as you may recall, amateurs compete. Professionals create.

When we battle our entitlement, when we set aside our ego, when we disrupt ourselves, we are working very hard to believe that every single person on this planet has thoughts and feelings, hopes and dreams that we are here to create, not compete. You can compete. But compete against yourself. The only contest is against yourself, against your potential.

You are made to act, not be acted upon, and that is true for every person you have ever or will ever know. We are all made to act.

The good news is that the glass isn't half empty. It isn't even half full. It's full. It's overflowing. There is enough, more than enough. Wallace D. Wattles said, "Every living thing must continually seek for the enlargement of life. In the mere act of living, it must increase itself. A seed dropped into the ground, springs into activity, and in the act of living produces a hundred more seeds. Life by living multiplies itself. It is forever becoming more. It must do so to continue to exist."

In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, there is a nighttime scene in the camp of the English soldiers just before their battle with the French. In disguise, King Henry wanders among the soldiers trying to gauge their morale. Because they don't know who he is, their comments are unguarded. A conversation ensues about who bears the responsibility for what happens to the men in battle, the King or each soldier. One soldier says, if the King's cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes the crime of it out of us. Not surprisingly, King Henry, still in disguise responds, "Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own." This strikes at the heart of what it means to battle entitlement. If we want to be an agent of disruption and agent of change, first we must become its subject.

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