

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 164: DAVID PETERSON

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself Podcast, a podcast where we discuss strategies and advice for moving up 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. I'm your host, Whitney Johnson, and today my guest is Dr. David Peterson, Director of Leadership and Coaching at Google since 2011, Chief Transformation Officer at 7 Paths Forward, one of the original members of the Marshall Goldsmith 100, and one of the most influential coaches in the world.

One of the fastest ways for us to slingshot forward is to have someone help us see our blind spots, both the good, and the bad, and a coach can help us do that. As I said, David Peterson is one of the best, and it is my absolute pleasure to have him here today on the podcast so that you can learn from him about how to navigate these uncertain times. David, welcome.

DAVID Thank you, Whitney. It is so good to be here chatting with you.

WHITNEY So, David, tell us, where you grew up and what it was like to grow up where you grew up?

DAVID I grew up in a small town in central Wisconsin, near a small town called Wausau. I actually grew up in Rothschild, Wisconsin, and it was almost ideal in the sense of, we lived near the woods, it was close to town, I would walk to school, but then, in the afternoons and weekends I could run around and play like crazy. So, that part of it was almost ideal.

WHITNEY As you think about who you are today and what you care about today, what kind of impact do you think your childhood, that idyllic childhood, or setting, had on you? Or has had on you?

DAVID I think it shaped me in two ways. One was, it was a small town, pretty quiet. I did a lot of reading, and in the summers I would read a couple of books a day. I think, in our little library I read half the books they had. So, I was an avid reader, and, I loved that. So, I just consumed a wide variety of things, and that exposure to ideas and thinking and a great perspective of the world. On the other hand, this was a small, very homogenous town, so it didn't actually have any firsthand experiences with what I think of as the broader world.

And I grew up in, pretty much, a blue-collar kind of class, and I would read about London and Paris and think, "Oh, wow." You know. "I probably will never, ever get to go to those places." And so, I had both this expansive view of the world and this really, really narrow limited view of the world. Like I thought that the coolest thing in the world would be to go to New York one day. Now, of course, I travel to these places fairly frequently.

WHITNEY

That's one thing that I love is that we have these dreams as children, and some of the dreams don't happen, but sometimes we accomplish and achieve and go places and do things that are beyond what we could have even imagined. And, and so I'm wondering, do you remember what some of your dreams were as a child?

DAVID

So, yes. I was very drawn to science and I wanted to grow up and be a scientist. But then, when I was in my early teens, I fell in love with music and I wanted to become a rock star. Sadly, I desperately lacked the talent. I still play guitar. Music is still a really big part of my life, but I was thinking about, in my life story, and people would ask me, "What do you want to be?" And what I said, you know, "Oh, I think this." And, and they said, "Well, what's your plan B?" And I said, "This is plan B." Being a rock star was clearly not in my calling. So, this is plan B. And I thought if I ever write an autobiography, that's going to be the title of it. This Is Plan B.

WHITNEY

How has music and that love of music influenced who you are and how you live your life today?

DAVID

There's two things. I'll tell you one funny story. I was going to a conference on organizational psychology, and in the application form they asked us, you know, what are the three topics you're most interested in? And so, it was just this wide-open question, and of course everyone else was saying, "Coaching," or, "Leadership." I wrote in there, "Beauty, love and music." And a friend of mine was working in the conference and he saw those answers and said, "That has to be David."

DAVID

And so, that list changes from time to time, but when I think about what I really care about, those things are what matters. What do I want to be when I grow up? I never thought about careers in that way. I thought about, "I want to help people learn. I don't know what job that is, but that's what I want to do. I want to help people learn." And that turned into a mission statement several years later when I started writing.

I wrote a couple of books. *Development First, Leader as Coach* with my colleague, and we wrote our own mission statement that was, "Make learning and development faster, better and easier for people and organizations." That was like, "Faster, Better, Easier and more rewarding for people and organizations." And so that kind of passion, it still shows up today.

I was talking with one of my friends yesterday who said, "You're a coach. What do like about that?" And I said, "I never think of myself as a coach. I think of myself as someone who develops better leaders. And coaching is one tool to do that." So, I'm not sure that I actually answered that question. But, the other peeps that I was interested in coming back to, was, music was one of the things I just explored. I had a passion for this, and so I would listen to different kinds of music, and then, about five years ago, my wife and I were driving down to Southern California to visit her, her parents. And we were listening to a playlist that I had prepared.

Every song that came on, I said, "Oh, I love this song. I love this song. I love this song." And I realized, "I'm only listening to stuff that I love. I need something new and

different." And so, I started listening to only new music that was released in the last month or two. And so, for the past five years, about 90% of the time I'm listening to music, I'm listening to something I've never heard before. So, I find new music, I put it on my playlist, I listen to it. I highlight some of the songs that I like, but it's kind of continually exposing me to new and different things. And it satisfies a level of curiosity, but also has exposed me to such amazing, new musicians that I really love.

WHITNEY

Wow. Talk about building your muscle to jump to new S-curves, because I mean we know from our research—you know, have you ever read the book by Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, I think it was called?

DAVID

I have not read it.

WHITNEY

Ah! I think you would really like it. One of the things he said is that we tend to go back to music that we liked in high school because that's when our brain was really forming and it was a deeply emotional time for us, and so we feel most connected to that music that we listened to when we were 14 to 18-years-old. And so when I hear you saying, you know what, you're only listening to music released in the last five years, you're allowing yourself and almost requiring yourself to develop emotional connections to music and what is happening today, and not being anchored in the past.

DAVID

Yeah. I'm only listening to music released in the last few months. And, the other 10% of the time, I'm listening to the stuff that I've recently identified as favorites over the past few years. But, yeah, you're right, it is building new connections. And that has been part of my life, intentionally or unintentionally. I think this is what, what came out of growing up in a small town where I didn't feel like I belonged that. Like, "This is not the life I was meant to live." And so, I started pursuing new things.

And I started intentionally putting myself into new and different circumstances. And probably the most transformative moment was when I went into, I can't remember if it was my dentist or my doctor's waiting room, and I looked at these magazines in the lounge area. I said, "Who would read this?" And, I meant that in a derogatory way. You know-

WHITNEY

Right.

DAVID

I was looking at all these Guns and Ammos, Home and Garden, Cat Fancy-er, you know, and, of course, they're all appealing to something. But, who would read this? And then I asked that same question again, out of curiosity, like, "Who would read this?" And so, I just started picking things up and looking at them from the lens of, who would find this interesting? And so, let's just imagine I picked up Cat Fancy magazine. And I picked what looked like the least interesting article, and I read it and tried to put myself in the shoes of someone who would be reading this and loving it.

And so, for me, that was, that was transformational in the sense of, building that empathetic ability to see things with fresh eyes, to put myself into somebody else's position, to be able to step out of myself and appreciate different things in different ways. And, you know, I continue to do that in lots of different ways through the years. Sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. But I have to say, that has enhanced my ability to coach diverse people, to work with really different folks, to appreciate values, to see things from very different perspectives.

WHITNEY

Wow. Okay. So, I've two questions for you. Number one is, what's a magazine you've read recently, and number two, what's on your playlist right now?

DAVID Ha! Great questions. Well, the only magazine I read regularly is The New Yorker. And part of what I like about that is, it is, it covers such diverse topics. Things I would never go look for but reading them is just fascinating. And again, it's that intentionally seeing, getting exposure to very different ideas and different perspectives. I'm constantly looking for metaphors or examples that illustrate important principles, and I've often, with that mindset of going into something, like, "Yeah, I might learn something," but I'm really looking for cross-disciplinary examples. Cross-disciplinary trends and patterns.

WHITNEY Mm. Okay. Playlist. What's on your playlist? Right now.

DAVID What I've noticed in the last two years, is there's so much good music coming out by female artists. It seemed that forever indie music and then music that I loved was dominated by males, but the last couple of years, like Sharon Van Etten and Billie Eilish were really much better known. I don't know how much your listeners will be familiar with them, but, Billie Eilish has just blown up in the world in the last year or two.

Phoebe Bridgers is another one I love, who's just been putting out all kinds of amazing music. So, the Best Coast, a great album, mostly built around a female singer, and she's been doing phenomenal music, and I love her new album. So, there's all of this music that's coming out now that is really exciting.

WHITNEY Mm. Okay, everyone, so you've got some tips from David on, if you want to develop more empathy, pick up a magazine and wonder, "Who would read this?" Lots of new things to listen to. Lots of new S-curves to jump to, as if we don't have enough right now, but we'll talk more about that in a minute. talked a little bit about your purpose or your why statement. Tell us how you became a coach? How did you find this other career?

DAVID So I went through my college years, I realized, you know, I love ideas, but I love helping people. I want to make a difference. I got into organizational psychology, it really hit a chord for me. I'm working with smart, brilliant leaders facing really difficult complex and constantly changing challenges, both intellectual, idea-related challenges, people-related, business-related, and so I was constantly learning, and turning that around into, how do I help others learn better and faster? How do I help these leaders become more effective leaders?

And, the way that I think about my purpose now, when I am coaching, over the years my time horizon has gotten longer and longer. A lot of people love coaching because they love working with leaders, they love helping them, and, it's easy and you see things getting better. I've shifted my focus now to where I see my mission as helping build leaders who will be the world's greatest leaders 20 years from now. So, thinking about, "How do I find people who will still be actively leading 20 years from now?"

Yeah, lots of people want... "Oh, I want to coach the CEO. I want to coach this person. I want to have this kind of impact." I'm like, "I don't." I want these... the- the- the 30-year-olds, the 35-year-olds, who are going to be CEOs of big, cool... They don't have to be big, but cool organizations that are making the world a better place, and by helping them be better leaders, their organizations are better, the lives of the people they lead are better, the, the services they offer, all of these things benefit from that. So, there's a, a multiplication factor. But I want.., the- the picture that I have in my head is, 20 years from now, one of these leaders is going to go, "Oh, that's what David was preparing me for."

"That's why he made me do that."

So, I want that kind of lasting impact.

WHITNEY

Mm. You know, David, when I hear you say that, I can just hear the energy and the passion in your voice, and it's just so exciting. So, I have a couple of questions for you. One is, I want to take a step back briefly because you talk a lot about VUCA and I want you to tell people what VUCA is, because really what you're saying is, you're preparing people to manage in a VUCA world, which we're certainly experiencing right now. Can you talk to us a little bit about VUCA.

DAVID

VUCA is an acronym that has been used to describe the conditions of this crazy kind of world we live in today. It's volatile, constantly changing. It's uncertain. We don't know what's going to happen next. It's complex. Things are interconnected in ways that, that there are a lots of unintended consequences. And it's ambiguous. Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. So, in thinking about VUCA, I actually tried to make better sense of it, because this was just a word that was made up to describe all these crazy conditions.

But what I decided and what makes sense to me, is that the volatility, in the world we live in, it's more just... change. It's not volatile in the sense of explosive, but it's constantly changing and it's changing at an exponential rate, which we're not really prepared to deal with. And so, volatility or constant change is best understood rationally, like, "What's happening? What are the implications? Can I see and anticipate farther into the future?" Complexity is the same way. Step back and try to make sense of it rationally. How are things connected? How are things making sense? The uncertainty and ambiguity really are best understood and addressed emotionally.

WHITNEY

Huh.

DAVID

Uncertainty creates fear and discomfort and anxiety in people. If you think about the world today, like, "I don't know what's going to happen to me. What does this mean? What are the implications?" You can't answer those questions, but leaders have to be able to address the emotional fallout from people feeling that way. So, finding that balance of the emotional connection, the empathy, the human relationships, and the intellectual or rational component of, "Let's make sense of this. Let's project forward. Let's see what's going to happen. Let's learn how to make better decisions."

And so, it's following those two threads of helping leaders become more emotionally attuned and engaged and more empathetic in their leadership as well as being able to make better decisions in conditions of constant change and complexity.

WHITNEY

Does that underpin then your coaching philosophy? Like, so, when you think about your coaching philosophy, how do you describe it to people?

DAVID

I don't really describe it to people very often. So, I don't have a simple, clear answer to that, but the philosophy I have is that, number one, my goal is to help people become better learners. That's really what is at the core of helping them prepare for this future. So, I'm less concerned about, can you run a better meeting tomorrow? You know, lots of people could help you with that. But I want to know how you're going to build a better process for meetings in your organization 10 years from now. Yes, I'm always trying to plant seeds there, so I'm really thinking about playing the long game. So, thinking about the longer time horizon. So, a big part of my philosophy is, helping people develop the ability to develop themselves.

Second is, there's so many rules that people learn in coaching, and it goes back to why I never really describe myself as a coach. I do coaching. I use coaching. I think of myself as someone who develops leaders. And so, I'll use whatever tools I have in my tool kit. Teaching, telling, advising, questioning, confronting. Like, what is it that this leader in front of me needs right now? And so, there's, there's a... I call it twofers.

In every conversation, I'm trying to think of how can I give, how can I create a two-for-one? How can I give them something, help them, you know, develop or learn or see something that has practical value, right now? Because they need that. But also, how am I planting the seeds for that longer-term development? So, I have to be thinking about, what's something they can go back and use tomorrow, and go, "Wow, that was useful. I want to go back and see David again."

And, something that, you know, in three months or three years, they'll say, "Oh! That actually applies to this challenge today, too. That's awesome." And then again in 10 years, so that, that, you know, threefers, and, is even better, but are always trying to operate simultaneously on two different wavelengths.

WHITNEY

Okay. All right. Head exploding, just slightly. So, a bunch of different questions.

Do you ever give your clients, say to them, "I want you to go read these three magazines," when you're trying to get them to be more empathetic? Do you ever give them those assignments? Or, "I want you to go listen to these 10 songs, or five songs."

DAVID

Here's an assignment that I might give somebody. Like the next time you're in a debate with somebody, and it's especially with a direct report or something where they don't have your level of knowledge or expertise. And, I say, "Listen to yourself. Now, if you were the you, you remember when you were 20-years-old, how would you hear what you just said to them? If you were 20 years older, how would you hear what you're saying to them now?"

And so, it's getting them to shift their perspective but keeping it close enough so it's still you, but it expands like the time horizon that they can look at it, he- "Oh, when I was a 29-year-old kid, I would have said you're an idiot." Yeah. So how can you say that in a way that the person you're talking to now isn't rolling their eyes and thinking that exact same thing? How would you speak to somebody who is more like you were five years ago than you are today, because that's who you're talking to.

And, can you put it into a longer-term perspective? So, it's about shifting perspectives. Seeing things in new ways. And the more capable they are of seeing things from different perspectives, the more likely I am to encourage them to look at this from... Let's say you're a teenage kid who loves computers in India. You know, what are they interested in? How would you relate to them? And so, for people who are inventing new products, or they are thinking about marketing campaigns, I have this concept called triangulation. Can you look at something from three widely different perspectives?

So, if you're making a tough choice, that's another assignment I may make. Go ask somebody who you don't like how they see this issue. Go ask somebody, from a completely different business domain, what they would do in your circumstances. Go ask a friend of your daughter's how they would think about this. You know, so you just, you just start to expand the perspectives and see things from very, very different lenses. And it doesn't necessarily lead to a different decision, but it often leads to a much more thoughtful kind of decision.

Same way, you know, I use techniques about, one from the Heath brothers, their book, *Decisive*. You know, what decision would you feel best about 10 minutes from now, 10 years from now? Oftentimes, it's like 10 years from now, I won't even care. Okay. Let it go then.

WHITNEY

How do you decide, "All right, I'm going to take a bet on this person because I believe they're going to be this leader in 20 years," or, "I think I'm going to say no." Thoughts.

DAVID

So some of my clients come to me through many different channels. So, I meet with all of our newly hired senior leaders to help onboard them, and some of them, you know, I just I'm talking to them I think, "Okay, this person is going to struggle, but I can see this awesome potential in them." And, so, for me, that's like, "Yup, I'm just going to keep this going as long as I they're getting value and I'm getting value." Some come in, I help them land effectively, answer a few questions, but they're solid, they know what they're doing. I don't see like they're going to change the world in 10 years, so I hand them off or send them on their way. And they do very well. But I don't see where I can make a unique difference in them. Some of them, I'll just be working in a program or something where I'm working with a much wider range of people. I do some key notes on different topics, like accelerating your growth and how you scale your organization.

And there are, from time to time, people will come up and engage with me. They're passionate about this topic. They are curious. They want to learn more. Some of them, I just kind of adopt and we continue coaching, formally or informally. There's one person, very young, diverse, gentleman, who came in through one of our diversity programs for coaching. I volunteer in that, and it's supposed to be a six-month program. I've been coaching him for three, four years now. And he's a great example of somebody, I think he just turned 30, but I see tremendous potential in him. And he's a perfect example. Never would have crossed my path otherwise, but I see the opportunity to make a big difference here.

And then, finally, I get asked to work with some of the more difficult and challenging people, not necessarily challenging in different ways, but really demanding, like super smart, very picky. So, whenever one of our senior leaders ends up not liking a coach they're working with or rejects them or won't work with them, I usually get called in--

WHITNEY

It gets tossed upstairs to David.

DAVID

Yeah. Yeah. All those things come to me. The most difficult, picky clients end up in my court, usually. But that's where I can usually make a unique difference. I don't want to coach people that somebody else could coach just as well. I want to coach where either because of my time horizon or, you know, my understanding or my coaching capability, whatever it is, I think I can actually make a unique difference.

WHITNEY

I love it. Which goes back to your mission statement. So, you have mentioned before, about coaching someone through the unknowns of the pandemic, through a VUCA situation. And you talked a little bit about performance mode versus learning mode. Can you share that with us because I think it's so good and I want everybody to learn from you.

DAVID

This comes from Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset*. I've been following Carol's work for decades now, and I really, really love what she's been able to do. But she differentiated a performance mindset, which I summarize simply as, people want to get it right. They want to know, "how do I get the A in this class?" And then their learning or growth mindset is the people who want to learn and grow. Now, short-term, the performance

mindset, especially with structured tasks, almost always does better. So, in college, it kind of cultivates a performance mindset. "I want to get the A. I want to graduate. I want to be top of my class. How do I do that? What are the rules?"

And, the B+ students with a learning mindset, they're far more interested in just learning, expanding their knowledge and really understanding how things work. And so, they perform worse on average, but they're more adaptable in new and different situations, they're less fazed by failure, and these are the characteristics that leaders really need as they're going to face new, difficult challenges that they haven't faced before.

And so, there's a notion I call the DNA of VUCA. We were just talking about VUCA a moment ago. The DNA of VUCA is diversity, novelty and adversity. So, if the future is challenging and difficult and requires agility and adaptability to circumstances you haven't seen before, the only way to really get good at that is to intentionally put yourself into those exact kinds of situation. So, trying to get, you know, working at different business, working at different country, where you're work with more diverse audiences, put yourself into new and different and challenging situations. That's where you and reflect on them, which is also a necessary component of learning.

But that's where you stretch and get comfortable with, the- the notion, "I don't know how to do this." So, someone with a strong performance mindset, when they're in a situation where, "I don't know how to do this," they tend to freeze or, you know, go back to old strategies. People with the learning orientation say, "Oh, I don't know how to do this. I'm going to figure it out." And that's exactly the mindset that you need for the future. It's that comfort with stress and strife and change.

WHITNEY

Yeah. And what's interesting is, I think, I remember hearing you say this, is this idea of, right now we're all on a brand new S-curve of learning, and we've got this opportunity sort of unparalleled to learn, and yet, I think you said that, because so many of us have a performance mindset right at this moment where we could be learning, we're actually performing. And so, there's the potential that, in the midst of this massive upheaval and disruption, we don't actually learn very much. Is that, is that accurate?

DAVID

Yes. That's one of the factors. So, we're, we're so stressed, it's... the questions like, "How do I get through this?" You know, "What do I do?"

And, so that, that mindset of figuring it out, getting it right, drives us. But the other part of this is that, the more stressed you're under, the more demanding the circumstances, the less bandwidth you have mentally just to reflect and apply to learning. So, you're not asking yourself that question, "How do I learn from this?" You're just trying to get through it. And that's the default reaction. So, helping people cultivate a sense of mindfulness and awareness, "I am going through a challenging circumstance. I'm going to pay attention to this. I want to see what I can learn. I want to see what happens next." And then, when this is over and we did get through it, people go like, "Ugh, glad we got through that. Okay. What's next?"

And they don't say, "What about the next pandemic?" So, one of the things I'm encouraging people right now to do two things. One is, using disruption to question the way things have always been done. A really good example now is, people using video conferencing, virtual technology for meetings and, yeah, working from home, all of that. Do we want to go back to going into office buildings? You know, could we save money on real estate? Could we save co- costs for travel time, disruption? You're sitting in traffic. Thinking from first principles, what is really the best way to work?

What work is best done from home, virtually, versus in an office with your colleagues in person? But really using this disruption to question how we do things, what makes sense going forward. Because otherwise we just stay stuck in our grooves, and I think having disruption enables you to think more creatively about this.

WHITNEY

All right. So, David, when you need to be coached, who coaches you? What do you do? Who's the coach's coach?

DAVID

It's a fabulous question. Early in my coaching career I set a challenge for myself, because I was really trying to build my capabilities, you know, asking the right questions, helping people learn and grow. And, I set a challenge of having every single conversation that I had be a learning experience for me and for the other person. And so, imagine, you know, like, right now, I think you're asking some good questions, I'm saying some things, we're both probably learning.

But how could I go into any single conversation and make it a learning experience for both of us? And so, I had to think very differently, like, "What could I learn from this person?" You know, one of the things I was doing at the time was, we were doing a lot of assessments. So, I was working for a company that did leadership assessments. And I would always save a few minutes to ask them, like, "What's the best lesson you ever learned?" Or, "What can you tell me about supply chains?"

And, after about five years of that, of really, you know, always dedicating five minutes for my own learning, I started calling that my personal MBA. That's where I learned business from, you know, learning some new thing from each of the leaders that I assessed. And even though I'm interviewing them and gathering data, I'm also trying to think, "What is that I could share with them that might have them leaving here better positioned to be an effective leader?" So, instead of just me, "I'm here to assess you," it became, "I'm here to assess you. I'm here to learn. And I'm here to help you learn something."

And so that intentionality. And so, now, I see virtually everyone as my coach. I don't do the same thing of, of trying to learn, you know, from every single conversation, but I love the social network that I have. They're all my coaches. I really try to learn from my peers, my colleagues, my friends, sometimes just by observation, but very often from saying, "Hey, can you help me with this?" So, it's, it's a mindset about cultivating a learning community more than defining someone as, "You're my coach."

So, just like I don't like to be limited and defined by, "You're my coach," I look at other people as, "You're someone I could learn from," and maybe that would be coaching me, maybe it'll be teaching me, but I'm less concerned about what you're doing and more about how are you helping me learn? How am I helping you learn?

WHITNEY

I love that. All right. So, David, where can people find you? Where they're listening and they're like, "I want to learn more. I want to engage with him more." I think you have a course coming out. Just tell us about how people can learn more from you, and, and, and you can learn from them.

DAVID

Yes, indeed. Yes.

So, one place is the 7 Paths Forward site. The number seven, 7pathsforward.com. One word. You can find more of my articles, some presentations, more information on what's coming up. I've been doing a series of web-based training with WBECS, so, WBECS.com. We're launching a new program right now called Journey to Mastery. So,

this is helping good coaches become great coaches, and that will... there're people are signing up now to launch, I think, in July, but Journey to Mastery at wbecs.com. It is part of the ACE series of programs, Accelerated Coach Excellence.

So, we have a foundations course, a Journey to Mastery course, and then what we're calling the Virtuoso Level, so really, really working with the world's best coaches to help them continue to grow and learn in community. So, two places to learn more.

WHITNEY All right. So, 7 Paths Forward, and then also go to the WBECS website. That course sounds fantastic.

DAVID Yeah.

WHITNEY All right. Any final thoughts that you would like to share with us as we wrap up?

DAVID So, a tool that I keep hearing from people has been helpful from, for them, and that I think is particularly relevant now, is something called the reflection calendar, and you can find that at the 7 Paths Forward site. But, it's taking a minute a day to just reflect, "What, what was my life like today? What can I do tomorrow to make it better? How can I be more effective as a human being, as a leader, tomorrow?" Taking two minutes every week, step back and say, "What did I learn last week? What do I want to learn next week? How do I want to show up?" And then, three minutes every month.

So, it just goes, day, week, month, quarter, year, triannually, quinquennially, and decadelly. So, at every time frame, you kind of step back and look farther back and look farther ahead, in context. Like, "Who am I becoming? What kind of human do I want to be five or 10 years from now?" And, in a fast-paced life, it seems paradoxical, but, it's even more important to slow down, step back, see the bigger picture.

And so, developing that habit of reflection, on different time frames. So really, really, really helps people stay grounded in times like this. Helps people stay focused on what really matters. And that's kind of the lesson that I would like to leave with people here, is, think about what really matters to you. Are you leading the life that you want to lead? What can you do differently tomorrow that will carry you forward to become the person you want to be, and live the life you want to live, 10 years from now?

WHITNEY David Peterson, thank you so much for being with us.

DAVID It was a pleasure, Whitney.

One of my favorite things about revisiting an interview to create the outro segments is the opportunity to reflect. As David said at the end, reflection is critical to learning and really internalizing the things we are trying to learn and internalize. Asking yourself those questions - what was my life like today? What can I do tomorrow make it better? Framing our learning with reflection will help us figure out the way forward. Which is critical given that we've collectively been pushed to a new learning curve. As we talked about - when you are at the launch point of an S-curve, you have something to prove. You shift into performance mode. You want to show what you know to as many people as you can. The problem is, at the launch point of the curve, it's important to be in learning mode. You're in a new situation. You don't know what is happening or what you

are doing. And if you can be vulnerable enough to stay in learning mode, absorb as much as you can, you'll grow more quickly than if you are in performance mode. If you want the A in the long run, be willing to get the B+ in the short-run. And since the launch point is uncomfortable, the more quickly you can grow, the better.

And, I'm going to make a more concerted effort at looking at the world from a different perspective. I just listened to some of the new music David recommended, including Billie Eilish. Yesterday I downloaded an app called Picture This that allows you to identify flowers—I now know what Indigo looks like. Given that I have a 19 and a 23 year-old in my house all summer, my children—I can ask them to introduce me to what they are listening to? Reading? Watching? Which I haven't done. Besides the Korean show on Netflix Romance is a Bonus Book, she says with a wink. In doing those activities, the most important thing is the wondering and reflecting - who would listen to this? Who would read this? What metaphors and ways of looking at the world will help me see things from a different perspective?

With so much so much uncertainty about what might happen in the next few months, the more reflection, learning and empathy we can bring to the table, the better.

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Thank you again to David Peterson for being our guest, thank you to sound engineer Whitney Jobe, producer Melissa Rutty, managers Sarah Duran and Macy Robison, content contributors Virginia Kivlighan, Jennifer Richardson, and Nancy Wilson.

I'm Whitney Johnson
And this is Disrupt Yourself.