

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 176: DARRELL RIGBY

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast, I'm Whitney Johnson. Here we discuss strategies and advice on how to climb the S Curve of Learning in your career and life, which means disrupting who you are now to slingshot into who you want to be. When most of us think about disruption and jumping s curves, we think about a grand plan, a new career, a new business, something totally different than what we've been doing. Today, we're talking with Darrell Rigby, a good friend of mine who has had an incredibly successful career while at the same company for four decades. I wanted to drill down on that, because this goes against how people think they're supposed to navigate growth and their S curves. It's hard to think of corporate lifers as disruptors, but Darrell is. Not only has he carved out new challenges of the same employer, he's also an expert in the philosophy called Agile, which involves practices such as more nimble teams and quicker customer feedback. These practices can help employees jump to new S curves while also bumping up productivity and innovation inside of the organization. Darrell is a widely published author in the business trades, including the Harvard Business Review, Wall Street Journal, BusinessWeek and the Financial Times. When Darrell isn't writing and speaking about agile and innovation, he's advising clients about how to implement these practices at the firm Bain and Company.

Whitney Johnson: Thank you, Darrell, so much for joining us.

Darrell Rigby: Whitney, it is entirely my pleasure. It is so nice to hear your voice.

Whitney Johnson: Well, I am just delighted that you are with us. So often, I will have people come to me and they'll say, I can't disrupt myself unless I change jobs. I have to change organizations. I have to change firms. You haven't been doing the same thing. Can you just at a very high level, walk us through how you've been able to disrupt yourself?

Darrell Rigby: It's a great question, and you're right that I haven't changed companies, but I've changed jobs many times. And so there were several times at Bain when I was given offers to leave and go do other things. Before I left, what I always did was to ask myself, how could I make this job at Bain the perfect job? And if I could do that, well, then I may as well stay. And so I would think about the job offers I had and I would think about how to make my experience at Bain better. And I would go to the senior executives and say, look, I have these options. I like this

place. I love the people here, but I would love to do some different things if you would allow me to do that. And every time I did, they said, "Sure, we'd be willing to give it a try. If you're interested in that."

Whitney Johnson: I want people to get to know you a little bit. So can you just tell us a little bit of your story about your upbringing and what interested you when you were growing up?

Darrell Rigby: Sure! I was raised in Southern California, was sort of a California snob who would be happy to talk to anybody about the delights of going to the beach and then going to inner tube in the snow in the mountains on the same day. So I loved California. I went to school in Utah at Brigham Young University and then went back to go to business school. I never intended to go into business. When I was in junior high school based on watching not just one but a couple of episodes of Perry Mason, I was convinced I should be a lawyer because you would get paid for solving mysteries and catching bad guys and debating shallow thinkers, what could be better than that? But I had a few mentors that said, Darrell, I think you're, you're going to be better at business than at law. And so I changed once I got to college and started majoring in business and have loved it ever since.

Whitney Johnson: I've heard you speak and you're a pretty good debater. Do you remember what some of your mentors suggested to you that they thought, you know, I think you'd enjoy business more?

Darrell Rigby: I do I actually had one mentor who was an investment banker, and he said you could do law. I'm sure that's right but you have a mind that is curious. You have a mind that is good with numbers. I think you could do business. And if you will change your major from prelaw to business, I can guarantee you a job in investment banking anytime you want. And I grew up in a sort of middle class family, but not having a lot of money. The thought of having a guaranteed job was just very intriguing to me. And as you know, investment banking can be a fairly good career. So I figured I would give it a try.

Whitney Johnson: Did you end up doing investment banking after undergrad?

Darrell Rigby: I did not. No, I went to the Harvard Business School and I was one of very few that went to the Harvard Business School with no business experience and a lot of investment banks required business experience. And so when I was applying for summer jobs, they were not very interested in me. And I had a number of interviews. A lot of them thought I was too young and inexperienced. Bain and company decided to give me a chance at a summer position that worked out so well that I just signed up full time at the end of the summer and have been consulting for 42 years.

Whitney Johnson: When you think about all of these different personal disruptions that you've done inside of Bain, and I know you wouldn't describe it that way, but I would, which was the hardest sell? Meaning you went to one of your stakeholders and they were like, I don't know, Darrell. That's, that's a big leap. Which one was the hardest one for you to persuade them that this, in fact, made a lot of sense for the organization?

Darrell Rigby: The hardest one was starting up the innovation practice because at the time they did not have an innovation practice and there were a lot of people that thought Bain isn't really an innovation kind of firm. We don't even think of Bain as that. And to me, that just felt wrong. It felt to me like any strategy, any vision, had to include innovation to be successful, and I was convinced that it was an essential part of any change management program. So it took a little bit of selling. It took a little bit of convincing because I had to get some funding to do it. But I in the end just said, let me try it for six months and if it doesn't work, I'm happy to find something else. But if it does work, then we've created a new platform, a new leg for the company that could be good for our clients and good for the people that want to work on it, and so they agreed to let me try it. And then as I was messing around with innovation

and how to apply innovation, actually in some retail businesses, I came across agile practices in the technology departments of many retailers. At first it scared me. I didn't like all of the jargon. It felt like huge keep out signs of don't mess with this. And it was a language I wasn't convinced I wanted to learn, but eventually decided I had to do it. And then as I learned more about it, I figured this is not a not just a better way to do technology, this is a better way to improve innovation. And so I began playing with taking it out of technology into new product development, marketing virtually every function in an organization and found that it worked.

Whitney Johnson: Hmm. I think it's interesting to the approach that you took of saying let's just try it for six months. We don't have to stay there, but let's test, let's experiment and see what happens.

Darrell Rigby: Yeah, I feel like there are too many people that are in positions at companies where they don't feel like they're having fun, they don't feel like they're learning and growing, and they feel like the only way to change that is to leave the company and find a different place. And I'm sure that can work, but unfortunately, a lot of companies have the same fundamental underlying bureaucracy, and I think a lot of people change jobs and end up at a different company and find that it maybe wasn't as different as they expected it to be. So I've always believed that before you leave a position, that you should ask yourself, what can I do to change this position, to take more personal responsibility and be a cause for your own experience and not just expect that if you go to a different company, somebody else will provide a better opportunity for you. I think you have to create those opportunities for yourself many times.

Whitney Johnson: And here you are. You've now created the Global Innovation Practice at, at Bain, and you've just co-authored a book called *Doing Agile Right*. And for the uninitiated, which kind of includes myself, can you talk people through what this concept is exactly? And, and specifically, how do you explain it to someone who's never heard of it before? They're like foreign language, don't know what it is. How do you explain it in a very simple way for people.

Darrell Rigby: You're exactly right. The problem with Agile, it is such a beautiful word that people often warp it to mean anything that they want it to mean. I often when I'm meeting with companies, I'll hear them use their description of agile. And I often feel like Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*, where he says, "You keep saying that word. I do not think it means what you think it means." That's true of agile, that people use it in so many different ways. But when I use agile, I think of agile as a mindset and also a method for improving innovation through deep customer collaboration and adaptive testing and learning. So Agile always begins thinking from the customer backward. What is the customer's problem? What is the customer's dilemma? What are they frustrated by? And then I listen to them very carefully and begin to think about ways to improve that opportunity to improve that solution. And I go about it through adaptive testing and learning. So, I'm getting back to customers very frequently. I listen to them and I say, if I heard you right, this is what you're looking for and I'll try to put a prototype in front of them. And they'll look at the prototype or they'll play with a prototype and they'll say, "Wow, that's kind of right. But you didn't get this right. This is very wrong. This does not work." And what I find is the sooner you can get back to them with very rudimentary prototypes, the more eager they are to help you. So as opposed to going away for a year or 18 months or two years and then coming back and saying, "Do you remember we had that conversation two years ago where you told me you wanted this? Well, here it is." And they say "Two years ago, I barely remember the conversation. But no, that's not the way the world works today. I now have a different phone, or I have a different need. And this is out of date. And you didn't hear me correctly anyway." So, it's very rapid testing, learning, prototyping and deep collaboration with the customer so that they say, "Yes, if you could help me to do that, I would be thrilled."

Whitney Johnson: So you've got the customer, you're going to the customer. You're asking them this question of what do you need? You're putting prototypes in front of them as quickly as possible. Can you just talk through some of the basic components or pieces or what structuring what does a team need to look like in order for you to get that prototype in front of the customer rapidly?

Darrell Rigby: Great, so that gets into the method of how do we actually set up a team to do this agile innovation. And we typically begin with the leadership team defining the objectives for the team and then assembling a team. Agile teams are small teams. They're typically four to eight people. They are multidisciplinary teams. So, they have the expertise of all the functions that you're going to need to solve the problem. You may have someone from marketing, you may have someone from manufacturing, you may have someone from technology, someone from finance, but you have all the experts that you will need to solve this customer problem, working together as peers, as deep collaborators to solve this customer problem. So they work very closely together. Normally, we would try to get them face to face. Now we're doing a lot of remote collaboration zoom meetings and using software to collaborate with each other, which also works. But they work together, and they work, in short, what are called sprints. So, every two weeks we will have some working prototype that we can review with a customer to see whether we're understanding their needs correctly or not. The team is 100 percent dedicated to the task, so they don't get distracted. One of the things we know is that multitasking makes us stupid. We do everything we can to avoid multitasking, so we prioritize and sequence tasks. We take the most important one first. We create a prototype, bring it in front of the customer. If they like that, we move on to the next feature or the next function. And when we have something that is ready for the market, even if it's imperfect, we get it into the market so that we can start getting benefits from it and we can start learning from those prototypes and then we'll continue to improve it just week after week, month after month.

Whitney Johnson: What happened and who were some of the first companies that adopted this?

Darrell Rigby: Good. There's a little bit of a misperception, actually, about how Agile got started, because a lot of people think that it started with software. But in truth, there was an article in the Harvard Business Review back in 1986 called the New New Product Development Game, where some professors, including Hirotaka Takeuchi, had been studying, in particular Japanese companies that were developing products that were very effective, doing it very rapidly by working in these small teams. And so they started studying people like Honda making engines and Fuji making cameras and Xerox making duplication machines. And they found that these teams, as opposed to working in what was called waterfall fashion or what they called a relay race, where first a group starts off by defining the problem and then they pass that problem to another team and that team starts to design a solution. And then another team develops the prototypes and then another team starts doing the manufacturing and then another. And so they're constantly passing it along like a relay race, like a baton. What they found is that these teams were doing all of those things, doing them together as a team and having extraordinary success. Now, honestly, that article didn't get a whole lot of attention, although it was brilliant. And then when the Internet hit, then software developers started to change the way they were developing software to keep up with the speed of this very dynamic Internet growth, a number of people started developing systems for doing that. One of them was a fellow named Jeff Sutherland. Jeff Sutherland co-developed with a friend named Ken Schwaber, a process called Scrum. Scrum is just a method of doing agile. But Jeff, in his process discovered this article and said, ahhh, this is how the teams should work. And the author of the article had described the right way of working very much like a rugby team who advanced the ball up the field by passing it to each other, constantly working and so in on honor of that, in honor of the rugby analogy, he called it the scrum. And then in 2001 there was a group of 17 software engineers called themselves rebels and they met in Snowbird, Utah. They drafted what they called the Agile Manifesto and laid out values and principles for how to develop software. And it took off it took off very quickly in technology departments

and IT departments. It was perfectly suited for that. It could change software quickly and continuously. And so it did take off in software. It took hold in software very quickly but that's not actually where it began.

Whitney Johnson: Agile is obviously really a great process, it drives innovation. But it's easy with something like this to say, you know, in with the new, out with the old. But there must have been something about the waterfall and the approach that people were taking in advance of that or prior to that, that was also valuable. Can you just talk to that very briefly? Because I think sometimes we want to just be very binary about it, but there was probably some very good things about the prior approach and why that was appropriate at that time.

Darrell Rigby: You are exactly right and it's an astute observation, I'm glad you asked the question. Because I think a lot of people try to position agile as the way to kill bureaucracy. Personally, I do not do that. I view bureaucracy as one of the greatest innovations in the history of business. It's what allowed small mom and pop shops to get to be large global organizations. Bureaucracy was based on sort of three fundamental concepts. One is you do have a hierarchy of approvals. The second is you have division of labor so that people do what they're good at. And then three, you have standard operating procedures that people conform to so that you have standardization, you have reliable, predictable products coming out at the end of the process. And that was very valuable, actually, for helping companies to expand. The problem is that bureaucracy got out of control. Bureaucracy is good for doing some things, it is terrible at doing innovation. And so it it overgrew, it over-expanded and displaced things. What my co-authors and I like to say is that every business needs to do three things to succeed. It has to run the business reliably and efficiently. It has to change the business rapidly and effectively. And it has to find a way to harmonize those two activities because they're complementary. They're not enemies. You need to do both of these things in order to succeed. And so there's a place for standard operating procedures. When I get onto an airplane, most of the time, I do a lot of travel, I want checklists. I want standard operating procedures. I want to know that the mechanics and the pilots have checked everything according to the list and that it's all working properly. You've probably had experiences like I have where I've had three takeoffs in a row aborted. And after a while you say, let's go back to the checklist and just make sure this is safe. And it's true in food safety. It's true when you're developing new drugs and you're testing things, when you're developing policies for combating harassment in the workplace or when people are doing accounting and reporting to shareholders. You want consistency, you want reliability, you want approval levels that make sure that things are done correctly. The problem is, if you try to do that too much in innovation, you kill it. You will probably remember as well as I do, a few years back, Lean Six Sigma was being applied to manufacturing operations. And it's a great concept for running the business, for manufacturing, because what you want to do is minimize variability. You want to cut defects, and it's great for manufacturing, great for running the business. The problem is in innovation, you want to, you need to, maximize variability. You want to create new situations and say, hmm, I wonder if this worked better or not. If it didn't, you stop it. If it did, you grow it. So that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to figure out how do you use the standard operating procedures in the running of the business day to day, and how do you use Agile to be able to change the business and get the people in operations? Because often those are the people who know more than anybody about what the problems are and how to fix them. So we rely very heavily on people on the front lines that are running these day to day operations to say, look, I do this every day. I'm convinced we could do this better. How could we do it better? All right, then let's run some controlled experiments, see if that's right, and we'll change the operation. So I do not view hierarchy and innovation as enemies. You need them both. The trick is finding balance and finding balance on an ever shifting base, on an ever shifting ground. And today, you might call that ground more like a roller coaster than just a shift. But that's the trick. How do I get the right balance on this ever changing ground in order to be able to run the business and change the business?

Whitney Johnson: So let's talk about a company that is doing a good job of not only running the business, changing the business and harmonizing the business. What is a company that you've worked with, that's doing this really well?

Darrell Rigby: Oh, there's so many good examples. And the thing I love about Agile is that it can happen anywhere in any industry. One of the companies that I like to study a lot is Amazon. And a lot of times people do not like to hear Amazon as an example because they say, oh, sure, it's a digital company and it was born. That's easy. None of that is true. First of all, Amazon does do some things digital, but if you look at their supply chain, their warehouses, their delivery, there's a lot about Amazon that is anything but digital. Second of all, they were not born agile. They were born very much like many other companies. And it was several years after they were up and running and had gone public that Jeff Bezos actually got this notion of maybe we should be working in smaller teams and moving faster. He called them two pizza teams, rather than agile teams. He called them two pizza teams because any team that could not be fed by two pizzas was too big. And so they would break things up until the team could be fed by two pizzas. And they really have figured out how to adapt quickly. Now, all that being said, Amazon is also an imperfect company, and that's what I love about them. They're often criticized for maybe being too hard on their employees or sometimes being too hard on the taxpaying communities around them. And I think there's truth in that. But much like all of us, we're imperfect, but we find ways to keep getting better and better. And that's what I love about Amazon, is they keep that urgency. They find ways to say we're not perfect, but our objective is to avoid becoming obsolete. Someday we'll go out of business if we don't keep changing and getting better. I love the transformation of Microsoft. There was a time when Microsoft was not an easy place to work, a number of people left. I had the privilege of spending some time with Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, at the World Economic Forum in Davos this past January and to listen to how seriously he is taking the transformation of the company to become an agile enterprise. One of the people in the conversation said that she had left several years before he took over and it was just too hard for her, and that listening to him almost made her want to come back. And he was saying, "Please do come back. You're the kind of people that we need here." But a complete reinvention of the ways of working in culture. Bosch has done the same thing in the production of dishwashers and power tools, starting at the top with the senior leadership team saying if we're going to make the organization agile, we ourselves have to become agile. And they wrote their own agile manifesto of, so how should we as an organization and the leadership team change our behaviors? And now it is trickling down through the rest of the organization.

Whitney Johnson: So Darrell, when you think about this, a couple of things are coming up for me. One is, you know, in a really competitive environment, what mechanisms do people put in place in order to avoid that? And what do you tend to do or prescribed in order to overcome that for, for the people that you advise?

Darrell Rigby: Yeah, it's a great question because one of the problems that we've seen with overextended bureaucracy is the creation of silos, is the creation of such division of labor that everybody believes, first of all, if I just do my job and everybody else just does their job, then we add it all up and at the end we'll have a successful company. It turns out that's not right. That in order to get innovation, you need people with different perspectives, bouncing ideas off of each other. One of the things that I've never liked is the idea when you go into a brainstorming session, we've all been in those sessions where somebody will start off the session by saying "Now, just to get the rules straight, there is no such thing as a bad idea." And I always feel like you must be kidding me. I've had 20 bad ideas just this morning. That is wrong. There are all sorts of bad ideas. The only way to figure out whether they're bad or not is to bounce them off of other people and get better by saying that's interesting. What if we did this? And on top of that, we did this. And so too many times in organizations we find silos that, they sort of get self-absorbed and they'll develop nicknames for the other silos. The finance department, they're the bean counters. And so you develop demeaning stereotypes of them; the legal department, well, that's the sales prevention department. They won't let us do anything. And so our department is the only one that has the right answers. The, the rest of those fools let them do what they will do, but we know the real truth. And the most fun thing for me has been putting together agile teams with different experts, very different levels of expertise and different kinds of skills coming together and behaving as one team. The truth of the matter is, I've played a lot of sports in my days, I have never

seen a truly great team of perfectly well rounded athletes. You don't. What you do is you have a team of people who are great at bringing the ball up the court, people who are great at rebounding, people who are great at posting up. And you don't want everybody to have the same skills. You want to capitalize on different skills. And watching people come together and learn to appreciate others, and when they go back to their departments and people say, "Yeah, that finance department, those guys are crazy." To have them say, "Look, I don't know about all the finance department, but I've worked with Joan over the last six months, and I won't let you talk about Joan that way. She's fabulous." They really do start thinking about a team as a collection of mutually beneficial strengths. And I've had groups that I've trained that talk together in a break and will say "I am never going back to the old way of working. I want to stay together with this group, keep us together. We're good. We know how to do this stuff." It is just a much better way of working.

Whitney Johnson: It sounds like it. And do you make it explicit, you know, no name calling, no bean counters, no sales prevention. Do you make that an explicit part of the process or does it just happen naturally?

Darrell Rigby: It's both really. Part of agile is recognizing that people are capable of doing more than most people expect. Too many executives have been trained to underestimate human potential. There's this notion that I'm a senior executive and therefore my objective, the way I add value to the company, is to be smarter than everybody else, see the future longer and more clearly than anybody else. So I formed the vision. I formulate the plan for achieving that vision, and then my underlings do what I tell them to do faster than ever before. And what we find is that is not the best way for a leader to add value to the organization. The best way for a leader to add value to the organization is to un-tap the 20 to 30 or 40 percent potential in individuals that nobody has bothered to find and unleash. For me, one of the most fascinating natural experiments going on during this terrible pandemic is there are a lot of agile coaches that will say, In order to become agile, here's what you have to do. First of all, you have to reorganize the entire company. Get rid of 30 percent of the dead wood, get other people working in agile squads and tribes and chapters and guilds. And you you create a new organization structure and, of course, you know, you don't have innovative people inside your company today. So you're going to have to change all the talent to bring in innovative people that you don't have in the organization today. Well, lo and behold, we've proven that that's wrong. That with the same organization structures that we've had with the same people in the organization, all kinds of corporate McGyvers are popping up in the organization saying, let's stop doing this and let's start doing that instead. Great idea. Going through the hierarchical approvals far faster, giving people greater autonomy, trusting them. And I think it should be an eye opening lesson for most executives to look at what their people are accomplishing during this period of time and say, how do we bottle this up? What are the lessons we've learned? How do we do this even after the crisis passes? Because we know that if we go back to traditional ways of working, it's just a matter of time before there's going to be a military conflict or another disease or a terrible hurricane or catastrophe. It's just these days it's crisis after crisis, Black Swan event after Black Swan event. We have to learn how to operate that way and not reinvent it every time another crisis hits.

Whitney Johnson: So for people who are listening to this and thinking, you know what, we need to adopt this in order to navigate over the next six months, certainly, and possibly after that as well. But for the next three to six months, what's one or two recommendations that you would make for people who are saying this sounds amazing, but I have no idea where to start?

Darrell Rigby: The first thing that scares most executives is what happens if we back away from decisions that we've always handled in a command and control way? It scares me to just blindly trust employees. And my response is you should not be blindly trusting your employees. You should be building trustworthy employees and helping them to develop the skills that are going to allow them to succeed. I have three children all grown now. One of the hardest times for me was when they were teenagers and I was being forced to make decisions about what to allow them to

do or not to do. And one of the things that was so satisfying for me was to identify situations where I could let them exercise good judgment. Strengthen their own decision making. And as they did that, and we both got more confidence in their ability to do that, it was easier to give them bigger and bigger and bigger decisions. I remember one of the greatest parenting lessons I ever learned was you're not trying to raise children to do what you say, you are raising children who will become better adults than you are and who will make the world a better place. That's your job. You're raising future adults. You're not raising children. And I feel very much the same way about employees that you're not trying to get them to do what they, what you say more explicitly. You're building the next generation of leaders in the company and the generation after that. Why not start today doing that? So I think giving people the opportunity to grow and develop and stretch, it makes them happier. It makes them more creative. It makes them more valuable. And frankly, it makes your own life easier. It makes your own life more fulfilling in the process.

Whitney Johnson: So if I'm hearing you then, if you've got a leader who's saying, I want to do this and they don't need to be the leader leader, they can just be a manager inside of a company or like, I want to do this, I want to try this. I'm not sure where to start. What I'm hearing you say is have them take a look at the five things that they need to get done in the next month and be willing to hand over ownership, real ownership to some of those projects, to people on their team and say, you run with it, you can figure this out and I will support you. Is that what I'm hearing?

Darrell Rigby: That's exactly right. You probably said it better than I did. A lot of executives feel good when their subordinates come to them and say, we have got a real conundrum here. What do you think we should do? And it feels good to be the leader that can sit back and stroke your chin and say, hmm, I've seen this situation a lot and here's what you should do and give them marching orders and away they go. It's very different to say, that is a challenge, isn't it? What do you recommend and how could we test that. And what can I do to coach you in the process as we do. So what are the barriers, what's getting in your way, how can I help? It's not initially a natural thing to do, but it is a much better way of getting work done and developing people at the same time, you have to create a few controlled experiments and agile teams are going to be working very, very closely with customers. And you're going to be bringing them prototypes every two weeks to see if it works or if it doesn't work. Honestly, how far astray could a team go in two weeks for crying out loud? It's only two weeks. Give it a try, see how it works.

Whitney Johnson: I think that's one of the beauties of right now, is that leaders and managers, you know, we all like to think we're in control, but we're realizing right now we're actually not in control so that that illusion is is not there in quite the way it usually is. And so we've been forced to let go. And that's part of where this whole agility has come in, is in that letting go, they're going and they're doing it and and they're experimenting. And then they're realizing, oh, wow, look at what they just accomplished, which is just exciting. All right, so let's, let's transition as we start to wrap up. What about the individual, for people who want to grow faster, to disrupt themselves, to jump to new askers of learning, how would you apply agile? How would you think about that? And maybe you've not thought about this before, so just riff for a minute. What are your thoughts?

Darrell Rigby: You're right, I probably don't think about that very explicitly, but I guess a couple of thoughts. One is at work. What can I do to be a more agile leader at work? Because one of the things that we've seen is frequently agile teams bubble up from the depths of the organization as opposed to being forced from the top down. And so, like you said, a lot of people, maybe they're not the most senior people in the organization, but you can still be a leader. You can still say in my department, in my team, what could I do to behave in more agile fashion? How could I show more respect for other people? How could I prioritize? How could I avoid multitasking? How could I take advantage and compliment people on the skills that I see in them and let them know I recognize that in them? I think the, the values, the principles of agile, could be applied in any work situation. I'm appalled that there seems to be a deal in too many businesses these days that says, yes, you're going to be miserable at work, get over it, because

I'm going to pay you enough money that when you get off of work, you can use this money and buy happiness with it. So you trade your hours to me, I will give you money and you can use money to buy happiness.

Whitney Johnson: So industrial age.

Darrell Rigby: It is. And it's a terrible fallacy. People that are happier are more creative and more successful and people that are more creative are happier. It's a self reinforcing loop that honestly, I believe anybody has the right to feel good about what they're contributing at work and agile ways can help to do that. And at home and with my family, I also find myself applying agile principles in particular to prioritizing and sequencing tasks. One and I, I feel terrible about this, but one of the lessons that I learned as a parent is that children are constantly running sophisticated conjoint analysis on their parents. And by that I mean they are trying to figure out what is really most important to the parent. So when my daughters would say, Dad, are you going to be able to come to my concert tonight? And I would say, well, yes, just as soon as I get this presentation done, or yes as soon as this Celtics game ends, that they're learning a lesson, they're saying, OK. And so in terms of dad's priorities, there's work presentations and then there's Celtics and then there's me and my concert. That's very sophisticated analysis but they're doing it all the time. And some of my fondest memories are the times when I've set aside things that seemed so important at the time to go in the backyard and play catch with my son. Or to leave a meeting early, fly home so that I could get to a choir performance. Those are times I will never regret. So prioritization and making sure that it's obvious to my family what the most important things in life are to me is one of the things that Agile has helped me to, without embarrassment, be able to tell clients or people who are accustomed to having people just say, yes, sir or yes, ma'am, being told I, I will get that done, but I'm going to do it after this. Which is higher on my to do list right now. Tough lesson and not always easy to make those trade offs, but always more valuable in the long term.

Whitney Johnson: Darrell, where can people find you?

Darrell Rigby: Well, the easiest way is possibly my email, Darrell.Rigby at Bain.com. And I love to have conversations with people who are serious about this. I'm also on LinkedIn. I am not as sophisticated at social media as you are. I think I have four or five Facebook friends, all family members.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, that's funny.

Darrell Rigby: And my granddaughter makes fun of me for sending emails to family members and friends rather than text messages. It makes them laugh out loud. I'm not as good at some of those things but email is always easy.

Whitney Johnson: So we'll know you're advancing when you don't just say d-a-r-r-e-l-l-r-i-g-b-y-@bain.com, you'll give people your phone number so they can text you. We'll know you're advancing and you're disrupting yourself. Any final advice or final words that you'd like to share?

Darrell Rigby: No, thank you so much for doing this. I, I'm honored to be on your program. I've listened to so many of your podcasts and I admire the way you do interviews and the people that you choose to speak with and I'm truly honored to be one of those. So thank you.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, it's been a pleasure. Thank you, Darrell.

One of the most compelling parts of Darryl's story is that he's found his own way forward, disrupting his own S curve while staying at a company where he loves to work, and then he's pulled that company into its own disruption. It can be more than OK to stay put and find a creative way forward that is disruptive enough. Which brings us to Agile. Daryl gave us a lot, certainly gave me a lot to think about as we consider bringing Agile into our workplaces. Companies are finding success with small, nimble, multidisciplinary teams. Think about Jeff Bezos and his two pizza Amazon teams. It's more than just a division of labor. It's about adaptive testing and learning through collaboration. And that brings out people's strengths, creativity and even happiness. There is untapped and underestimated human potential left inside of our organizations. Imagine what our workplaces could look like if we all found an agile way forward.

Thank you again to Darrell Rigby for being our guest. Thank you to our team, Jennifer Brotherson, Sarah Duran, Whitney Jobe, Virginia Kivlighan, Macy Robinson, Melissa Ruddy and Nancy Wilson. I'm Whitney Johnson. And this is Disrupt Yourself.