

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 179: ROBERT GLAZER

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, finding ways to disrupt who you are now, to slingshot into who you want to be. Today, our guest is Robert Glaser. Robert is the founder and CEO of the global marketing agency Acceleration Partners and people like working with him. So much so that Acceleration Partners has been awarded numerous company culture awards, including number four in Glass Doors Employee Choice Awards, Ad Age's Best Places to Work, Entrepreneur magazine's Top Company Culture and Ink magazine's Best Workplaces. Roberts book Elevate, which we'll talk about today, discusses how to strengthen our capacity so that we can get where we want to go, climbing our current s curves and jumping to new ones. His latest book, Friday Forward, offers us the inspiration to do that and is based on a weekly newsletter to more than a hundred thousand leaders globally. Welcome, Robert. I am so happy to have you join us.

Robert Glazer: Thanks Whitney, glad we can make it happen.

Whitney Johnson: So, Robert, tell us about where you grew up and what you wanted to be when you grew up.

Robert Glazer: I grew up outside of Boston, a town called Brookline, right outside of Boston, and I wanted to be a lawyer because my dad was a lawyer. I was good at arguing, so I figured I wanted to be a lawyer. That was even my plan going into to college. And then I interned actually at two law firms my freshman summer then and then throughout the year, and I realized I did not want to be a lawyer. So, you know, and part of it may have been like just it's just kind of like get coffee and weren't very nice to me. A lot of politics. And I just I was sort of turned off by the whole experience. And then that was right before I went abroad, which was sort of one of my transformative kind of experiences and worked abroad and really realized that I liked business. And once I figured that out, then I went a hundred miles an hour in that direction.

Whitney Johnson: Where did you go abroad?

Robert Glazer: I went abroad to Prague, which was pretty incredible, and it was 96, so really right as like, you know, a few years after the walls fallen and sort of democracy is taking over in Prague was kind of like a hot but very cheap place at the time, which is a great combination for a college student a on, I think beers were like 75 cents or something like that, but there was this kind of amazing thing going on. So, I ended up getting an internship at, at Arthur D Little, which was a consulting firm over there, and, you know, just saw all this Europe and history and

really, really got into it. And this whole issue of restitution was going on. So, the government was like giving businesses back to families that hadn't run them in like 100 years. And so, they had no idea what to do with them. And so that was some of the work that a, ADL was doing at the time, which was just really interesting.

Whitney Johnson: So you go over to Prague, you do the study abroad, you see restitution, you see capitalism kind of blooming and you find yourself business. This looks really interesting.

Robert Glazer: I had these two conflicting qualities. I had always been very entrepreneurial, looking back, but I was also very risk avoidant. I am sort of a rule following first born. And so I think those sort of were in conflict for, for me a lot. And I also, I was really like bored in school most of the time. Like, I did not enjoy parent teacher conferences. I still, I don't like going to them today as an adult because I have bad memories of them as a kid of the teachers, you know, it seems really smart, but just doesn't seem interested. Not, doesn't really pay attention. Very, very capable, he has ability that he's not using were things that were very often said. And, and I've never been good at being interested in something I'm not interested in. And, and so even the first two years of, of school were kind of like the prerequisite courses. But I had started to realize I really liked marketing. I was good at it. I started to, you know, really, you know, got business if you like business and you do like strategy consulting work, I mean, it's, it's you know, it's exhilarating, like it's, like new problem, new stuff. And I came back and I sort of figured out my major and I got like a 4.0 the next two years because I just loved all the classes I was taking. And that was kind of a switch realizing like I liked to learn, I just hadn't liked what I was learning for a good portion of my formal education.

Whitney Johnson: Is Prague the, the, the pivotal event that where you decided to disrupt yourself from being an underachiever to someone who's elevated? Or was there other events or was there sort of a series of events that contributed to this?

Robert Glazer: I think there were two. And I'd say to elevating maybe versus elevated, I would assume that I've achieved some, some level. I think it's a process. But yeah. So that was the first one, that was clearly a huge pivot. And the second one was a while later, a couple of years after Acceleration Partners was getting going, I went to a pretty intensive five-day leadership like training as part of entrepreneurs organization that's sort of like almost like Leadership Academy, they called it. And I actually thought it was going to be this whole thing where you come in, learn a lead and manage people like the outward facing stuff. And it was it was very inward.

It was designed to sort of break you down, think about who you are, what are your values. You can't lead authentically if you're not clear about, about yourself and what you want. I remember sitting in that and being frustrated that I, I knew and felt that I could do more and I just I wasn't doing it. And, and that was sort of my final commitment to sort of, you know, take the airplane thruster and just shove it forward. And a lot of this sort of logarithmic changes really happened after that. Those were the two big pivots. One was sort of towards, you know, realizing what I like to do and what I wanted to learn and getting into that. And then the other was just a commitment to kick it to a different level. I mean, I remember reading stuff to other people was sharing who are having, you know, big impact that I didn't even think was that good. And thinking like what? You know, I can do this, like, I must be holding myself back because I can't, I can't figure out why, you know, I'm not at this at the same sort of level with some of the writing and stuff I wanted to do.

Whitney Johnson: That's interesting. So, let's, let's talk about that for a second. So, you go to this retreat, you do a lot of inner work and it sounds like you were able to tap into your core values. I'd love to hear you talk a little bit about what are some of your core values, your stated values that you were able to discover because of that work. And then also talk a bit about the work that you're doing around core values today.

Robert Glazer: Sure, this is a big part of my book, *Elevate*, I'm a huge believer in this, I think this was a game changer for me. And now I actually built some curriculum to teach it to our up and coming leaders, because I think, again, if they're not clear about their own core values, it's going to impact everything they do. So, the disclaimer is that this is a process. You can start it, but I think this was sort of six to 12 months where I kind of narrowed down and figured it out. And when you get them right, it's kind of like this piece of paper, like with a with a trace that you start holding it up against a bunch of the wins and failures and things in your life. And it kind of like aligns perfectly. I think that's, you know, you get it right. So I, I was able to come away with five that, that I really felt were defining for me and those were find a better way and share it, which is kind of probably my most hierarchical dominant one, self-reliance, respect for authenticity, long term orientation and health and vitality. And, you know, one of the things about core values I've come to understand is I think they're there. They've been there since you were little. You just don't get the instruction manual, you know, when you're born saying, hey, Whitney, here's, here's how you work. You just know when they're crossed, you know, by a feeling when they're crossed or when you're sort of aligned to them. But when you can actually articulate them, what that does to you from a decision-making standpoint of saying this is clearly what I should do, this is what I should not do. And and so coming out of that, really what I did was I doubled down on things that were aligned, then I really pulled back on things that, that weren't.

Whitney Johnson: Share them again. So, you find a better way and share it, that was the first one. What, what are the second, third, fourth and fifth again?

Robert Glazer: Self-reliance. And I have always been super independent since I was a kid. I hate, I drive myself home from the hospital, like after surgery. Like, I just don't, that's, that's a deep one for me. Respectful authenticity. Funny. There was a report card I shared with my team that sort of from the written when I was five years old in preschool, that like really like you could see a lot of these things in them. And that was one of them. But as I gave very direct feedback to my peers who weren't really, you know, as emotionally ready to accept it at five years old as I might have been later on. Long term orientation, which is an interesting one for me now in the sort of covid world and then health and vitality.

Whitney Johnson: Ok, love it. Let's step back for just a minute. So acceleration partners, I mean, you're, you're well known to many people now because of your ideas and your writing, but you're also the CEO and founder of a company. Can you talk to us a bit about what Acceleration Partners does? And I understand you've been doing remote work for about ten years, so maybe comment briefly on that as well as sort of a, uh, an addition.

Robert Glazer: No one understands what we do. So I'll explain.

Whitney Johnson: I hope you do...

Robert Glazer: An example. I even wrote a book about it and most, a lot of people in our company gave it to their parents and said, OK, now they have some sense of what we do. But, but we are a partner and affiliate marketing agency. And we help companies, mostly companies who transact online, build these large digital partnership programs where instead of paying for a click or an impression, they recruit hundreds or thousands of partners. They sign them up onto a platform and those partners go promote their products and services across comparison review sites, deal sites, mom, bloggers, otherwise, and they are only paid, we're able to track all of it and they're paid on a conversion basis or when they sell something. So, as an example, let's, you know, let's these Amazon, like Amazon, has a very large affiliate program, probably millions of associates that started 20 years ago. You know, everyone links to Amazon. So, if you were to put the notes of my podcast on your blog and link to my books, you could create a link. You could sign up as an Amazon associate, you create a link and you get a commission for driving that sale to

Amazon. So, we helped build like big versions of these programs for, for large global brands. It's kind of a specialty. And that's, we actually started with the remote work out of necessity in the U.S., because the talent that we needed, it was kind of a niche industry and people were everywhere and we needed to get the talent. And then pretty soon we all realized, like, we like the flexibility. And we wanted to build a culture that had really high, you know, accountability and outcomes, but also flexibility and that we really didn't care the exact hours or where you worked or how you worked so long as clients were happy and you got the work done and we were getting, getting results. So it went sort of from an accident to sort of intentionally, you know, how could we build a world class culture that that's distributed and funny? It's something we sort of like, almost underplayed or hid for years, and now we don't do that anymore.

Whitney Johnson: Now everybody's saying, how do you do it? You raise something that I thought was interesting was this idea of accountability, because someone said to me the other day or a number of people have said, well, if they're not in the office, how do I know they're working? Which is a question that when you hear it, it's kind of gob smacking, because there is the assumption baked into it that if you can see their face, they're working. If you can't see them, they're not. I like what you said, is that when you do have remote working, when you do have a distributed workforce, you're using different metrics and they're probably better metrics. You're just focused on what did they produce or not. So anyway, any thoughts on that?

Robert Glazer: Yeah, I mean, I hear that a lot. Like, how do you know people working, do you use spy software? You know, all this stuff. I'm like, this is bad leadership, right? So, I, I had a boss years ago who I was pretty convinced, valued sort of just being in the in the office. He would get frustrated when people weren't in there, even though the culture had promised a lot of flexibility. And so, I didn't experiment. I came in early equal to or him or earlier for like a week or two and played games for two hours. And he was much happier with my productivity. So, if you value input or face time, you know, that's what you'll get. I think it's up to a leader to create clear goals, outcomes, accountability and hold people to that. And we understand this with sales, right. You don't pat the salesperson on the back who spent 14 hours on calls that day and didn't sell anything. You know, if they talk to the right two people and sold a million dollars, that's a behavior you will reward. So, there are clear outcomes for our business, our clients happy, are they staying retained? Are the programs growing? Because that's how that's how we get paid and they're measurable. And so, I think anyone who makes that statement doesn't really want to lead and manage. I think they're sort of abdicating the responsibility of a more outcome-oriented culture.

Whitney Johnson: Interesting. So, it's a very telling statement. So, Robert, when someone has metrics, there are outcomes that they are responsible for and they are not delivering. What does that conversation look like for you?

Robert Glazer: Yeah, so what's interesting is there's even accountability before that conversation. So, we practice a lot of the alignment work that has come out of like EOS entrepreneur operating system traction gazelles, Verne Harnish. And so we have these dashboards. We have our three-year vision. It's sort of broken down into quarterly goals, things that everyone's committed to, rocks for the quarter that is all in a public piece of software where everyone can see my goals, my commitments, kind of my weekly to dos, and it's all red, green, yellow lights, you know, every week. And the update meetings, the biggest problem people have in performance is when you think you're doing a great job and I think you're not. Because then, then, then we clearly haven't, we don't have alignment around the metrics or the goals or what we're actually looking for, right? And this happens a lot when people tell me they want to hire a sales and marketing person. And I'm like, be really careful about that. The marketing team is going to want them to market, the salespeople want them to sell. So even before that discussion, whatever it is that you're doing, will have been red or yellow, you know, for a while, and that accountability will be there. So, I'm, I'm everyone's biggest supporter and champion, but I also believe that, you know, you also sit down and have a discussion and say, look, the results aren't there. Is, is this, is this what you want to do? You know, is there

something that you, you need? Is there training that you need? When people know the goals and they can't hit them, they're very often just not in the right role. And when they're getting the right support and training and they don't want to hear that this goes back to the respect for authenticity, think it's hard for them to hear that because frankly, like it's easier not to disrupt yourself. We have this very non-traditional open transition program. And we've gone to people a lot of times and let's say Whitney, like when we think that it's time for them to do something else, we'll give them months and we'll help them find a new job. But I go to you and say, Whitney, this just it just doesn't seem like it's working, like you're in a sales role and you don't like to sell or talk to people. And I notice your analytical. And so, you know, we can try to work on finding something new for you or we can keep doing this. But everything tells me that has a very low chance of success.

Whitney Johnson: You're on the wrong s curve. Basically.

Robert Glazer: You're on the wrong s curve. If I sit down with you and have that discussion and we've seen this in our managers and say, Whitney you know, this just doesn't seem like the right role, like we could either look for role organization or maybe outside, maybe it's time to think about starting to look for something else and we can work on a long term transition with you. So this is not that your job's over today, but it's that it's not working. Or we can kind of put you on a performance plan. We can do some training, kind of been here before. They will choose that. They will, they will choose B in that scenario when everyone and all of us believe that A is the right choice for them. And I just think somehow, they perceive it safer not to change when what they're doing is is not and has not been working.

Whitney Johnson: So one of the things I heard you say is that you have the conversation, but there's a prior conversation and that is what are the metrics. Let's agree that if you're going to be on this s curve, I'm using my language. Here's how we know if you're accelerating up that curve or if you're not accelerating. And if we can agree on that, then the conversation later when someone's not delivering is actually a much easier conversation because it's not so much a question of did you do a good job or not? It's like maybe you're not in the right role because we know if you're in the right role, as you said earlier, if you want to do something, you do it. And most people are like that. If something is really interesting to us and we're good at it, we do it. And if it's not, we don't. But it's interesting for you to say that there's really that prior conversation. If you do frequently, you're not going to have to get to this. You're not performing.

Robert Glazer: There should be check ins and data is, right, so that that person, either in previous check ins or, or on our sort of public software there's also, their lights are going to be red. And so your lights are red for one quarter, there's a discussion, two, like by three quarters, like, you know, that it's not gonna to continue that way. I've done some studies with this in our leadership training where two people have a discussion and they really think they're clear and people heard different things. So we've even really tightened our check in and review system to it's not a forced curve. But, but it, it is a very descriptive quadrant that you're in of, you are you know, you are above performer who is, you know, going to be promoted and sets the standard. You're a great performer. You meet the expectations because we need them to walk out of that. We need the manager and the employee, and employee does the same thing for the manager, by the way, too. But we need them walk out of there with an actual shared understanding of, of where they are. I've been shocked, like over the years, how, you know, someone tells me they I hear a story about they were blindsided and then I go read their performance reviews and I'm like, the way I'm reading them, the person should not have been blindsided, but they just really didn't internalize sort of where they were. And so I'm, I'm very passionate in our team, we just overhauled our own system around back to this respect for authenticity. Like people deserve to know where they stand, you know, in the eyes of their managers. And also, you know, managers need to know where they stand in the eyes of their employees.

Whitney Johnson: All right. Let's talk briefly about your book, *Elevate*. It's very concise. You identify four areas where people need to build capacity and then provide action steps. Can you at a high-level share with us what those four are and then one or two one for each, each area of capacity that people can do that are listening. And then, of course, they're going to want to go buy the book, but just to give them a taster.

Robert Glazer: Sure. So, first of all, at a high level, I think capacity building is the method by which individuals seek, acquire and develop the skills and ability consistently perform at a high level in pursuit of their innate potential. So, it's really about them. That's the long definition. The short one is how you get better. And what I found is looking at my life and our training and how we investing people and all these kind of high achievers. I just, I kept seeing these same four themes that this is, you know, high achievers' kind of focus on building their capacity. So, the first the spiritual capacity. And these go in an order. And there are logically think of them as a ball like chambers of a ball. So, it's spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional. And they kind of go in that order. So spiritual capacity is about understanding who you are, what you want most and the standards you want to live by. It's your core values, your core purpose, your why, as it's come to be known by other way, other ways. And you know this. I think the thing here is if you if you can't articulate your core values, that is a process that you should start that will be pretty game changing for you. And it leads to what comes next in the other situations. And it almost mimics a little bit what I was telling you about my college story, because that leads to intellectual capacity. And so intellectual capacity is about how you improve your ability to think, learn, plan and execute with discipline. So this is concepts like growth mindset, being proactive, setting short long term goals, establishing routine, your habits and accountability.

You learn when you know what you want and you're willing to go get better at it. So that's why I think when you need clarity on your spiritual capacity, you kind of lock in on your intellectual capacity and say, what do I need to learn? And look, right now, there are a lot of businesses that need to ramp up their intellectual capacity to to learn a new way of doing something to, to survive. One of the key things that I've found in intellectual capacity is for those very few people who are there are some night owls, but generally starting off your day right, having a morning routine is a hallmark of people who build intellectual capacity at high rates. They do not jump out of bed, turn on email, watch all the depressing stuff on the news overnight. They tend to do some thinking, some reading, exercising journal plan out their day, play offense and they take control of the morning and it really drives the rest of their day. So that's I think that's a key tip for intellectual capacity. Physical capacity, so we understand this more. And I like to always point out that physical capacity, let's think about it. If I, if I lift the weight every day for thirty days, I can then lift more of that weight faster and easier than before. If I run an extra half mile a day, I will build up my ability over two to three months to run more. The other capacities are the same thing. We tend to think in these other ones that we have them or we don't have them, but they're just as increasable as physical. So physical capacity is your health, wellbeing and performance, maintaining health and wellness, getting sleep, managing stress, actually embracing competition I think is part of that and sort of building physical and mental resilience.

One of the best things I have found in terms of committing to a routine around building physical capacity is, is to pick an event better than a gym membership, better ROI. Pick an event you want to do and it's something you haven't done. And it could be a depending on your level, it could be a 5K, it could be a half Ironman, it could be a Spartan race and pick it six months out and pay the deposit. And it really is it's more motivating than a gym membership. You commit to that event; you create the accountability. It forces you to start the practice and into that. And it's really less about the event than it is the six months of work that you will do before that and then do something that you haven't done before. And I think physical and mental resilience are a little like a flywheel, you do something you haven't done before, you then have the confidence that you can do that and then you're willing to sort of commit to the next thing. Entry fees are one of the best ways, better, better value than even a gym membership to, to commit to improving your physical capacity. And then emotional capacity is the one I think a lot of people have the hardest time with because it's less about them and it's the world around them. So, it's how you

react to challenging situations, your emotional mindset and the quality of your relationships. So this includes overcoming self-limiting beliefs, having, you know, the right attitude and meaningful relationships.

And the one here that, that someone shared this to me years ago and I've sort of adapted it and shared it with others, there are relationships in our life that bring us energy and that excite us. And there's people that may only see once or twice a year, but it's always great when you see them. And then there's others that exhaust us and those go into this bucket called energy vampires and these people, it's really draining. So I actually think that you might want to keep this list in your desk drawer. But and I talk about a bigger exercise in the book. But list of five people you want to spend more time with on one side of the paper and then on the other side of the paper list of five relationships that have sort of run their course are draining and then you need to spend less time with. And the tip I got from someone a few years ago about those on the right side is, is I was talking to Keith Ferrazi about this actually yesterday. You don't have to blow up or have a breakup with those relationships. You just need to apply less energy. You just need to stop making plans every week. If you don't want to meet every week, you need to stop calling every four days. You know, put it make it eight days and you slowly just pull away energy from those and double down on the other ones. And you will see a pretty a pretty big change.

Whitney Johnson: That's terrific. And you gave all the tips and I think everybody is going to find it very, very helpful. You one thing I thought of as you were talking in is on the physical. Early 2019, I interviewed James Clear for the podcast Atomic Habits, you know, start running. And so, at that point in time, I was oh, so good. I started doing running five minutes. Then I was going to add, you know, one person every day. And I'm now up to because I don't run every day because I used to travel a lot. Right now, I don't I'm at like thirty-seven, thirty-eight minutes and, and with a goal of running a 5K. But as I'm listening to you talk about this, I'm thinking, you know what, I think maybe it's time for me to put a deposit down on that 5K because I'm you know, I'm creeping up. But if I gave myself a deadline, I would get there faster and it's probably time to do that. So, you have just motivated me to put that deposit down.

Robert Glazer: And they probably appreciate your deposit now to so,

Whitney Johnson: Probably. All right. So, you recommend a number of books that people read. Can you share with us what one or two of those books are and, and then talk about why they influenced you, why there are important books to you.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, there's a bunch of books I love, but I'll, I'll, you know, one, one I thought of because I actually saw someone post something on LinkedIn this morning and he said worst book title ever, but best book I've ever read, and that was "How to make friends and Influence People".

Whitney Johnson: Ahh, such a good.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, it is. You know, I think a lot of people are turned off from it. Maybe if they just hear the name. But this is a Dale Carnegie book. It was written, I mean, we're getting close to 100 years ago probably now. And I just think it's a fundamental book on, on relationships and understanding other people and how to communicate. And every time I read that book, I reread the principles, or I have a, I have an issue with someone else or a problem. And I and I use one of his principles, it just always works. And just even the one I can think of is, is give others a good name to live up to. You know, and if you're, if you're ever, you know, dealing with a company or you have a problem and you communicate in a way like, you know, this is not what I would have expected from a restaurant with this sort of service and rather than sort of just kind of railing on them, you know, make it about, you know, give them some pride in what it is that they do. And yet we've made our employees read that book. And I just

I think that especially in a time now, when relationships are going to matter most, I mean that it really is timeless, timeless best practices on sort of interpersonal skills and what real kind of relationship and networking is far beyond collecting business cards. And, and the, the computers are going to do a lot of manual tasks in the future. So, the ability to connect with others is going to be a skill that is that is high in demand. And if you can do that well, it will serve you well.

The other book, which is probably the one that I you know, when people ask what's a book you would give to others, give the most. It's funny. It's known in like small circles, but not on a wide level. But it was a book on mistakes were made, but not by me. And it's kind of the definitive book on cognitive dissonance. And that book so clearly illuminates the principles of cognitive dissonance, the dangers of it. Why we kind of and I think the subtitle is like why we repeat our foolish acts and don't learn from them and all the things that we do to protect ourselves from our own mistakes. And if you see and understand cognitive dissonance, it is everywhere. And if you can learn how to recognize it in yourself and recognize it in others, it really helps you kind of negotiate, again, interpersonal situations and, and difficult things. Because we're basically, you know, one of my favorite examples of, of that book was, you know, we try to hold these two, like, separate ideas in our head. And sometimes that, that's the premise of cognitive dissonance and it kind of makes a mess for us. One of the examples that, that she gives in this book is that when DNA evidence came out and it exonerated all of these criminals that had to put away for life like that, they weren't there. It wasn't them. When the crime, the DAs that put them in jail, like, came out of retirement to work these cases and, like, double down and prove that they were guilty. And the reason and sort of cognitive dissonance way is that, they believe that they were a good person and they couldn't possibly put the wrong person in jail. Therefore, like, it must have been a mistake. So, their inability to think that they made a mistake actually had them like doubled down on keeping people in jail. So, if a big part of leadership is like being self-aware enough to, to learn from your mistakes and get better from them, you have to be aware of the dangers of cognitive dissonance.

Whitney Johnson: In your in Elevate, you talk, because you're elevating, not elevated yet. You talked about your anxiety and how that really prompted or spurred you to change your physical habits. Talk about that a little bit. And then I guess today, does it still flare up from time to time? And when and if it does, how do you manage it? Because I think a lot of people struggle with anxiety, but we don't, we don't know what to do with it. I know I do. And I suspect a lot of people listening to so would love to hear your thoughts.

Robert Glazer: Yeah so, so the story in the book was actually during a period when my wife and I had our third kid, we are in the middle of building a house and moving. It was the beginning of the Great Recession. I had started my business. My grandmother had died. It was just a crazy couple of weeks. And I was, I was working like crazy, you know, having a cup of coffee in the morning, maybe a glass of wine, you know, at night. And, you know, one day then I probably had two cups of coffee in the morning and maybe two glasses of wine at night. And one morning my heart was just like racing and it just kind of got worse throughout the day. And then you start Googling stuff, which you should never do if you have any medical things. And, you know, my kind of arm was tingling, and it got really bad. And my son, who is probably six or nine months old, was home. We had a babysitter who was helping him out. We're actually living with my parents while we were building this house. All the things that you could create stress in your life. And I just I started to feel really bad. And I call my wife and I said, you know, you've got to come home and back to that self-reliance. Like, I never do that. Like that scared her because, and I was standing in the kitchen and I collapsed. And I thought I had a heart attack and the ambulance came and, you know, I'm rushed to the hospital.

I realized I was alive but wasn't sure what the repercussions were, were going to be and ran through all these tests. And I just you know, I had a had a massive panic attack that was I've been sick, too. And I also was a little deficient on magnesium, which makes your heart race. But then you get into this, like bad loop, your heart's racing and then

you get worried. So, yeah, that spurred some real change for me. I started I never really run. I started running more after that. Actually, even to this day, it's interesting. Like, I don't like running, but the impact that running has on me and I sort of body and how I feel whatever is very noticeable. So, I this sounds like you might be in the same thing and forcing yourself. So, I run with podcast like I do what I need to do to get myself to do it, because I know that it works. So yeah, I started getting back into yoga and just tried to focus more on sort of, you know, balance and health and not overdoing it. I'm still not good at overdoing it. I really, I look, I have two speeds, zero and a hundred. And I don't seem to do well in between. I almost have to go to zero to make myself not, not go to one hundred, but it flares up from from time to time. I definitely you know, I get myself a little overwhelmed. It happens when I don't take breaks, I don't step back, I'm traveling. What's interesting is it for me it almost happens like when things settle down a little bit, it's almost like I have a post-traumatic like, like it's like a post tra- like when I'm in the middle of dealing with a stretch or whatever, I kind of like fight through it and then I sort of end up feeling the effects afterwards. So that's, that's actually a pattern I've noticed in the last couple of years. And I still need to do better. We all know what works like. I know that I started meditating. I really it's helped. I find the apps are really helpful. I know that meditation works. I know that rest works. You know that sleep works. You know, I know the exercise. All these things really helped bring down sort of cortisol, all that stuff. It's just a matter of sticking to them in the habit.

Whitney Johnson: Doing it.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, it's doing it.

Whitney Johnson: You just have to do it. So what, what meditation apps do you like?

Robert Glazer: Both my wife has come and I have Headspace, I really like Headspace, and it's got some it's got some like sleep casting's, you ever wake up in the middle of the night and some different things. But I like the I don't I find the British voices very soothing, soothing.

Whitney Johnson: Very calming. Yeah.

Robert Glazer: Yeah.

Whitney Johnson: When I asked you the question, how do you manage it, I mean part of I think your answer is this all of your life's work since that period right over the last decade, you've been figuring out how to manage it. As you said, one of your key goals is to figure out where to go and find a way, find a better way and share it. Right. That's what you said. So last 12 years, you said, OK, there's got to be a better way. I don't want to have panic attacks every day. So I'm going to figure that out. I'm going to share it. And so that's the work that you do now. If I look at sort of this body of work, that is, that is what you are doing. You're in the process of doing, is helping people figure out how to reduce their anxiety and not have panic attacks at a very basic level.

Robert Glazer: As I said, all the things go together in terms of physical capacity, I think is the one that's mos-, that interestingly enough, is most, you can most correlate, like it's a drag or an accelerant. Right. So when your physical capacity is good, when you're sleeping well, when you're a good space, right. You're focused on the big picture. It's easier to learn. Your relationships are better, you have patience. When you're tired, exhausted and stressed. Let's think about it. Like you get very near term with your focus. You lose sight of the big things. You have a hard time kind of reading and sitting back and learning stuff and your patience with people, you know, drops down a lot. So what was interesting for me was understanding the interconnectedness with this. And it's all a process. We're not in balance. In fact, I've shared with a lot of people that, you know, in launching my book on, you know, elevating the four capacities, I physically exhausted. I mean, you've been through a book launch. I physically exhausted myself

and kind of destroyed my physical capacity over those over those two months, which was, you know, slightly ironic. But it shows that these are not things that this is why you're not elevated. Right. These are not things you; you master and are done. They, they, they get out of whack, you know, and it's just a matter of figuring out where they're out of whack.

Whitney Johnson: So, speaking of books, you have another book coming out. Friday Forward tells the back story.

Robert Glazer: Coming out of that Leadership Academy program, one of the folks who led it, who's a mentor to me today a man named Warren Rustand, really focused on that morning routine kind of get up, think read something positive, write. And some of the stuff that I was given for the positive reading afterwards was a little too rainbow and unicorny for me, and so somewhere along the line I decided to combine those activities. I had some stories and some quotes and some stuff I had saved in a folder. Our team was about 40 and we were in different places and remote. So, on Friday I just started sending this note and I change the name a few times. It was called Friday Inspiration and it was just about improvement or getting better. It had a story to it. It sort of evolved to then always have a quote at the end. And I didn't know if anyone was reading it, but I liked writing it. So, I kept doing it. And then maybe a month or two in, I really, I did start to hear from people. They said, you know, I love this. I signed up for that race or something that you talked about, or I actually share this with my husband's family or, you know, I gave my wife and she shared it with her company. So, it's actually clear that it was like going outside of our, our company because it wasn't it wasn't about our business. I was at a EO event with a few other CEOs and we were talking about some best practice stuff. And I said, you know, I've been writing this note to my team every week. It's good for me. They seem to be really enjoying it. It's a good way to sort of connect and a bunch of us will send us an example. And so, I sent it to about three or four of them and one said, this is great. And he started his own and the other three said, this is great. We'll just send this to our teams every week. Can you add us to the list? So, I started to think maybe there was some more interest outside of the company.

I set it up kind of as a newsletter but tried to make it look like a plain email because I just I needed a way to manage it, that wasn't BCC. I added those people on the list and I threw a couple hundred friends, families, colleagues, figuring I get a lot of like, what the hell is this? Take me off. And I didn't, I got the same sort of feedback. Someone wrote an article in Inc.; this is the only newsletter I read every week. And, you know, I'd wake up two, three years later and there's 100,000 people in 60 countries opening it. And going through all kinds of company's slack every week, and just kind of expanded beyond my wildest dreams. I renamed it Friday Forward because it was being forwarded and I actually went to write a compilation book. Now, this is probably three years ago, four years ago when this started. And, and my writing really wasn't known, and I wasn't that known, and bunch of agents all said, hey, love the writing, but publishers don't like compilation books. And so, they actually forced me down the path towards Elevate, which was why are these stories impacting all these strangers? I don't know. What were some of the things I was doing? How are we training people and realizing, sort of uncovering that, that these stories had all been about capacity building, but, but Elevate ended up being about the principles of of capacity building. But then I started talking to the publisher, who published Elevate, and I said, you know, it'd be really interesting now to take some of these best ones. A lot of people, you know, as the audience has grown, they've never seen this stuff in four or five years ago. And they like these kind of week by week things and organize them all around the principles of capacity building. Now that I've introduced that concept, like what are the best stories that can highlight spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, you? So I went I sort of went back and rewrote and updated the kind of fifty two best stories, pulled it together with, you know, a new intro and tied it into the capacity, so it's the prequel, because it was actually the book I started to write, but I actually you know, sometimes this is a good lesson for life. Like, it's about timing, right? I actually think the time for that book is more right now than it was three or four years ago.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah, I agree. I shared, you know, the early copy with someone on my team. They're like, I love this. I love it. It's so good. I'm going to, you know, print out some of these and read them. So, I think that's really exciting. All right. So, Robert, where can people find you?

Robert Glazer: Sure. So, all of my stuff is at RobertGlazer.com. And there's a quick link there, if you just want to find the podcast and sign up for Friday Forward, which is at RobertGlazer.com/connect. And you can sign up for Friday Forward, see the books, listen to my elevated podcast. Everything's all on one place there. I also have a on the connect page. I have a sort of 10-minute video. There's a link to a video I did on on sort of getting started, finding your core values, if that's something you're you're interested in starting the process around.

Whitney Johnson: Any final thoughts you'd like to share for people who are looking to disrupt themselves, to elevate their game as we wrap up?

Robert Glazer: Yeah, I think, I think this is where our work intersects, which and you were saying this before, and it made me think of it around, you know, if you're just, if you're struggling on an S curve, you probably don't want to be on that s curve. So, for me, that comes back to the spiritual capacity of of really figuring out who you are and what you want, because it's hard to then really want to be the best at something if you don't know what you want. So, I really think it does start at that beginning. And if you haven't, if you haven't had time and you're sort of struggling and you haven't kind of gotten off the hamster wheel, the pull back and make sure that you're on the right hamster wheel, I found that that is the key inflection point for most people, and it really is where that they should start.

Whitney Johnson: Robert, thank you so much for being with us.

Robert Glazer: Thanks, Whitney.

Most of us have been there. We lose passion for our work, we lose sight of our core values and goals, and that means it's time to find a new s curve learning, which can be hard. What's encouraging is that we can build our capacity so that we can do things better. That's such a freeing concept. We're not stuck as we are. We can always grow and do better. For Robert, he was going full throttle until his panic attack forced him to take a look at work and personal life, something had to give. That life event, led him to find a new way forward, disrupting himself, finding a new s curve. To break those down again for you, he presents four themes, spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional. You can read more about them in his book, *Elevate*. I also encourage you to read examples of how that's working for people in Friday forward. And you can find both of them on his website at RobertGlazer.com.

Thank you again to Robert Glazer for being our guest. Thank you to our team, Jennifer Brotherson, Sarah Duran, Whitney Jobe, Virginia Kivlighan, Melissa Rutty and Nancy Wilson.

I'm Whitney Johnson and this is Disrupt Yourself.