

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPISODE 182: MIKAILA ULMER

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, disrupting who you are now to slingshot into who you want to be.

When we think back to our childhoods, we were constantly disrupting ourselves and starting new S curves. We started at new schools, took new classes, joined new clubs, made new friends. Youth is all about learning and finding our interests and jumping S curves as we learn more about ourselves. One young woman did all of that while becoming an entrepreneur. Mikaila Ulmer got her start with a lemonade stand in her front yard when she was just four years old. But that was the beginning. Now, at 15, almost 16, she sells Me and the Bee's lemonade in stores nationwide, including getting shelf space at Whole Foods and the Fresh Market. That was after she appeared on Shark Tank and got buy in from Damon John. She also received an eight hundred thousand dollar investment from a consortium of football players. Mikaila started a nonprofit and she's written a delightful book titled Bee Fearless. Mikaila, thank you so much for joining us.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I'm so glad to be here.

**Whitney Johnson:** So how you got started is such a charming story. Let's start there. How did you how did you get interested in bees?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So I got interested in bees when I was four and a half, and it was surprisingly out of being stung by two bees. So I had signed up in two business fairs a couple of my kindergarten peers were doing. And I was trying to figure out what product I was going to sell for those fairs. And over the summer, I got stung by two bees. One was in my ear, one was in my neck. And as a result, I was terrified of them. And my parents actually said before you were afraid of them for the rest of your life, why don't you try to learn a little bit more about them? And reluctantly, I did. I started with picture books and animated videos, but I ended up realizing how important bees are to the foods that I eat every day. And pretty much everyone eats and also learn that they are dying at an alarming rate. And so all these were told in the perspective of a bee like I, I eat this and this is nectar and I make honey and I also pollinate a lot of your apples and nuts and things like that. And so I started getting interested in them and then wondering why I had never heard about this or I had never seen anybody else talking about this.

And I decided that whatever I'm going to do for my stand, I'm going to relate it to the bees or figure out how I could help save the bees through it. And so I was still thinking of what product I wanted to make. I knew honey bees made honey. I knew bees pollinate foods and crops and around the same time, I got a cookbook for my great granny Helen for flax seed lemonade. And it was a pretty unique recipe. But I was like, what if I take her 1940s cookbook for flex seed lemonade? Sweeten it with Honey, which I just learned the bees make or honey bees make, and I can sell that out of a stand for my business fair. And that's exactly what I did. I started working on recipes with my dad in the kitchen. The counters were covered in honey and lemon and any other ingredient. And so for my first stand I sold my product and I donated a portion to organizations that were in Austin, which is where I'm born and raised, but we're also helping save the bees.

**Whitney Johnson:** I have so many questions there, Mikaila. What a great story. So I think one question that's coming up for me as I listen to this is you had this experience, you were afraid and your parents said to you before you're afraid for the rest of your life. Let's just take a step back. And have you learned more about bees? Have you ever asked your parents what sort of gave them the sense or the notion that it was important for you to face that fear?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yes, and after I did the research about the Bees, I don't think I realized that exactly what the lesson was. I didn't realize how important that can be and how powerful learning or finding with the source of your fear is can help you overcome it. I didn't get that of four or five and I was too focused on the bees. But I think now, looking back and also just looking at how my parents are helping me with the business today and how they're still teaching lessons like curiosity or going and having me open up my first bank account, like I'm realizing that without those lessons and without what they've taught me, I would not be where I am today or I probably wouldn't have taken the leap to even start the stand in the first place.

**Whitney Johnson:** So I definitely want to talk more about your parents later, because I think it's an interesting question and as a parent, I have questions. Let's talk a little bit more about I'm fascinated that as a kindergartner, they had a science fair. It sounds like or a business fair. that's Austin, right. So Austin's very entrepreneurial. I'm not surprised, but still, I'm a little surprised. So you did the lemonade stand or you presented at the business fair, which came first?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I started by seeing Lemonade Day. So Lemonade Day is a national event. It started in Houston and it's all lemonade stands. And so we were driving around Austin and I saw the lemonade stand and that's how I decided I'm going to sign up for this. But by the time we got home and I wanted to make lemonade, the day was pretty much over. And I didn't have a stand. I didn't have a recipe. So I was like, OK, let me sign up for the business fair and try to come up with the recipe by then. And I saw the flyer for the business fair while touring my kindergarten and I just had finished preschool. My parents were touring kindergarten and I saw the sign that was outside the library and I was like, what is that? That's a business fair. And I didn't know what that was. It sounded like a carnival fair, so it's like I'm going to do it. And then she explained what a business fair is. I still wanted to do it. And it ended up having an idea that I could use for both the business fair and the next lemonade day.

**Whitney Johnson:** When you said to your was it your mom or your dad or was it both of your parents that you said, I want to do this, I want to participate in this business fair. I want to build a lemonade stand? Do you remember how they responded to you, what the reaction was?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I don't remember exactly, but this was part of writing. My book was going and interviewing friends and family on, like, different things that happened when I was too young to remember. But based on the events that happened, I think that they were really supportive. They were probably a little bit questioning at first, like, why is she signing up for this? What are we going to have to do? But instead of immediately, like, shutting it down and saying, no, no way, they were like, OK, what are the steps that you're going to have to take? How long is this? Are you sure you want to do this? And those are the questions that they've asked me when I first started my stand.

Now, like, do you still want to do this? How's it going? But also just throughout growing, like before Shark Tank or before a big presentation instead of saying, no, no way. Like, let's hold off or wait, they said, how are you going to do this? What do you need help on?

**Whitney Johnson:** They allowed you to have the power to own your own what you wanted to accomplish.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yes. They still offer so much guidance. So if there's something that I'm doing way off, they're going to say, hey, you're not responding to these emails and this is a big opportunity or this is a big connection. You need to respond to these emails. And so it's still I guess it's still parenting in a way, even though we're working as a family run company, it's still like parenting. But I'm the CEO of the company and I don't know, I like to say co-CEOs. It's really different when it's a family run company.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, it's a fascinating dynamic. The reason I ask that question is not too long ago I had on our podcast a man by the name of Levingston Taylor, who's a musician, and you're probably not familiar with him, but his he comes from a family of musicians, including his brother, James Taylor. Your parents would know who he is. And one of the things you shared in the podcast was that when he was a very young boy, probably a little bit older than you are, but not much older, he went to his mother and he said, I want to build a pool in our backyard. You know, he's four years old. And his mother said to him, well, where do you think you'll put the pool? And that was so powerful for him because it wasn't, you know. Do you think you can? No, I don't think that makes sense. It was just well, of course, you're going to build this pool. Where you going to put it? And so that's why I'm asking that question. It sounds like your parents have given you that similar gift of, OK, you're going to build a lemonade stand? Have you thought about this? Have you thought about what revenue looks like, what costs look like, etc.?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yeah, and also, if there are any parents that are listening to this podcast, I'd like to say that one thing they also did was they were hands on with the business, but they didn't take it over. They weren't running the business for me or selling the product behind the stand. This is one of the rules for the business fair was that parents can be behind the booth, but they're not the CEOs. They're not the people that are selling your product.

**Whitney Johnson:** All right. So we're on your parents. Let's stay there for a minute and then we'll we'll move on to the next question I have for you. So what advice do you go to your dad for? So when you've got you're trying to figure out a thorny problem. What is your dad, your go to guy?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So I think my dad is my go to guy personally for group projects because he works at Dell. He does finance and helps at Dell and so his whole job is group project that's managing a team, making sure they reach deadlines, making sure that everything's running smoothly. So if I'm at school and there's like a member of a group that's trying to take over do everything or a member of the group that's not contributing, that's just something that I know my dad has really good experience when it comes to that. So let me go ask him that question and that I'm happy that I have that. And then another one is.

Like sending emails, I didn't realize it was this hard when you started, but sending e-mails is a whole another language.

So that's one thing is just how do I make sure that the tone of this email is like, good? And is there anything I need to change? So that's one. And then also, when it comes to personal finance or business finance and ops and any questions that I have about that.

**Whitney Johnson:** Hmm. OK, let's go to your little brother and then we'll go to your mom. When is your little brother the go-to person?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Probably when I have a crazy idea and I need someone else who has crazy ideas to help me out with it, like making a game or something or trying to gameify by learning, because I know that he he loves games.

And so he's also a middle schooler. And a lot of the times I'm talking about entrepreneurship or business or the bees. It's to middle schoolers or kids around that age, maybe a little bit younger, sometimes a little older. He needs something that's interesting and engaging for him to focus. And so I know like if it can pass the younger brother Jacob test, then it's going to be fun and engaging for whoever I'm speaking in front of. And so when it comes to

activities or workshops or breakout sessions, I know that, hey, let me ask my brother if this is fun to him or let me try to teach it to him and maybe I can teach it to the people who I'm speaking in front of.

**Whitney Johnson:** Ok, so there's the Jacob test. I love it when you when you're speaking or teaching. All right. So when is your mom the go-to person?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** There's so many things, just ones that I can think of is blog posts or videos, anything related to marketing, because she even though she didn't have any particular beverage industry experience, she started her own marketing firm. She was a first gen college student and she started with, I think, a minor in dance. And then she moved on to business and marketing. And so she knows she taught me what I knew about marketing. She was the one who brought the bee suit for my first stand and was like, wear this for marketing. Wear this to attract customers. And it worked. I wore the bee suit and the antenna and the striped footies in front of my stand and people instantly knew it was about the bees. I'll go to her for like time management or bee engagement's and then also things like anything PR marketing related.

**Whitney Johnson:** And so this is now become a family business. It sounds like your dad has a day job, but your family, You're the CEO and then you've got your dad's your CFO, your mom's your CMO and your brother is your let's see, what is your brother?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I call him head of photogra-bee, but I've also called him the number one sales rep, because when we were in front of the stand, he was always yelling "lemonade anyone" at the top of his lungs.

So he has multiple roles.

**Whitney Johnson:** That is so cute.

I love that so much. OK, how fun that your family gets to do this together. All right. So you do the lemonade stand and then you make a decision. We're going to turn this, I want to turn this into a business. How did it start to grow and maybe talk to us a little bit about that first experience where you said, "oh, you mean there are costs associated with the revenue? What does that look like?" Maybe share a little bit of that, that initial good idea, fun project to business.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So I was selling out of my lemonade stand and I was putting my lemonade stand at the fair so I would do that twice a year. Sometimes I would do it in front of my house because we live right next to a church. So we would try to catch the church goers after they were going home from church. And then also we had like a family friend who owned a diner and they would let us set up my stand in front of there and sometimes friends from my school would also put on a bee suit and help me out at the stand. I set up a bank account with my dad and he taught me about deposit slips. So any money that I made, I would give, save and spend and I would save for the bank account for the next stand. And so I didn't really think of it as a business. I just thought, I'm teaching about the bees. I'm able to donate some to these organizations that I like. I was also able to go and visit a hive. And so they had beekeeping classes and I signed up for one. They didn't have any bee suits that fit me. So they like doubled them up and rolled up the sleeves. But I was just so excited to be able to try the honey and go see the bees that I was learning about the bees.

I was able to put money in savings and I was having fun. And so there was one time I was doing a stand and a owner of a local pizza shop in Austin that my family actually eats at said "Hey, if you can find a way to follow your product, I'd like to carry in my store." And at the time I was always selling out of. So it didn't matter how many hours I stayed up past my bedtime squeezing lemons, I would always sell out of product and I wanted to find a way to help save the bees around. And so when he came up and said, "hey, if you can bottle this and I think you can, I'll carry it in my store." That's when I realized, OK, maybe this is a way that I can help save the bees year round. And so I started asking a bunch of questions, realizing that this could be like those bottles that I see on the shelves. And this is when I was probably like eight, about to turn nine. And I asked a bunch of questions. My parents asked questions. We, I remember taking kind of field trips to different stores and shops and asking managers what they liked about the bottles and which ones did well there. And we started with a commercial kitchen in Austin about five minutes from our house. And it was small production runs.

It was delivering from like my mom's car. She would drive me and then I would put the product in boxes in a cart, take it up to the store. They'd sign the invoice and write me a check, and then I go deposit it in the bank. And it was just like that for a couple of awesome stores, probably around like four or five.

**Whitney Johnson:** So do they make bee suits for 15 year olds?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I think now they do.

Now, they make bee suits for little kids and big kids, and it's funny because after winning the nonprofit, I started to be apiary. And I remember one of my requirements was I want to make sure that there are bee suits for kids because I could never find a bee suit that fit me. And so we donated kid friendly bee suits to those apiaries so kids can also visit the hives as well as take classes.

**Whitney Johnson:** When did you decide to go on Shark Tank and how did it feel? Because lots of people listening have dreamed of being on Shark Tank. So give us the behind the scenes. How did how did you decide to do it? How did it feel? Take us behind the curtain, Mikaila.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So we were in those stores in Austin, just a couple, and I just decided to do a workshop about the bees in front of one of the stores. So, like, while parents were grocery shopping, I would bring my tri-fold of bee facts some bee friendly plants, and pots and seeds, and I would teach kids about the bees. And so I was doing those, more restaurants or stores, saw them, I guess, and asked to carry the product as well.

And so the buzz around Austin started building. Kids had heard of my product. Parents were like trying to figure out how they could buy it. So stores started saying, "hey, how can I carry this" and contacting me? And after doing one at Whole Foods, they said, "if you can bottle it had already been bottled, but they said we'd like to carry it for buzz week here. That's something that we do at Whole Foods often."

**Whitney Johnson:** How convenient. How convenient. A Buzz week, I love it.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** And it's crazy because Austin was, Austin's where Whole Foods was founded.

And so for their headquarter location, they do buzz week. They feature bee related or be saving products.

And they offered to carry the product for a week. They had started with four cases for their buzz week. And I guess they were expecting it to last the whole week. And then half a week later, they said, "hey, we're going to need some more. We sold out." And so the product did super well there. Then we started, I guess, pitching to different Austin stores. It's hot in Austin, so I'd make sure to do it on a hot day. But just talk about my product. And so through that Buzz, I think the Austin African-American Chamber of Commerce heard about us and contacted my parents and they said "Shark Tank is holding auditions in our offices. Would you be interested in auditioning?" And so the first reaction was no. From my parents, it was no. We have seen the sharks we like they can be pretty brutal sometimes. There's no way that I want my kid going on and then, like, being discouraged because she didn't get a deal or stopping because she didn't get a deal on shark tank and I think my family had watched Shark Tank and we knew about it, but I didn't even see that as an option. I didn't even think like my business was big enough to go on Shark Tank. But when I heard about the opportunity, I convinced my parents, like, can we at least do the one round of audition? And so we did the one round of audition. There were multiple elimination rounds.

And I just talked about my business with the same amount of energy that I talked about it when people were coming to the booth or when I was trying to get new stores to carry it. And they really liked that. So after a lot of elimination rounds, they started giving us paperwork. My parents said, do we want to actually go through with this and find the paperwork, go on the show? Even if we go in pitch to the sharks, we may not get funding. So we had to take that into account. And the ultimate decision was we're still in this commercial kitchen, but we have all these like pending stores that want to get the product. But we don't have, we've pretty much outgrown where we were going, but we also didn't have enough money to scale it and go to a larger production facility. So I decided

I'm going to go on Shark Tank. And my dad was the one who came on and pitched. It was months of pitch preparation and pitching to friends and family. But I landed a deal with Mr. Damon John. And so since then he has been a mentor. But also it was nat.. It was our first national TV exposure. So we had to prepare for that. We had to build on our website and prepare social media, make sure we had enough product. But after that, I think the business really started growing rapidly.

**Whitney Johnson:** What's the first thing that you say when you pitch someone, what's the very first thing you say?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** It differs depending on people, but the very first thing that I start with is my story, like something that I realize is how important powerful storytelling is when it comes to business.

That's what gets people interested. That's what gets people to want to join the cause and figure out how they can help my mission. So we always start with the story and the mission and then the product. Like not only did I dream of starting a lemonade company, but, hey, we actually have a product. We actually were able to execute my dream of having a company. And you can be a part of that, too.

**Whitney Johnson:** What was the most surprising part of being on Shark Tank for you?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** There were two. One was when Miss Lori Greiner said that she was allergic to citrus. She said she loved the business, she loved the branding and everything, but she didn't want to invest in a product that she couldn't herself try and endorse. And so she was out. That was pretty surprising because I guess we just had done enough research to figure that out. I'm so surprised we didn't figure that out. And then the next one that was surprising was Mr. Wonderful saying Like, I like my employees full-time. So you're going to have to quit school for me to invest. That was also a shocker. And I think the producers knew that. So they zoomed in on my face.

I was just sitting there.

**Whitney Johnson:** Something that stuck out for me when you told that story is that before you went on Shark Tank, you practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced your pitch over and over and over again. It sounds like it was over the course of months. Is that right?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yes.

**Whitney Johnson:** I'm calling that out because I think sometimes we think we can just wing something. What you're saying is that that moment that you showed up to make your pitch where people saw you on TV, you had been practicing that well, really since you were four years old, but you had been really refining it over the prior couple of months. And I think that's important. You talk about going up to a store and pitching your product. I can think of so many people, adults, children, doesn't matter who would be full of trepidation, do you get afraid? And if you do, how do you overcome it?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I do get afraid. There's different things that make me nervous. Shark Tank was one of them. Sometimes speaking in front of large crowds or speaking in front of crowds were like, I've prepared this entire presentation, but so few people came. That also makes me kind of nervous. Like do they want to hear my story or are they even going to listen? And I got a pretty interesting lesson from that. I was invited to speak or keynote for this big event. And so when it was my dream to come on stage, like there was a huge auditorium of chairs, but it wasn't I don't even think it was halfway full like it was there were as many people as I was expecting. And I just remember preparing for that presentation and getting really excited about it. But I looked out to the crowd before I went on and there were so few people and that was so nerve wracking to me. But my mom said, I know you're disappointed, but even if there's not as many people, the people who did show up showed up to hear your story. So, like, go present to the people who did show up and hope that they're inspired and hope that they will continue talking about this. And so what ended up happening was I went on stage, I shared my story even though I was nervous and, like, shaking, but I shared my story. And I think they recorded the presentation and sent it out and everyone loved it. So it was a little bit of maybe being underestimated because I'm a teen or.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, like, yeah, probably, of course,

**Mikaila Ulmer:** At that time.

But just being underestimated and people saying there's nothing that I can learn from her like she knows just much as I do. I'm not going to learn anything from her. But then also realizing that you are going to have people who believe and want to hear from you, like no matter what you do. So even if it's for them, do it for them.

**Whitney Johnson:** Such a great lesson. Thank you for sharing that.

Something that I definitely have had to learn. I think all of us is to talk to the people who showed up to hear you, wise mother. And it sounds like it's really changed how you present to audiences. All right. So tell us where your business is now. How many brands do you have? How many stores are you in?

Just give us a sense. You're no longer the, you know, lemonade stand in front of your house in Austin or in front of the the local pizza parlor. Give us a sense of your size.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** It's sold in over 1100 stores today in over 40 states, and we're continuing to grow in scale, so we've grown from like co-packer to we go from commercial kitchen to co-packer or to an even bigger co-packer that allows us to like produce as much as we need if big stores contact us. Overall, we're making a measurable impact on saving the bees and the product is just continuing to grow.

**Whitney Johnson:** What's a co-packer? I don't know what a co-packer is .

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So a co-packer is a facility that manufactures the lemonade, you signed a contract for them to use your recipe and they produce it. So yeah, we have a co-packer and we have made and sold a million bottles of lemonade as of December of last year.

**Whitney Johnson:** Mm. That's exciting on your foundation that you have. If people who are listening want to find the foundation, where do they go to find that if they want to donate money to your foundation.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I'm going to say meandthebees.com Because we are currently redoing the website actually right now. So meandthebees.com and there's a healthy hive page on there. And so just some cool products that we're working on now is we just finished a study with San Francisco State University. And so we helped fund the last four years of their 15 year study that was researching the impact on wildfires on bee populations. And they had some incredible results that we're able to now share with people would be advocates around the world. So that's something that I'm so excited about.

**Whitney Johnson:** I get the sense when I hear you talk that it's never about selling something. It's always for you about a cause and something that you're trying to do and get done and to contribute. Is that part of why you're able to not feel quite so afraid? I'm just I'm really curious about that. I'd love to hear a bit more.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I think that is a really good point, is that it's not about selling something for me.

And just right now, as I have finished writing the book, my book is about to be published August 18th. And I'm being told you need to sell this book like you need to start advocating for this book. That is just something that I'm not as used to, is I, when I sell, I can sell the product, but I sell the product, through story, and I'm having to take on like the hat of being a salesperson and selling my book as well. But I think the one reason why I'm not afraid is just because I've been met with so much enthusiasm in the past. And so I know that there's still people out there who could benefit from what I'm what I'm saying or who would like to learn about the bees or who could help save the bees. So that's one reason why I'm not afraid. And yeah, I just have, like, a really great hive or really great team.

**Whitney Johnson:** So are you calling your team a hive? I love that.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yeah, we have bee roles. So my mom is like a marketing bee but.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh that's great.

Ok, so in our work we talk about the curve of learning and there's, there's the launch point of an experience and there's a sweet spot where you feel like you know enough but not too much. And so you're in this period of really fast growth and then you get to the high end of the S curve where you're like, you know, I think I've kind of figured out I need to do something new. When you think about yourself as an entrepreneur and maybe, perhaps more fittingly, a social entrepreneur, where would you say you're on your s curve of learning?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** So I think that currently I'm at the point that's right before the sweet spot, but also more towards the inexperienced side.

**Whitney Johnson:** So one of the things I'm wondering is what's it like? So you go to school, you're going to be a junior in high school this year. Your teachers know that you have this big business. What what is that like? What's that experience like? Do you find that you negotiate, interact with your teachers very differently because you're a businesswoman or business, I don't know, business teenager like, oh, I'm interacting with this teacher differently because I run a business.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I don't think so. One interaction that I have with my teachers that is different is talking about where I'm going. So, like sometimes I'm invited to speak or sometimes I have to make a meeting and it's in person during a school day. So I will, like, do a planned absence form because my school knows that I have a business and they acknowledge it and let me miss school as long as I make everything up. So I still have to complete my school work. And the most recent time was the United States woman conference. So originally I was going to speak at a workshop there and they gave me my speaking engagement. So they're like, you're going to do a workshop, you're going to do a small presentation and you're going to be a pitch judge, I think. But they called one more time and me and my parents like, oh, are we just going to change again? And they said, I think you'd be the best suited person to introduce the President Obama. And so we were shocked. I was shocked because I had met him and I'm shaking his hand and taking pictures with him. But I had never been on stage or introduced him. So we had a couple of weeks to prepare a speech. That was the first and still, I think, the only presentation where, like, I cried afterwards and so.

**Whitney Johnson:** Did you cry just because of the emotion that you had?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Yes, it was a lot. And he asked for a job afterwards, so I introduced him. And then he said, I will be on the job market in a couple of months. So I hope she is hiring because it was his last year in office.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, oh, oh. What a wonderful memory. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that with us. All right. So you have a book coming out. Tell us where people can get your book, Bee fearless.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I have a book coming out and I didn't think I would say the word, but I'm publishing a book.

It's part memoir, part business guide and title, Bee Fearless Dream Like a kid. You can visit my website, which has all the sites that carry it. So it's in Hudson Books. It's at Barnes and Noble. It's on Amazon as an audio book and hardcover copy and then also Indiebound allows you to read books in order from your local bookstore, bookstores or bookshops. So if you have a local bookstore that you'd like to support, you can also order through there.

**Whitney Johnson:** Love it.

And you were gracious enough to be willing to donate three books to our lucky listeners. And so thank you so much for being willing to do that. We really appreciate it. All right, Mikaila, it's been so wonderful to have you today. Any final thoughts, any advice to high schoolers that are listening? Any advice to the parents or teachers that are listening and or entrepreneurs?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** I have a couple of pieces of advice for kids or teens or even adults who have businesses or would like to grow their own, and the first one is don't be discouraged by the little things. Get back up and spread your wings. So whatever you do, whether you're a student or an entrepreneur or just in life, you're going to have stings and you're going to have those challenges. And so this is where the make lemonade out of lemons comes in. But it's take those challenges and figure out how you can turn it around and keep on going, especially if it's something that you believe in, that you're interested in. And then the next piece of advice that I would say is dream like a kid. And by that I mean dream big. And if you have a goal that you want to reach, be kid-like, do whatever it takes to get to that goal, keep on growing and working hard at it.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, so good.

And any advice for the parents and teachers are listening?

**Mikaila Ulmer:** the piece of advice that I'd have for parents or teachers is instead of always asking, what do you want to be when you grow up, ask what change you want to make? What are you interested in now? Who is someone you look up to? And I think that that teaches them that they don't have to wait in order to be a change maker, but they can start now. So that's one. And then the next one that I would say is fostering curiosity, because I remember being told Curiosity killed the cat, but I never had heard the But satisfaction brought it back. And so when it comes to teaching kids, I think that it's super important to, like, acknowledge when they're curious about the topic, even especially if it's entrepreneurship and help guide them along that path.

**Whitney Johnson:** Mikaila, it has been a pleasure. So much fun to have you on today. Thank you for joining us.

**Mikaila Ulmer:** Thank you for inviting me.

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I love Mikaila's story. Instead of giving in to terror, her parents encouraged her to learn about the bees and in the process, she developed empathy for them, resolve to take action and open to a lemonade stand. Her parents, rather than focusing on the perceived limitations of Mikaila's age, encouraged her to explore, ask questions and develop her ideas. They fostered her entrepreneurial spirit. This signals something powerful to Mikaila, I am capable I can do this, I just need to learn how. Much as Livingston Taylor's mother did, as we heard in Episode one 177, when he announced he would build a pool with just a shovel. Rather than telling him all the ways this wouldn't work, she asked him where he planned to dig. Mikaila's parents tapped into this wisdom. Their response to her curiosity has given her the gift of confidence. Finally, Mikaila understands the importance of personal Disruption accelerant No.7 be driven by discovery, which is exactly what she's doing in publishing her first book, Bee Fearless. She is an impressive and delightful young woman.

I'm excited for her future and ours because she's in it. Thank you again to Mikaila 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.