

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 230: CHRIS DANCY

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast, where we provide strategies and advice on how to climb the S curve of learning™ in your professional and personal life. I'm your host, Whitney Johnson.

Our next book out in January 2022 is titled *Smart Growth*. So when our producer, Matt Silverman, told me about Chris Dancy, author of *Don't Unplug How Technology Saved My Life and Can Save Yours Too*, I knew I wanted you to hear from Chris. By examining and tracking every aspect of his body and lifestyle through apps, sensors and data, Chris found a way to harness his habits and completely disrupt his life.

He's been described as the world's most connected man, the closest thing to a real life cyborg. But given all the data that he has on himself, I would say he's the world's smartest man. Smart homes, smart devices, smart growth, smart man. Today, Chris is here to talk about how he got so smart and how you can get smart too.

Whitney Johnson: Chris, you wrote a book titled *Don't Unplug*. What is the gist of that book?

Chris Dancy: Well, the book actually, Whitney, was actually called *I Am Utamaro* originally, and they changed the name at the last moment to do unplug because the gist of *I am Utamaro* was too confusing. They said it needs to be simpler. People need to understand the subtitle is still the same, *Technology Save My Life Can Save Yours Too*. But the title changed. And I guess it just isn't really that. The idea is like don't unplug. We actually have legal documents about actually unplugging and unplugging each other and people we call them wills and living wills, etc. But for me, I thought there was a dangerous sentiment in our social discourse about unplugging because technology was breaking people. And I wanted to try to stop that, although I was unsuccessful.

Whitney Johnson: How were you unsuccessful?

Chris Dancy: There still, I think very heavy sentiment all over the world that the way we use our technology, the way we communicate with each other, is limiting and going so far as to harming society. It's a really difficult time to be a mindful cyborg.

Whitney Johnson: So, Chris, what's your origin story? How did you become the world's most connected man?

Chris Dancy: Oh, my goodness. At 40 years old, in 2008, I weighed 140 pounds, I spoke to packs of cigarettes a day, I've been on anti-depressants for 22 or 23 years at that point, benzodiazepines for about 15 years. I was constantly angry. I've been fired from every job I have, but I was constantly successful and I thought to myself, why don't I know me as good as my browser history? So I set out to create a little program that would watch me as closely as technology and teach me about who I am.

So when you think about your browser and what it knows about you, back then it didn't know a lot. But it did know some things like your social. Like how often did you spend on MySpace, your entertainment? Like what did you watch on YouTube? Netflix was coming around back then, but then we got phones like what types of places did you go? What did you eat? What did you spend your money? So I created these ten areas of my life, everything from social media to my environment and thought to myself, any place of space technology, I want to track it. Almost like you want to get some valuable resource out of it and make it visible as those things that came up from the depths of the technology, I need a place to store it. So I created this simple little way to get data out of my devices into my Google calendar. So I'd have a Google calendar full of hundreds of appointments every single day about different data points in my life, which allowed me in the beginning just to search my calendar, search for anything else. But as it became more fleshed out, be able to see me who I was almost a fingerprint for my humanity.

Whitney Johnson: As I read your book, which I loved, I've always been fascinated by how we are influenced by our parents, like certain attributes of our parents influence who we become. And you, you talk in the book about a gift that your mother gave you when you turned 35. But that gift that she gave you actually started when you were much younger. And so talk to us a little bit about something that you learned from your mother and then how that's translated into who you are today.

Chris Dancy: I'll try not to get emotional because it always makes me emotional when I talk about my mother. My mother was very organized, she would make lists every year. We had a ritual around sitting together at the beginning at the end of the year and getting next year's calendar and writing down all the things that repeated. She'd literally start in the morning writing these long lists and close the day, but writing complex letters to relatives who were no longer close. But in between those two times, my mother worked five or ten jobs. I'm 53. This was back in the 70s and early 80s and my father had a lot of anger issues and couldn't stay employed. To be blunt. He was probably HR's second favorite person after I hit the workforce and it was hard growing up because we were that family, the family that kids weren't allowed to play around. Because their parents swore, because the house wasn't immaculate, the cars were not brand new. So I had a couple of challenges growing up where I just felt like I never saw my mother. I loved my mother. She was always doing as much as she could, but she worked from morning, noon and night, three or four jobs sometimes to keep things going.

I grew up in an atmosphere of control what you can. With any tool you can and understand that things are just kind of being you can control other people's ideas of where you are. Fast forward now into my late teens, early 20s, early 30s, and I had just become a wreck. Right after I turned 30, my mother's health started declining. She'd have cancer when I was a teenager and I took her back before the chemotherapy. And for Christmas, she sent me a big box. And inside this box, she told me not to, not to open it before the internet and stuff. I'm not really [INAUDIBLE]. And she said when you, when Christmas morning comes, you have to call me. You have to make sure you call me Christopher. You promise me you'll call me when you, because, Christopher, I know you can open this up and try to see what the gifts are. And I promise, Mom, I'll call you. And I knew something big because my mother doesn't make like, doesn't, doesn't exaggerate like this when it comes to all the important stuff.

So Christmas morning comes, call, grab the cell phone, the mobile phone. "Hey, it's me." She said "Hey Chris, how are you? Are you ready?" I said, "yes", "you didn't open it?" And I said "I didn't." "Just put Doug on the phone," my partner at the time. "No, mom, he didn't open it." So I open I got on the floor and start cutting open these big boxes. "Wait a minute Christopher!" I could hear her yelling, she swore and I won't swear on your show. But "it's Chris, right?" "Yeah", "that's has to be box one." I'm like, Okay mom, because we're like three big boxes. It's [INAUDIBLE] Now take out the first book. So I lift out what looks to be a photo binder, an old school, 70s, 80s photo binders. You put your photos in there, clear plastic. It ripped real hard pictures to get stuck in there. "Hey Christopher. Now, I want you before you open up the page there, listen to me closely." She was a heavy smoker, I said "what mom" she goes, "I know there were times I couldn't always be there for you, but I watched and watched over and took care of you as much as I could. And this is my testament that, that you were always cared for. Even when I couldn't be

around." I said I started feeling like emotional. I said, "Mom, What's going on? Are you upset? Are you, is something happen?" She goes, "No Christopher, I just want you to know that no matter how lost you feel in life, I know who you are. And it's in these books, I flip open the book. And there was a note, and it had February 1967 at the top. She said, "Christopher, I just found out you're coming today. Your father doesn't even know your name is Christopher." And I started going through this book and I was overwhelmed, she saved everything. She didn't miss anything, none of my life.

That was incredibly hard. Because there I was in my 30s, falling apart emotionally and physically, mentally. And just pelt me this really valuable lesson, you can never understand what someone else is going through, how much they love you or not love you because they're there even when you don't think they are, they're there. And my mom died six months later and we didn't see it come in and it just changed my life, forever. So it was a very profound gift. So think about like a baby book, but like on steroids, because it was hundreds and hundreds and thousands of letters and documents and memories, as if she was recording everything, but with the only technology she had then, pens, papers and lists and photos.

Whitney Johnson: And she had never shared any of this with you?

Chris Dancy: I know! And I knew that house inside and out because come Christmas and Halloween, I would tear it apart, looking for stuff like candy and presents. I was one of those kids has always gone through stuff. So I had no idea. Didn't do it for my father, didn't do it for my brother. I don't know why. And I never got the chance to ask her because I was so overwhelmed by it. And it's funny, I just had a television crew here filming some stuff late December and they wanted to see these things and I pulled out the boxes and stuff. She said, "will you open up some of them?" And I said, "I'll be honest with you, I never got to your box one, I don't know what happens after age seven." It's too much to see that much love. And hold it. We miss it today because we're so overwhelmed by how intangible everything is and I'm just like, it doesn't make it less real. I was that family, like my parents were never do anything I did in school, and that love was just as real.

Whitney Johnson: When do you think you'll open age eight?

Chris Dancy: Oh, my goodness. My husband really wants me to do that. I'll be honest with you, I don't know if I ever will. To me, it's enough to know that she lives and it's there and yeah, it's literally enough. It's interesting. We have a 10 year old, her name is Destiny, my husband and I, It's actually his sister. Long story. Because he's older and she's like much younger. And when I started, when I met my husband six years ago I started doing something very similar for her that no one knows about. So I've actually done all of her genealogy. I've done swab samples and everything on the family and tell them it's a project I'm working on. And again, even if Fernanda knows about this, Destiny doesn't know anything about me. She doesn't look me up on the internet. She's never seen videos of me, doesn't know my story. And my whole goal was when she turns 18, I want to give her her legacy.

Whitney Johnson: Something you've said that I think is so beautiful. A good future is defined by how you relive the past. And so one of the questions that I have for you is from age eight to age 20, that your mother has documented her age 25, that your mother has documented you aren't ready to yet relive that.

Chris Dancy: No, because I just know how it felt and to me, I think, you know, the last 15 years, have becoming the world's most connected person or whatever, has been a challenge, because so much of the questions I get are about the devices I'm wearing or the data that I'm collecting and not about what it means to me. No one gets flowers and demands to see the seats. It's enough to get the flowers.

Whitney Johnson: You said that getting this from your mom changed your life and you've, you've talked a little bit about that. But are there one or two specific things that it really shifted the trajectory in the course of your life because of that gift that she gave you of herself?

Chris Dancy: The biggest takeaways I got of the beginning of it as it started coming in, like what's happening was, you could learn a lot if you were to give yourself the same attention that you want from other people. I'm not talking about self-love. I'm not talking about all the kind of the cliches. I'm talking about this idea of like we all want to feel special by other people. But is there a way that we could give ourselves the attentiveness that we desire so much

from people and in that way train you to be the person you should be for others? Because the whole idea of you can't love yourself you can't love someone else. Also, if you can't, you can't record and watch yourself and know yourself, you really can't ever get to know someone else before you even get to love someone else.

So that was a big breakthrough for me. I was like, okay wait a minute, I can actually understand myself without being narcissistic. I can start to understand and have a way of saying, you know, remember the first you know, when I first got heart rate sensors, all the stuff back in the late 2000s, you know, people would ancor me and I would hold them up, appointed them like, look, because people were starting to disassociate with your voices and your face is angry. There must be something wrong. I swear, some people today just love to poke at you. So to me, like collecting the information, understanding it was a way to me to actually feel like these are real feelings and I can have them and I can actually show you what they look like.

Whitney Johnson: Two observations. One is this idea of you said being, loving yourself and you said you don't mean self-love necessarily, you're saying pay attention to yourself. Look at what you're doing. Look at how you're spending your time. Look at what you're listening to. Look at what you're watching. We talk about being attentive to other people. You're saying by being attentive to yourself, who you are, what you're doing, that is a form of listening and and to your point of like we want to be listened to. But when we pay attention to ourselves and our data, we're listening to ourselves. And that to me is really profound.

Chris Dancy: What's interesting, we have we have five senses and we only care about the one with listening, and there are so many more ways, you know, why is it that when someone feels compelled to take a screenshot of something that enraged them, why not tap into like, what is it about? You noticed something in yourself? We're creating these proxies for our emotions that that are digital in nature, which is totally fine. But like like don't put in a bionic ear and then keep it on low. And I think if we were to start to see ourselves kind of like I've been fortunate enough to do Whitney like, wow, I can actually become the most human human.

Whitney Johnson: Using technology?

Chris Dancy: Yes.

Whitney Johnson: So I want to just give you a quick shoutout. It's interesting. I noticed when we first got on the call, we were having technology issues and we had to change platforms and etc, etc. And that was making me a little bit discombobulated. And so I noticed that one thing you did is you observed what was happening for me and said, "it's okay, we're good. It will be fine." And because you've observed yourself, I suspect it makes you very much an observer of the human condition generally. And we're able to say to me, or observe that I was a little bit concerned and you said, "nope, it's okay." And then that helped me calm down. Do you do that a lot with people?

Chris Dancy: I have to turn it off, because even when I don't do it, people notice. The cashier still sometimes tear up in front of me and I'm like, "What's wrong?" She goes, "You care?" And again, I'm [INAUDIBLE]. Yeah, I mean, there's a weird world were in where a large group of the population now is hyper empathetic. A lot of what is defining us is political rhetoric is just empathy on steroids. I think it's a sensitization of knowing so much so often, so frequently. But yeah, I mean, it's really hard for me.

I used to, back when we were we did a lot of in-person things. I have a parlor stunt, as they would call it, back in the day where you can put sensors on someone. I can look at them and tell you their heart rate, their respiration rate, how much they slept last night kind of gets into their diet. And I started explaining this to people in 2014, 2015, especially the television shows and stuff I would be on and like doctors would write in saying he's actually right. I'm a physician and I don't even need this stethoscope. And again, Whitney, to your point about observation in yourself, I mean, my quote is "if you wear a sensor long enough, you become one." By the way, mothers do this instinctively.

Whitney Johnson: So let's talk about how did your moniker, The World's Most Connected Man, come about

Chris Dancy: Such a wild turn of events! So I was on a Bloomberg show early in the 2010's and they were filming me all over San Francisco with all of the gadgets and stuff. And at the end, this guy named Corey, who's the guy in Bloomberg, says, you know, to my own self be true or something like that. And some would say Chris Dancy is the

most surveilled person on the planet. And that was it, and the title was like, you know, surveilled person, you know, the most surveilled person. It was an interesting title, but it's not a big deal. And you could still find the article.

Maybe a month or so later, I reached out to to do a quick interview on BBC. And the guy I think had obviously read something and but he switched surveilled to connected and then started being the most connected, most connected. And for the longest time, like 2010, 11, 12, 13, you had to type in most connected man in the world. And then I think 2013, 2014, it was like most connected man. And then for the last six years, you can just type in most connected, just two words. So I'm really hoping, Whitney, by some point this decade I get to just most because I think that's the kind of art you want. But it was just a series of of, I think, media mistakes. But for me, it all started a few years before this where I started actually wiring up my life. So how would I digitize my mother? So not big brother, but big mother. Right. Those same things that were recording and watching, how would I do that for about two years, before anyone even knew what I was doing any time I touched my keyboard or sent an email or bought something on a credit card, everything. A digital copy would go to my Google calendar. And in that way, when my life has been documented in real time, I started having this blueprints of each day with hundreds of appointments. And in between all of that, I was at a conference and someone saw my calendar as if someone was writing hundreds of points at a time. They saw me just sitting there like, what is that? I kind of explained and that was a writer from Wired, who did an interview. And then I was in this great publication called Mashable. And by 2014 I was a cover of BusinessWeek. As the global tech issue is most Disruptive person outside of Silicon Valley no one's ever heard of. And to this day, that's still true. I could be back on the cover. It was just a weird thing to happen on the internet and you know how it is once you get a name on the internet, it's like that's kind of an internet person forever. So I always kind of riff on Kathy Griffin. I'm a delist internet celebrity.

Whitney Johnson: Can you give us an example of how this works when there's something that you want to get better at? What do you do to start tracking it, to analyze it, etc? Give us a specific example.

Chris Dancy: What I tell people who are just getting started, it's like before you even decide you want to measure something, tell me what you value. Because one of my favorite quotes, that I think that's one of the world's greatest problems, is we don't know how to measure what we care about, so we care about what we measure. I think it's really important people take a moment to say what are the things that make you as a human tick? And what are the things that you value? For me, I value attentiveness and on timeness little things like that, those are more traits, not values, more like principles. But, you know, my values like home and health and family and service is a big value of me. Work is a value, and finance is a value. I've got like six core, but once you have your values, then then figure out what are the metrics to measure. But as far as the quick and easy wins for measuring stuff nowadays, again, I always tell people, find some problem part of your life and and then zoom in on it. So let's just take one I had very early on and it's always a funny one. So as a man in my 40s back in the day, I would have to use the restroom frequently at night. Prostate, all the other things start happening to men in their 40s. And it was a lot of fun. Not really. Not so much more efficient for my parents. But one of the things I did was like, it's going to sound like a really personal problem. I didn't want to get up and use the bathroom in the night. So I started measuring every time I drank and every time I went to use the restroom with just two sensors, one near the toilet and one near the fridge.

It taught me how late I could have a drink and not have to go in the middle of the night. So what's your retention? Like I did, I trained myself, like you do with a puppy. The rule is for every month the puppy, is all that can go like one hour without having to go outside. So this process really started helping me kind of zone in. But like, if I could do something much more esoteric, like nowadays that's like 2007 that and say, you know, one of the problems I've really tried to confront lately is how do I teach people that it's okay for me to have feelings that that make them uncomfortable?

I know a lot of people who need me to be the Chris Dancy that they have in their mind and not Chris Dancy. So that was a really interesting data problem because, I'm like, okay, so I need to find times when they're okay with me having other feelings that, you know, so obviously you both don't have a bad day at the same time, right. So that was about really logging my feelings in the morning and my feelings at night. And I can show you this on the screen at some point, and then tagging the people who were part of that day as part of the same system and then writing down their responses to my old school like my mom did. And what that allowed me to do was when days when I was having feelings that someone else might not had been exposed to, who needed to be exposed, I would basically start to interact with them, to teach them an emotional inoculation. So like, I'm having this type of day. But they weren't

directly affected because they weren't in the wake of the storm. And for the last two years I've been doing this, it's really helped me, I hate to say it, but be pretty brutal with people. And they're like, I get it. Whereas normally, if you're kind of any bit brutal or off script, people have a meltdown.

I've got two systems, one that logs kind of my business my whole life. And this one looks at my spirituality. Just a spirituality one. So I do a feeling in the morning and then I do a feeling at night. And if there are people tied, they come in here. And what this does is it allows, Linda Martin to someone from yesterday. So what this does is Linda now has been exposed to me as fulfilled and as creative. So what this allows me to do now is actually run a few, you saw some charts over on the side run Delta reports on days when I'm having other feelings and it tells me who needs to be exposed to those feelings. So I literally call people up and say, I'm having a really bad day around this. I'm really scared. Fear is a big one. We don't share with other people. So I purposely reach out to people, not see me afraid. It sounds wild, but it works particularly well.

Whitney Johnson: What's the goal? Is the goal you've got a group of people, that you care about and you want to extend your relationship with them and so you want to have them see your portfolio of emotions. Is it about you being giving yourself permission to feel what you need and want to feel at any given time? Is it both? Is it something else?

Chris Dancy: It's both. I mean, the challenge of all of this is if we think about all the types of emotions, my family has a meeting once a week where we have an opportunity to go through and we talk about different feelings. And again, even just putting words to feelings are hard on people. And then we go through our values and we write down like it. This week, I didn't really go from a health value this week. I didn't really give a home value. And we put them on a chart, but we also tie it to our feelings. What this allows me to do, at least, is when I think about all the things I could be feeling, today when I saw you and we were having problem with the technology, the first thing I thought was, could you feel rejected or excluded because you were do we have to reschedule this day? If I dive into rejected and and excluded, I come in here and see all the other times I felt that way. So July 29th, let's see what was going on that day. And what this does is it gives me a way to browse my emotional history. So yes, in this way it opens me up to extend and deepen my relationships with other people. It was your first point. More so if I'm being selfish, allows me to have feelings most people do want me to have. But more than anything, why do we have a World Wide Web, but we have nothing to serve ourselves? Why can I go to W.W.W. , put in anything to Google and find out how anyone else is doing? But there's no me. And until I can document the human experience in a way that makes me a more approachable and more human, my work is not done.

Chris Dancy: Okay, I have to pick up on something you're saying, now my brain went to this place of when when I said what if we rescheduled? You said the potential emotion would be that you or I felt rejected.

Chris Dancy: I thought you might feel when you said, let's just reschedule, because you would put a lot of work into our meeting today. So my first thought was, could you feel rejected? Could you, could you blame your tools? Could you blame yourself? I mean, you did a lot of research, at least in an email to me about what you want to talk about today. You look amazing. And I just I just didn't want out of all the talks and podcast you record, this wasn't the one about the tool run the show.

Whitney Johnson: Interesting, okay.

Chris Dancy: Whitney is running the show, not the tool.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah. And it goes back, something you talk about in the book at the very beginning, which I thought was so powerful. We've got a reptilian brain and then we've got our neocortex, our reasoning brain, the part that the executive functioning skills and using the techniques basically in this moment, don't let the reptilian brain be in charge. Let's put our executive brain back in charge, use the tool, use the technology to harness all of that and be in control.

Chris Dancy: And the reality is the reptilian brains kind of being control because it was here first. Right? So how do you put some safeguards around that? That emotional thing I talked about earlier is a really good one. Like telling people how you're feeling, I mean, do you remember, come on Whitney, you're over 30, right? You remember in

the 80s, in the 90s, people's tubes would have that little face and you would slide around. How you feeling today? And now all of technology is engineered toward reactions, not feelings. People are all upset because the world is hyper reactive. Well we're engineering for reactivity not engaging.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, WOW!

Chris Dancy: Right. People play games so other people can watch them game so those people can have reactions that they're playing the game. I'm pretty sure the anti-mass movement, all the other political things we see are just engineered reactions. I mean, Facebook allows you to have five feelings. Twitter vouchered up two. The problem isn't feelings, it's a reconstruction of feelings.

Whitney Johnson: I want to share something with you and just to have you riff on it for a moment, so my next book is titled *Smart Growth How to Grow Your People to Grow Your Company*. And so we talk about the S curve as this model for for personal growth, giving people a map. I'm actually going to look at my notes because it's kind of this mishmash of what you had written. So giving people a map and a GPS to think about where they are in their emotional journey of growth. And so when I think about your work now, I'm like, your work is all about collecting that data to tell you exactly where you are on the map and therefore what your next step would be. And so, as I'm thinking even about, you're talking about helping people be comfortable with you having the feelings that you have and sort of expanding your, your, not portfolio... But just,

Chris Dancy: Yeah. Emotional repertoire.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah! Your emotional repertoire. That's what I was looking for. So I would just love for you to respond to that. Like you're at the launch point and things are, you're trying to figure things out. You might feel discouraged and overwhelmed and impatient. Then you get to the sweet spot and you're like, I'm in the groove. I'm figuring this out. I've kind of got this dialed in of how to react when and what this looks like. And then you get to master and you're like, got it figured out. Time to go on to a new new habit or new thing.

Chris Dancy: So I watched the interview with you where someone said, explain the S curve in one sentence and you shut down. You did so good. You said, I don't think anyone's asked me to do it in one sentence. So first, let me say before I talk about the S curve, I love the S curve. I loved your analogy, analogy of the S curve. And I think the most important thing to know about the S curve from my point of view S is always plural. So no matter where you're at, there's always more. Okay, so remember, your S curve was always about there's more regardless of where you're out on it, because S' add more.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah.

Chris Dancy: I think when you think about that journey you talked about and that kind of sweet spot in the middle, people love the sweet spot in the middle. Like you said in multiple interviews, it's effortless and it's simple and it's approachable. People love being around people on the S. People dread being around people at the end of the S and people at the beginning the S we call them friends. But their projects until we figure out where we are. And I think if you understood, that people in your life are all in their own S', you can actually start to have closer friendships, because I think, again, this really isn't about your career. It's about your career and you, right. So you don't want to get to a new position. You want to get to a new feeling. And your ability to help other people and understand other people is the ultimate promotion at work. And I think a lot of leaders keep this a secret. That they're basically just bingeing on emotional content, kind of numbly so they can figure out where you're out in your S and then go, okay, I need to step in here and there. Regardless of where you are on your journey, but start to write it down. And if you can, I think I'd love to see, Whitney, do it like a journal where people write down every day, like, you know, the feelings they're having. What part of their S are they in? Just a little drop down menu. And the last thing is some notes on that. So for me, I could see it really simple. Like this is my health value today around my diet. I'm at the beginning of an S because the pandemic's not been easy for me. It's like I'll just eat anything, right? But again, if you could see your S's lined up in a way that they align to the things that are important to you, it wouldn't be this kind of massive slog of a journey. It'd be lots of little journeys that are continually restarting. And that's a lot more fun than one never ending death spiral that the S can feel like.

Whitney Johnson: You said something really interesting, which is, we're trying to get promoted to a new feeling or feel a new feeling. What did you say that was super. It caught my attention. Do you remember what you said while you're riffing?

Chris Dancy: Yeah. I mean, a lot of times what people want when they want the next level is they basically want the next feeling. They just don't call it that. They think that they associate the next level with a state of mind. And like you said earlier, it's like having a good future is how you consider the past. Well, that also works the other way. It's like to have a good future. You need to have a good present. And a lot of times when I imagine the next thing, the next contractor, next appointment or the next person I meet online and talk to, I just idealized version like, oh, Whitney Johnson's going to love me and we're going to collaborate with all this stuff. What am I doing? I'm idealizing a feeling I want us both to have and I think we could have that right now. Like we don't even need to go to the next S, right. And I think a lot of I think a lot of time...

Whitney Johnson: It just made me cry!

Chris Dancy: Thank you. Thank you. Oh, you're sweet. I love everything about you. If you can't tell, I like, after I read your email. I just really, I don't know. I just wanted to support you, plus when I did your phone palmistry. You've got the word mom and your home screen, but I'll show you that later. So I don't know. I just think, again, I love the S, but it's OK just to be here, right here in the middle of your S and or at the end, wherever you are.

Whitney Johnson: Right. Well, and that's that's the beauty is that is we honor the entire growth cycle. Right. It's not just about being, the peak performance, I argue, is their ability to be in the launch point, the ability to be in the sweet spot, the ability to be in mastery and and the ability to move through the growth cycle.

Chris Dancy: And to me like ultra peel because what Simone Biles just did. Simone Biles is the top of her game, as you just said. Not today. That's the mastery right there. Right. That's the mastery she literally could have like, But no. And again, that's she's okay with all her feelings and she's telling other people do that. I mean, this decade is going to be defined by people radically exploring, having all their feelings. And this all comes from, you know, I got married late in life. I never got married until about five years ago. And my husband and I, we had this amazing start to our relationship. We got to a point where he was like, I like it so much better when you're this way. I'm like, Fernando, if you limit when I'm allowed to feel, other things come with that. If you only ever use hot water, the hot water heater will break. If you onle use cold water, the hot water heater will become neglected. And once I kind of taught him that passion comes from anger. That sensitivity comes from fear. These things live on a spectrum and work together. You'll want to not manipulate people into being pleasant because you will kill a relationship really fast with love.

Whitney Johnson: You're causing me to think a lot about feelings. And it's been interesting because one of the one of the benefits of the pandemic is that we, we, I have become obsessed. Obsessed is not too strong a word with Korean dramas. But what's been interesting about them, is this is an observation from my daughter. So the wise that is she said, "Mom, one of the reasons I think you like these is because they make you feel things" like, I will watch them and I will cry, like I will be, like, legitimately sad. There was one epic drama. It's called Mr. Sunshine that I cry every time I thought about it for like five days. And I realized, oh, this is expanding that emotional repertoire of allowing myself to be sad.

Chris Dancy: I call the emotional gym, and I always tell all of my friends, did you go to a gym today? What we're, what we don't understand is this is happening more and more from people who go to YouTube to watch unboxing videos, which are the feeling of shopping. To people who go to YouTube to watch other people play games, which is the feeling of playing games to now we have kind of all of these new scripted reality series that kind of have this choose your own adventure feeling. So this kind of idea of emotional proxyism is huge in cybernetics? I don't have to have all the feeling. One of the things I talk about my book is I have playlists on YouTube for panic, depression, suicide, rage. I save videos in these kind of playlists. I spend a few minutes every week watching them to inoculate myself from some of the scarier stuff that's uncomfortable to feel because like it's hard sometimes. So I do think you're onto something with K dramas. I just think we need to all kind of embrace the fact that, you know, again, this is not real new. We've been having, like, theater forever, and that's how we communicate with each other and just go emotions first.

Whitney Johnson: Let's run through some quotes of yours. And I want to just kind of rapid fire and have you respond to them. "So we don't have app stores. We have habit stores. When you download a new app, you are downloading a new habit."

Chris Dancy: Right. So a lot of people see applications as an extension of their productivity or their health or something. But what you're really doing is downloading a bunch of new behaviors someone else have decided are important for you. We used to call that habits. You could do the same thing with a couple of good friends and save 99 cents a month.

Whitney Johnson: Okay, next. "Social networks are databases of our values at any given moment."

Chris Dancy: 100%, I mean, we call them trends, we call them viral videos, but at the end of the day, they're just values. Our values are being exposed in real time. They're bubbling to the top. Cancel culture is just our values being tested. I think if we could see what's happening online as a giant human experiment and kind of value driven architecture, societal societal design. It wouldn't be so scary.

Whitney Johnson: "What we consume for entertainment shapes our world and our beliefs more profoundly than anything else I have measured."

Chris Dancy: Yeah. So what you listen to from music, you watch for video, what you read for entertainment or study, will shape you faster than just about anything else you can do because you're you're having a one on one relationship with something. One of the challenges today is we often, because these things come to our devices, we are somehow not as meaningful because like, oh my goodness. You see all of these people are like articles, like the book is more real than the fun. Like, not if you only have a phone. So I always tell people if you really want to start shaping your world view, the fastest life hack I can give anyone is the next minute you're procrastinating, doing something, put on music you've never heard or played with, and you will just do it because your mind becomes so focused on not the procrastination, but the the what is this? That you will just create stuff, same type of stuff. Like if you really want to be intimate with your spouse, watch something together that neither one of you is interested in. So you have to work with your attention and your emotions as if they're tools just as valuable as hammers and cell phones.

Whitney Johnson: Ok, I want to go back to the first thing you said. So if I'm procrastinating something

Chris Dancy: Listen to something you've never heard before, your brain would instantly be more concerned about why you're forcing yourself to listen. You just do the work

Whitney Johnson: Because it's too much work to do. The new listen to the new song.

Chris Dancy: Yeah, it's just your, it'll just shut you down. I would say if you've got kids, ask to listen to their music, like share one of their playlists with you. You can write books like in a half an hour just by listening to country music if you don't like it.

Whitney Johnson: Ok, let's see. This is the last quote for you, "we need to stop valuing our schedule and schedule our values." You said that earlier, but I'd love for you to just riff on that for a minute

Chris Dancy: Because you can tell I'm really value centered. So but that's part of getting older, too. But no, I think today time has been weaponized. I think everybody feels the pressure of time on each other, whether you're waiting in line and someone in front of you who's taking too long. But more likely than not, you often feel like you're taking too long. So suddenly everything becomes robotic and mechanical. And I think this kind of idea of weaponized time is becoming pervasive and we're kind of forgetting that. Actually, if you forget about the time and just say, I value this, it's pretty hard to argue with that. First of all, the high value talking to cashiers want to talk to our cashiers are always very sensitive. So I value looking them in the eye. Being inclusive to them, I don't feel a pressure online because when you have someone else on your side looking at you going, thank God for not treating me like a machine, making your sandwich today, time stops. We used to call that love, right? So for me, when I say we need

to stop valuing our schedules, stop weaponizing time and start scheduling our values, be where you are, how you are when you are. But the calendar is linear. The heart is not. And those two things will fix themselves up this decade. I'm convinced of it.

Whitney Johnson: Speaking of values, you do something called iPhone palm reading or palmistry. I think phone history. I'm not sure you can tell me what it is. And so I sent you a photo of what's on my home screen. I will be fully transparent. I did update the one picture and I moved the apps that I do use that were on page four up to the front. So I've got all the apps that I use regularly. And so I would love for you to do what did you call it? A phone reading. What do you call it?

Chris Dancy: It's phone palmistry. So basically I would say it's like palm reading, but I literally get paid to do this. Companies and events fly me all over the world. I have a booth that looks like a palm reading booth. We ship ahead or they haven't built locally in whatever city I'm going to. I sit in this old fashioned palm reading booth and people walk, stand in line. They hand me their phones. I won't open up any apps. They just say all you have to do is show me the home screen. You can take a picture and show me the picture. You can send it to me online. And all I do is I look at it and kind of tell people about what I see and what type of life they lead.

So you sent me yours. You have a nice, but I rearranged it a little bit, so. Yeah. So I'll go to yours with you. So I always look at like six main areas. The first one is kind of just this visual layout, like what's on the screen, is there a wallpaper, etc. And you have this great phone. It's got this very rich colored background and some blackberries and cherries or some type of wild berries. What's interesting is they're all coming to a point. In the visual layout, this really shows me when I think about you, that you kind of invested your time is now starting to reap the rewards. Your life and career are very touchable, but you need to be kind of told to don't be afraid to relax a little bit, because if you notice, your meditation apps are literally at the tip of the berry and the fruit is you slowing down, you've got the timer and the muse, right there. I didn't design that. You did.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, that so okay, that is awesome. Okay, keep going. So just for everybody, you know, I've got Whoop, I've got news and those are two are right at the bottom at the of the berry. Love it.

Chris Dancy: The second one is app choices. So you got the layout and you've got the choices. So the choices are like what apps do you use? A lot of time, when we think about apps, it's not just the app and the apps functionalities the photo on the app. So for me, when I look at yours, go back to that bottom row, like your values super visible. You've got physical health, mental health, you've got picture and remember and you've got picture this, etc. You'll notice even the picture this is even a flower, like the closest thing to the bottom of the thing. So it's really growing. But what I what I said about you is what your values are very visible to you. They literally how you define success now. They also, your values really start to reach some kind of that bottom row, which is really about capturing your life and understanding yourself to the ones that are more esoteric. The thing farthest up into the left hand side of your screen is something called library. I don't know what that is, but I think it says a lot that that's very aspirational to be seen as a library. You know, the icon looks like a woman standing inside a doorway inviting people in to learn. And again, things on that side of the phone in that position are our aspirations and questions about our choices.

Whitney Johnson: Well, actually, that is a picture of Jesus. So to your point, aspirational values, top left hand corner.

Chris Dancy: So the next thing is kind of the home. So the home is the bottom row of your phone. It's the one where you have all your apps usually most accessible. And for you, I just put rhythm is everything in your life. You follow a beat, you're early to see a trend your first notice. Some things aren't going as planned, but your first job as mom, it's literally in your in your home bar. So if you look at your home bar, you've got phone there. Like the thing that's farthest to the left. But if you look at the next ones, you've got mail, safari and then you've got the music app, which literally spells mom. M O M. M for mail O for Safari with a big compass and then the the music, it looks like a letter m with the music note and also starts right now. So I thought that that was really profound about that was even though you got your values front and center, the reach of all the touchable, the berries that amuse you living mom is your first job. And that's why I was so excited when I got your phone was oh my gosh, I can't wait to meet Whitney. That makes sense?

Whitney Johnson: Yeah, it's fantastic. I love it.

Chris Dancy: Or thing those connections and stuff. If you look at the top of your phone, you don't have your battery percentage turned on. People with their battery percentage turned on are usually kind of super super a type, they get stressed a lot more easy and then show that stress a lot more easily. So for you, you also have location, something tracking your a location of times. You're [INAUDIBLE] okay with that? Number five like settings. People keep their settings in their home screen are special kind of creatures because it's really about defining your ability to connect and control the pieces of your life. And if you notice the things around settings for you are your camera, which is really just kind of eye just kind of watchful eye that I think that one second of day is also about capturing that and then the fit days. And Venmo, again, very, very provocative. If you look at the Kindle, Slack and Fit Days and Venmo, it almost looks like the word love. And then last but not least, alerts, you're someone's not afraid to keep your badges on, 480 or a 480 phone alerts, three emails, three slack messages. You're not defined by information. You kind of define it. And what I just thought about that was nothing really alarms you. You're kind of the person to keep your cool and makes every keep the wheels on the bus. So that that was your phone reading.

Whitney Johnson: Chris, where can people find you?

Chris Dancy: I've sent people to Google "Most connected." It helps my search ranking, but that I just ChrisDancy.com. I spent most of my social time on Twitter because I treat it like a diary. I don't care if people follow me. I just put what I'm thinking out there. But more than anything, like if you heard anything from today's podcast or today's show, my phone number is literally on my website at the bottom, like it's actually my phone number. My husband will tell you I get 10 to 15 phone calls a day. If you heard any of this and it made you feel inspired or it made you feel less scared or you are feeling scared. Call me. I don't know you, but I will take time because I value you, not my time.

Whitney Johnson: What was most useful to you in this conversation? So something that you thought, you heard, you felt that maybe you haven't expressed it yet. What was useful for you?

Chris Dancy: I think finding out that your your faith was so important to you, really, it was very useful to me. Faith is a tool we often don't talk about in business context enough. And whether you're a pagan or a Christian, a Muslim or an agnostic, embrace whatever keeps you going, because keep going.

Whitney Johnson: Any final thoughts?

Chris Dancy: Love you like you want to be loved.

Whitney Johnson: Chris Dancy, thank you so much for making the time.

Chris Dancy: Thank you Whitney.

Chris says the promise of his book is to help us become more aware of who we are and what we value. He kept that promise with this interview. Here are four things I learned.

Number one, there is nothing wrong with technology. It's just the way it's engineered. It sets us up not to feel, but to react. If we harness technology properly, it can make us even more human.

Number two, I love how he said we need to stop valuing our schedule and schedule our values. And also we don't know how to measure what we care about, so we care about what we measure. How are we finding ways to measure what we care about? Are the reminders on our phone not to go somewhere but to tell someone that we love them? For example, one thing that I'm doing because I tend to be task oriented is when our family does its

weekly sweet, sour, spiritual surprise. I'm now making sure that my sweet always includes something about my husband and each of my children.

Number three. Back to that quote that we don't download apps, we download habits. I just downloaded Whoop, because I want to get in the habit of better fitness.

Number four, I was intrigued by his life hack to stop procrastinating, put on music you've never heard. And since I've been procrastinating doing the final edits on my book, I'm about to listen to some new music.

Thank you again to Chris Dancy, the world's most connected and smartest man for being our guest. Thank you to you for listening. Thank you to our team, Steve Ludwig, Whitney, Jobe, Maddie McDaniel and Matt Silverman.

I'm Whitney Johnson.

And this is Disrupt Yourself.