

Disrupt Yourself

Podcast

EPIISODE 241: TANYA DALTON

Hi, it's Whitney and I have a favor to ask. We are seeking to better tailor our podcast to meet your needs so we are conducting a quick audience survey. It is a quick survey and the link to the survey is in the show notes. It is a small gesture of appreciation, and when you complete it, you'll get a free PDF listing 10 podcasts that can help with career changes. Thanks so much and onto the show.

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. Stepping back from who you are now to slingshot into who you want to be.

I'm your host, Whitney Johnson. On this show, we talk a lot about purpose and why it's arguably the most important part of work. When your personal mission is aligned with company goals, the sky is the limit on productivity and job satisfaction. When those things are misaligned, cue the burnout, resentment, and lack of motivation. That is what our guest today writes and speaks about. Tanya Dalton is a productivity expert whose new book *On Purpose* covers through a variety of lenses, perfectionism, fear, psychology, and being a woman in a world that suffers from bias.

I was thrilled to talk to Tanya about all these things, and I know that you'll enjoy this conversation as much as I did.

So, Tanya your book *On Purpose*, I loved the double entendre. Can you tell us why you decided to write this book?

Tanya Dalton: Oh yeah, I love this question because it's funny, it turned out to be a very different book than I originally thought I was going to write. You know I had my first book, *The Joy of Missing Out*, in 2019 and Harper Collins asked me to write a second book. So, I sat down with my editor, and we sat down and talked about what I could write the second book about, and we said, "Oh we should do goal setting." Everybody loves goal setting; I could talk about goal setting all day long. I have taught thousands of women how to set their goals, so I thought that would be a cake walk. No problem, right? So, I sit down, and I map out, I do a whole outline and create a writing schedule for myself. I have it all perfectly laid out in February of 2020. Then March of 2020 happened. I think we all know how that went. All the plans went out the window because suddenly I'm homeschooling my kids, I'm filling out paperwork for my business, I am trying to figure out how things work out with my team at the office, and everything else. And I didn't write, and I didn't write, and I didn't write. And the whole writing schedule went out the window and what was amazing is, while I was having this very intentional pause in my writing, I was watching these conversations and listening to all these things that people were talking about through the pandemic. And I thought, 'What have I been doing? Am I happy with how I have been spending my days? And is this really what life is all about?' and all of those things. And when I sat down to really start writing the book, I began to realize goals are not the goal. That I think a lot of times we believe that it's when we accomplish x or y or z, when I make this much money, or I achieve this level on the corporate ladder or do these things is suddenly when I am going to be happy. That when I reach the other side of that finish line, that's where happiness lies. And really, goals are the vehicle to get us that bigger life. I really wanted to tackle those questions of like 'Why am I here? What am I called to do? What is my bigger purpose?' And that's really what began to unfold very beautifully as I sat down to write. And so for somebody like me, a productivity expert, throwing out your perfectly laid plans, feels – it's a really interesting feeling. And yet it's so freeing in that the book that came out of me having this pause and really allowing the shifts to happen is so much better than what I would have written if I had started off and stuck with that whole outline. I truly believe that.

Whitney Johnson: So, it's a COVID baby?

Tanya Dalton: It's a COVID baby. Without question, yes! I think there's a lot of gifts that come out of what we've just been through. One of the biggest gifts is that really intentional pause. Sometimes it's easy to miss the gift because we don't like the package it's wrapped in. And that was a pretty ugly package. But what a gift it's been to have this moment in time and to really step back and take a good look at how we are living. Do I like what I am doing? Do I like where I am going? That's the big gift in all of this.

Whitney Johnson: Oh. I completely agree. It has been such, as you said, such a challenging time. But there is such a gift. And I loved what you said – what did you say about the packaging, or the wrapping say that again.

Tanya Dalton: Sometimes we miss the gift because of the package it's wrapped in. You know sometimes the gift we get is the failure and the trial and the trauma. The things we don't like, and we just 'I'm going to sweep them under the rug.' But you know, there's a lot of gifts in that, and that's really what we experienced with the pandemic. Not the prettiest gift, and not the best packaging – it was all wrapped up in not the best-looking thing, and yet hidden inside of that was this magical moment. That the whole world stopped to really reflect, and I think that's really powerful.

Whitney Johnson: Boom. Let's end the podcast, Tanya.

Tanya Dalton That's it we're done here.

Whitney Johnson: Everything we need here. So, one thing that you said in your book, once to accept responsibility for your own life you can do anything. Do you feel like this pause that happened, of you know, you thought you were going to write this one book, you ended up writing another book: on a scale of 1-10, how do you feel like you moved? You know were you a five in terms of accepting responsibility for your own life and as a result of this process, now you're at a 7? How much do feel like you moved over the last couple of years?

Tanya Dalton: I love this question, because sometimes that number shifts a little bit, right? Sometimes it's higher and sometimes it's lower. There were certainly times in my life several years ago where my responsibility rating would be probably like a 4, where it was just like life is happening to me, I have no control over anything, I just want the magic pill, tell me what to do, the magic system. And it's been through the course of the past several years, really, that I've really shifted to understand that, yes, there are a lot of things in this world that I can not control. You know if I were to make a list of all of those things it would be the length of a football field. But the things that we can control are so strong, they are so mighty. And when we choose to focus in on what we can control, that is when we really take ownership over our own life. That is when we really take charge. And for me, coming through all the things that we experienced pre-pandemic, pandemic, I would say my rating now would be like an 8 or a 9. Because it really is about the power of choice, the choices that we make on a daily basis. That we get to choose what that life looks like. That life isn't just this thing that happens to us on repeat, where it's just like this is just how life is. It's, no, that's not how life is. Let me choose to disrupt that pattern let me choose to step into what I really want. And feeling confident in doing that, doing it guilt free. That's another big part of that.

Whitney Johnson: Any you also said something that I thought was really, I love that this mighty. The mighty opportunity, I think that's really powerful. We don't use that word very often and I think that's really, that really resonated with me. So, alright, so let's start to dive into this idea. You talk about how we have these big dreams; we struggle to pursue

them. Tell us why, and in the book, you have an intriguing headline. Matt Damon and Natalie Portman walk into a bar I think you said it was.

Tanya Dalton: Yes.

Whitney Johnson: Let's just talk about some of the reasons why we don't do these bigger dreams that we have.

Tanya Dalton: I really, I thoroughly love this question because I love to talk about how our brain works. Because I think when we understand how our brain works, we can disrupt it. We can change the way that it works. Well, we can first of all normalize it and say 'Oh, oh, this is why I've struggled with whatever it is. Or this is why I'm doing these things.' So, there's this amazing study that I love and I nerd out on these kinds of studies. Because I think it's so fascinating to understand exactly how your brain works. So, there's this amazing fMRI study where they had these participants in an fMRI machine which basically lights up the parts of their brain that are activated. And they would have these participants talk about themselves right now, today, in the present. And sure enough, like a Christmas tree, certain parts of their brain would light up. So, then they had the same participants talk about themselves in the future. The future could be three years from now, could be weeks from now, could be three hours from now. But it's you in the future. And what's interesting is, a very different part of your brain lights up when you talk about yourself in the future. And the most interesting part of the whole thing to me was this, they would have those same participants talk about Matt Damon and Natalie Portman and that same area of the brain that lights up when you think about yourself in the future, that lights up. When you think about these strangers, the people that we kind of know. So when we think about our brain, us in the future is not us. It is someone who looks and acts and talks and thinks and even has your same name, but it isn't you. Your brain prioritizes what we're doing today because your brain is wired for survival. Your brain is like, we need to survive this sabretooth tiger. It's part of that caveman brain of ours. And it is prioritizing what we're doing today over what is going to happen to us in the future. Which explains why we buy the expensive shoes instead of saving for our 401-K. Why we eat the cookie today instead of eating the carrot. Because the person who has to deal with the repercussions. The person who has no money in their 401-K, that's not 'me', I don't have to worry about that. That is somebody else who has to deal with it. So, it really is fascinating how our brain prioritizes today over us in the future. And when we understand that it really starts to make sense why we've struggled with our goals in the past. Why we've had a hard time connecting to our purpose, and it's because our brain is really wired to want us to focus in on today.

Whitney Johnson: So, what's the work-around? What do you do? Now that you know that what do you do?

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, well this is the thing, is that now that you know you can really, you can kind of hack your brain to make it work for you. And I think there's a lot of fascinating ways to do it. And this is where I think technology is so amazing. I mean even on Instagram and Snapchat you can use these filters that automatically age you. So, studies have shown that if you look at a picture of yourself with age progression, you're actually going to save more money for your 401-K, for your retirement. So, you can have pictures of yourself where you look like yourself in the future. Or let's say that your goal is to run a marathon. You could find a picture of somebody running a marathon, crossing that finish line. And you could superimpose your own image of your face on top. Doesn't have to be perfect. You don't have to have an expert do that for you. Just even tape it on top of a printed picture and start to see yourself in the future. When we start to connect to who we are in the future, we start to connect our actions of today with that person

doing that action or accomplishing that goal or whatever it is. There's just a couple of really simple and easy ways we could do that.

Whitney Johnson: So how have you applied that for you specifically? What did you do? Did you tape a picture of your head on top of a person running a marathon or something different?

Tanya Dalton: Well, I have no interest in running a marathon unless I'm being chased by the sabretooth tiger, so no, not for that one. But I have used the age progressed pictures of myself for saving for my 401K. I think that it's really powerful to see that. And I've used age progressed pictures of myself in other ways. When I'm setting a goal, or when I'm thinking about who it is I want to be as a business owner, even putting, superimposing a picture of yourself on the cover of Forbes magazine, something like that. Those types of little tweaks, changes we can make, really make a big difference in us seeing the value of the work we're doing, the small steps we're making today to get to that bigger tomorrow. So that's just a couple of ways that I've done it, but there's lots of ways we can do that.

Whitney Johnson: When you put that picture of yourself on the cover of Forbes magazine, how did it feel?

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, well at first, you're like, 'Is this silly?', because this is part of our subconscious of coming in and saying, 'What are you doing here, come on, this is silly.' And then I was like, why is this silly? Why is this not a possibility? And I really started questioning the is this silly talk for myself because part of the, this is kind of a silly thing, is us shutting down the opportunity, the possibility that this could happen. SO really when I'm superimposing a picture of myself on the cover of Forbes magazine, I don't just put a picture of myself on Forbes magazine, I also think about what I want the headline to say. What does the headline look like for me? And it's really about who I am as you know somebody who starts a foundation and somebody who's a philanthropist, who gives back to the community. And when I started doing that, when I started really rounding out that story, that's when I began to really connect with it more. So, it's almost like creating a backstory of how I got there. That made a big difference for me.

Whitney Johnson: I love that. I love the explanation and I love that you did that. That just makes, I like you even more. So, are there any particularities or idiosyncrasies as it pertains to women. I know you're writing a book to women, but what have you discovered around that?

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, it's really fascinating. I think especially as women, our brains just work differently. I don't think it's a bad thing, I think it's a beautiful think to acknowledge and to accept. I think it's a wonderful thing that our brains work differently than how men's brains work. I think that's part of, you know, I tell my kids on a regular basis; this is what makes the world an amazing place is that we are all so different, we need that diversity, even in the way that we think. What I think is so interesting with women, which is so different from how men think, is that we as women have been primed and programmed by society to really be rule followers. You know we see this time and time again with girls exceeding and just excelling at school where we are rewarded for following the rules. But when we step out of line, outside of the rules, we're told that we are bossy. Right? Boys are never told that they are bossy. They're told that they are overconfident. And what happens is, we begin to associate this idea of being a boss, of you know not following the rules as being something that is bad innately. And so, we're so busy trying to play by the rules that it holds us back. In fact, there are numerous studies that show that if there is a job application that's out or a job offering, a woman will not apply unless she can check the boxes of 100% of the qualifications. Whereas a man, 60%, 60% and they're like 'Yep I can totally do that job.' As a woman we're worried that we are

not following the rules if we can't follow 100%. And that's not to say there's anything wrong with the fact that the men are applying at 60%, good for them. Right? It's really, why is it that we feel the need to play by these arbitrary, strict, yet always changing rules that society has for us? And what's wrong with bending the rules a little bit. I think that that holds us back in so many ways. From really seeing ourselves as the experts that we are. And I think that when we choose to not see ourselves as experts, it's no surprise that others don't see us as experts and don't turn to us automatically. So, it's really about rising up, recognizing that there are rules there, but rules are meant to be broken, or bent, or changed, or shifted, or crossing that line a little bit. Stepping into who you are, that you get to define who you are. You choose your identity. Other people will accept you as you present yourself. So, if you want to be taken seriously, present yourself seriously. If you are wanting to, let's say, start a business, don't call yourself like a hobbyist. Don't say 'Well I have this little business.' or 'I've got this little thing on the side.' That's making it small, that's making yourself small. That's cramming yourself inside this tiny little box. Choose, instead, to call yourself a successful entrepreneur, or an up-and-coming entrepreneur, or a savvy business owner. Think about how we're identifying ourselves and choose to step into that fully. The world will accept you as you decide.

Whitney Johnson: I was just about to ask you about your hack. And it sounds like your hack is use your words. Use your words to describe yourself as you imagine yourself to be. We had, oh probably months and months ago, but Marcus Whitney on the podcast and he was talking about how he wanted to become a programmer. And he didn't say 'I am becoming a programmer.' He said, 'I am a programmer.' And he became a programmer. You said it early in your career, when you were playing small, you had someone say to you that you trust you were being selfish. Say more about that.

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, this was the thing that shifted everything with my mindset. I think it's really powerful that a lot of times, especially as women, that we don't want to put ourselves out there because we are worried that we are being selfish by putting ourselves out there. That we are not doing enough for our family, or we are taking all the limelight away from other people. And we struggle with that as a gender, really putting ourselves out there. And the truth is that every single one of us is designed for greatness. Every single one of us has incredible gifts to offer up to the world. It doesn't matter if you have a big platform, or if you're someone famous. In fact, we talk in the book about the fact that regular, every day people have the ability to affect 80,000 people's lives over the course of their lifetime. So, if you have these amazing gifts, and you have the ability to impact 80,000 people, why would you hold back? Why would you not step into it fully? If you are choosing to withhold your gifts, the greatness you could offer the world, the impact you could make, *that* is truly being selfish. You're keeping all of that away from everybody else and when I realize that, that *wow*, I am being selfish by not sharing my story, by not helping other people with my gifts, that is when everything began to shift and fall into place with me. That I really began to recognize my place in the world and how important I am, how important every single one of us are to this amazing ecosystem that we're a part of – this society.

Whitney Johnson: Okay. I can't remember. How did you get to the 80,000 number? I remember reading that, but I forgot.

Tanya Dalton: So we live an average of 73.3 years in our lifetime, and we meet on average about 3 people a day, sometimes more sometimes less. You know the grocery clerk checking us out when we're buying our milk, to the neighbor down the street, to the other parents cheering on their kids at the soccer game alongside of us. So, we're meeting an average of 3 people a day. 3 people a day, 365 days in a year, times 73 years that we're alive on this earth. That's about 80,000 people. Which is a staggering number when we

stop to think about it. We think that we don't, just as regular everyday people don't have the ability to change lives, but 80,000 people. That's a lot. That's a stadium full.

Whitney Johnson: Wow, yeah. How is fear your ally in all of this?

Tanya Dalton: Well, I feel like fear is one of those things that we allow to hold us back. That we have these fears inside of us and we're afraid to step forward. And a lot of times our fears are just perception fears. They're not really survival fears. In fact, one of the things, I talk about in the book is that the #1 fear that people have is the fear of public speaking. A fear that will definitely not kill you. You're not going to die, I mean if your audience falls asleep, you're still going to survive that. Right? So, this is a thing is we give in to our fears even when they're not really survival fears, our body is primed for fear. Again, that's our beautiful brain helping us avoid the sabretooth tiger, to stay alive and so we allow that fear to set in. Even though it is a very natural thing, it's something that we should be experiencing on a regular basis. It keeps us from touching the fire, or from stepping out into traffic. Fear is a great thing, and we see fear as our enemy. We see fear as our enemy when fear can be our greatest ally. For me, when I made the decision to start my own business, grow that business. I had a goal at the time of really growing that business so I could absorb my husband's MBA income and he could come work alongside of me. And through some of the twists and turns of life, he ended up getting laid off from his job. So that fear was very real of 'Oh my gosh what am I doing going out here, chasing after this big dream of mine,' with zero business experience under my belt, mind you. Not a single business class in college. What was I doing there? What would this mean for our kids? Would they go hungry? My kids do like to eat three meals a day, they kind of demand that right? Are we going to be homeless on the street or what does this look like? Instead of saying, okay this fear is overwhelming and I'm going to go curl up in a ball, I let that fear circle me like a shark. Like yeah, what if this did happen? Maybe I could allow that to push me even more. That yes! This is the direction I need to go in because I don't want that worst case scenario to happen. So instead of feeling like we always have to be fearless, because fearlessness doesn't really exist in all walks of life. I mean it does in many regards, like we get in the shower without fearing that we are going to fall and crack our skull open, then we get into a car without fearing that we are going to get into a car accident every time. So we have moments of fearlessness, but it's okay to embrace fear. Let's focus in on the courage and the bravery because that's so much stronger than being fearless.

Whitney Johnson: And that reminds me of what your definition of resilience. That you've adapted a bit from the American psychological association; where you said, resilience is the ability to accept your own shortcomings and use that knowledge to your advantage.

Tanya Dalton: It really is. I mean the thing is trauma, failure, you know the parts of our past that are littered with things that we don't love. That does not make any one of us unique. Every single one of us has a past that's filled with all kinds of regret and sadness, and things that we don't necessarily want to repeat. When we acknowledge it, when we accept that these are parts of who we are, that we're not perfect, and we were not designed to be perfect. We have strengths and we have weaknesses. Let's embrace both. When we understand who we are as a whole, we can use that to our advantage. We can play to our strengths, and let's play to our weaknesses. If I know that I'm not good at something in my world, how can I make a system work so that that weakness becomes a superpower for me? How can I make it so that it becomes easier for me? So, it really is this idea of let's push against regret because the opposite of regret is really this idea of resilience. That regret and knowing what you don't want, knowing the things you don't want to repeat, so much more powerful than knowing what you do. I could promise you right now, if I said to your listeners: make a list of 10 things you want in the future. They would be like, 'Oh

gosh, 10?’ I mean think about it right now, 10 things. Okay, if instead I said: think of 10 things right now that you don’t want to repeat, 10 things in your past that you don’t want to have happen again. No problem, can come up with that list, can probably come up with 50, not 10. But what’s beautiful is we can use that regret as the springboard, we can push against it when we know what we don’t want. We can push against it to the opposite, that tells us what we do want. It’s so much more powerful to know what we don’t want.

Whitney Johnson: Alright, so for women who are feeling, their long-term goal growing up was: I want to be a mother, I want to run a household and now their children are starting to grow up and they’re going to be empty nesters. And now they’re feeling that they need to do something more. What advice would you give them, who are, they’ve got this yearning and they’re not quite sure where to start?

Tanya Dalton: Well, I feel you. I can tell you that first of all. Because I, I started off life thinking I was going to be a stay-at-home mom. I was a teacher for several years, and then I quit teaching when I had my son Jack who is now 18 and is just headed off to college. I still have one at home, but I thought I was going to be a stay-at-home mom, I really thought that that’s who I was “supposed to be.” And there was this pull within me that I wanted more, and I felt like, shouldn’t I be fulfilled enough by motherhood. And I felt guilty for not being 100% filled up, to the brim, with motherhood. So, I think, first of all, that it’s walking away from that feeling like is there something wrong with me? It’s okay to want more. It’s okay to have a life outside of what you do as a mother. You know, if we were designed to have motherhood be our end-all, be-all purpose for our entire lives, we would be flies. That’s what flies do, they have babies and then the babies are up and out, and then they die. And yet, we were made for so much more, right? We were made for so much more. And so really, first of all, accepting that that’s okay. Let’s, let’s, if I could do one thing for women honestly, if I had a superpower, if someone were to come down and say, “I am going to give you the gift of one superpower,” it would be to destroy guilt. Just to get rid of guilt because it does us no good. And I think guilt is what holds us back a lot of times, is that we feel like, well I should be completely fulfilled by being a mother. And it’s okay that we’re not. And it’s okay to shift into something new. In fact, I like to say that when we chase after our big dreams as mothers, no matter how old our kids are, whether we’re turning into empty nesters or we have kids just going into preschool, or just born, or whatever age. When we do that, we model for our children, we model for our daughters what a woman is capable of. That she can go after her dreams and it’s okay to chase after them. We want that for our daughters. If you were to ask any mother what she wants for her daughter, they would say, “For her to do what makes her happy.” Right? So why is that not enough for us? And here’s the thing, we’re modeling for our daughters what’s possible, but we’re modeling for our sons what a woman is capable of as well. You know, I am very proud to have raised a feminist who’s off as a freshman in college who doesn’t think twice about the fact that his mom is a CEO, and my husband works for me. To him, that is just natural, like why is that a big deal to anybody? We’re really establishing new models for our children when we go after our dreams. Think about what a gift that is for our children, that we’re creating a brand-new world for them through our actions. So, go for it. Do the thing that you’re really wanting to do, the thing that gets your heart on fire and ignites your soul. Go after that because that benefits your kids in a thousand different ways.

Whitney Johnson: Tanya, as you’re talking, I continually find myself wanting to say, ‘Amen!’ to everything you’re saying. It’s awesome, I feel like I’m at a revival.

Tanya Dalton: I do tend to get up on the pulpit just a little bit. I get fired up because I want women to feel as passionate about what they do as I do about what I do.

Whitney Johnson: So, let's talk a little bit about the S-Curve. So, in our work we use the S-Curve as this model for people to look at what growth looks like. Depending on where you are in your growth, you are going to do some things differently. It also orients you so that when you're doing something brand new, like this you know, the woman you were just talking to, where her children are growing up, and you're going to do something new. You're going to feel really uncomfortable and awkward and that normalizes the experience. And then you're moving along, and you've reached the top of the S-Curve and you've figured it out. You've got to do something new so that there's this growth cycle you go through. You work mostly with women, so where do you think women most struggle? Is it to gain traction to start something new? Is it to stay focused once they move into the sweet spot? Or is it when they get really good at something and they feel like they've got it figured out and they can't do it anymore, that they stay too long because they perhaps feel guilty? Do you find that women struggle at different points along the curve? Just riff with me for a moment.

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, well I think every one of those points in the S-Curve has its own pitfalls, right? There're different ways that we get stuck. I would say, honestly, probably where I see most women getting stuck is the launch point. The very beginning where they're grasping for knowledge. I think we get to a point in our lives, and it's not a very old point, try more like 30, where I should know everything. Like, I should have myself together, I should know these things. There's this whole idea where if I don't know how to do something, either it's not right for me, or I'm not right for it, or whatever. And I think we struggle with the not knowing. And we struggle with what that's going to look like to the outside world. And that plays again on those fears, the perception fears. Because most of our fears are not the survival fears, they're the perception fears of: what will people think? What will people think of me if I go back to school and get a degree? Look at me. I'm 50 years old. What am I thinking doing that? Or who do I think I am thinking I can go do something new? When if you really look at some of these women who are doing amazing things, I mean Julia Childs didn't start cooking until she was 40 years old. Did not know how to chop onions. Learned how to do that when she was 40 years old. Vera Wang hadn't sewn a single wedding gown until she was 40 years old. I think the not knowing, sometimes holds us back because we think that we're going to look stupid. And I think we have this fear of looking foolish and looking silly when in reality, the beautiful thing that happens when we don't know what's possible, is anything is possible. Our opportunities are endless when we don't have the expertise, when we're starting something fresh and new. We have so many more opportunities for innovation and disruption. We have so many opportunities to step fully into what it really is we want because we don't know what's possible. And that's an amazing thing. We don't step into it because we think that it looks silly, that if we're learning something new. I'll tell you this, Google is my best friend, and Google never judges you. You can Google the same thing 10 times in a row, and Google's not like, "Hey, dummy, that's not how..." You know? That's the thing, we have so much information at our fingertips. There are videos we can watch, there are Google searches we can do, there are all kinds of blogs and resources, and so much richness of knowledge. Don't fear stepping out of your comfort zone. That's the thing that happens when we're learning something new, it means we are stepping out of our comfort zone. Even if we're already uncomfortable where we are, we fear stepping out of that comfort zone. Because it feels like sweatpants and Netflix. That is what our comfort zone feels like. And really when we're challenging ourselves, that's when we get reignited. That's really when we get into that zone of greatness where we are operating on all cylinders and feeling the wind in our hair. That's when the excitement happens. It is getting out of our own way.

Whitney Johnson: So that's so fun, one of my husband's favorite films is *Pride and Prejudice* where Kiera Knightley is on top of the more, and they played this incredible

music called “Lizzy on Top of the World” and when you said that wind blowing in your hair, that’s immediately what I thought of. So that’s very fun.

Tanya Dalton: I mean what exhilaration, right? That’s what starting something new is. Exhilaration.

Whitney Johnson: Exactly. Right now, at this moment, when you look at all the advice and counsel that you are giving to the world. Which advice right now, this week, yesterday, this morning, is what you’re wrestling with? That you’re trying to do a little bit better.

Tanya Dalton: I tell you, that I have done a lot of interviews for this book, and no one has asked me this question. And I think it’s such a great question, it really is. Because a lot of times, when we are writing books and we are writing advice, I feel like it as much for the reader as it is for myself in many ways. Like it’s sometimes that I need to be reminded of things as well. I would say that there is a whole section of the book that I talk about the myth of the multi-passionate person. That we have all these shiny objects that we want to chase, and we gather them together like a squirrel. And we have all these ideas and that can stymie us that we don’t move forward. I like to say that one of my husband’s main jobs for me is to stand off on the side and say the word “narrow.” Because I’ve got 75 ideas, and every single one of those ideas has about 36 different versions to it. So, I could really easily go off the rails and just get into that realm of overwhelming myself with all the ideas. Which is why I think it’s so important to give yourself a container of time. To give yourself a container whenever you are brainstorming or coming up with ideas, and I use that idea container of time a lot because in my mind’s eye, when I picture a container of time I picture a Tupperware container, oddly enough. But it’s got these high-rimmed sides, it’s got to start time where I get into that container, and it’s got a stop time where I get out of that container. And so I very purposefully give myself those containers, because I know that’s one of my weaknesses. SO here I am, publicly announcing, that yes, that is a weakness for me. It is certainly something that I talk about because I can really speak into that. I really understand that issue and the problem of wanting to do #allthethings. I could do this, or I could do that, or I could chase this. And we all need someone in our life to go “narrow.” And that’s one of the things I hope to do in this book is help people narrow in. And that’s why we have the activity that talks about, how do you narrow? in the book.

Whitney Johnson: So where can people find you?

Tanya Dalton: The best place to really find me is tanyadalton.com which is my main website. You can find links to my books there: both *The Joy of Missing Out* and *On Purpose* both of which can be purchased anywhere books are sold. But you can also find links to my own podcast, *The Intentional Advantage* there as well. So that’s the best place, tanyadalton.com to connect with me.

Whitney Johnson: What was most useful to you in this conversation? So may have been something said but may have been something not said.

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, I had not seen the S-Curve of learning before, and I was really intrigued by that, it had really got my brain thinking about it. And then thinking about the different pitfalls that happen in each one of those spots. So that was really, I love that I am walking away thinking about that, and what does that look like? And where do I think I’m falling with that in different parts of my life? So that was really resonating. I love that.

Whitney Johnson: Alright, any final thoughts for us today?

Tanya Dalton: Yeah, so this is really what I would love for your listeners to do. If today, you heard any tiny piece of advice, or a thought, or a strategy, or a tactic, or anything like that, or if it spurred you to want to feel the wind in your hair a little bit on the Moors like Kiera Knightley. Here's what I would love for you to do. I would love for you to take action today. So, because we're saying today, that's a very small container of time. So that can't be a very big action. Because big actions can overwhelm us. What is something you can do today that would be small, tiny, itty bitty little step that would build a little bit of momentum to get you to where you want to be? It might be stopping to do a little reflection; it might be thinking about how you've been playing by the rules in your own life. It might be thinking about those 80,000 people and what your gifts could look like for them. Whatever it is, I want you to take action today. Do one small thing to build a little bit of momentum. Because here's the thing, when you take one small step, the second step is easy, and the third step becomes easier, and then that fourth step becomes bigger, and then you're running. And that's how we get to the life we want. So take action today.

Whitney Johnson: Tanya Dalton, thank you so much, it has been a delight.

Tanya Dalton: Thank you! I've enjoyed every moment of this.

Tanya was such a delight to talk to. Four key takeaways from this conversation.

Number 1: Sometimes failure and trauma can bear the biggest gifts. We're wired to see failure as a bad thing, and it can be. But as Tanya said, that greatest gifts can come in the ugliest packages. Whether it is dropping the ball on a project, missing a goal, or even a global pandemic that causes everyone hardship. Take the time to recognize what you can learn.

Number 2: Hack the caveman brain. Our ancestors didn't think about the future, it was all about survival today. But in the modern world, we need to stop eating those cookies and put money into the retirement fund. I was floored by Tanya's example from neuroscience. Thinking about yourself in the future, is like thinking about a stranger as far as your brain is concerned. Even though, it feels silly, visualizing yourself in the future by taping your face on a marathon winner can be a powerful way to connect with the person you want to become.

Number 3: Let's upend the unwritten rules for women. Tanya explained how girls are rewarded for following the rules and getting good grades, but when they speak up, they are labeled as bossy. When boys do this, they're confident. But in the grownup world, rules are made to be bent, often broken. We all know great leaders who do it. It is time to break down the gender stigma around rule breaking, so women and girls can achieve their goals without the guilt.

Number 4: Fear and regret as a springboard. Fear of failure, even when the stakes are low can hold us back. Tanya flips the script on everything fear wires us to avoid. She said it best, "when we don't know what is possible, anything is possible." Use your list of regrets to identify things you never want to do again. This can clarify your future.

If you enjoyed this episode, you may want to go back to Shawn Stephenson - Episode 202, he's the host of the Model Health show and he talks a lot about the brain. You may also want to listen to Aicha Evans - Episode 217, CEO of Zoon. Where she tells a story of taking apart her phone as a young girl. And finally, Brooke Snow - Episode 224, who also focuses on changing your self-limiting beliefs.

For those of you who would like a copy of Tanya's book, email me at wj@whitneyjohnson.com and tell me your purpose. We will make 5 copies available. I read and respond to every note. And we would really appreciate your taking our survey. It helps us understand you better. You can find a link to the survey in the show notes, and I promise it's quick.

Thank you again to Tanya Dalton for being our guest. Thank you for listening. Thank you to our producer Matt Silverman, audio engineer and editor Whitney Jobe, assistant producer Steven Ludwig, and production assistant Maddie McDaniel.

I'm Whitney Johnson.

And this is Disrupt Yourself.