

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPISODE 334: Alan Mulally

Today, we've got a special episode, one of my personal heroes--Alan Mulally.

You've probably sat in a Boeing 777. He was the chief engineer on that plane. You might have a Ford sitting out in your driveway. He's the reason Ford was the only major American car company that didn't take a bailout in 2008. He was even considered for the role of Secretary of State in 2016.

Alan Mulally has held many titles in his career -- President and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, President and CEO of Ford, but none of them quite capture his impact on these companies and the people who work for them. We can go over all the business maneuvers like mortgaging all of Ford's assets to borrow \$20 billion dollars or the engineering feats like the first all-digital cockpit -- but you have to hear it from his personally, how you put together four million plane parts, hundreds of thousands of employees and even more shareholders, to create an airplane that can deliver people point-to-point, non-stop, halfway around the world. Funnily enough, it all comes down to love.

So I'll let Alan tell you how he did it. I hope you enjoy.

**Whitney Johnson:** Alan, thank you for being here. I've been wanting to have this conversation for a number of years, and so I'm really delighted that our listeners are going to be able to get to hear from you.

**Alan Mulally:** Well, it's great to be with you again. I really look forward to our conversation.

**Whitney Johnson:** So as I reflect on your life, it's very much been a life about service to your family, to Boeing, to Ford and to the world generally. Will you share with us your working together journey? What made you who you are, how you developed as a leader, and most importantly, your service journey?

**Alan Mulally:** It's really interesting the way you ask the question because we both have a really good friend in Frances Hesselbein and Marshall Goldsmith and Sarah MacArthur, and they were writing a book entitled Work is Love Made Visible. And they called me and said they wanted to ask me if I'd write a chapter. And it along with the authors and I, they had great authors and I didn't think that I could add any value, so I regretted. So then they came back a couple of

weeks later and they said, We're not leaving until you agree to support us. I said, well, what would you like me to do? They said, would you like we'd like you to write the foreword to the book. And I said, well, what would you want me to write about? They said, well, and this is Frances talking. She said, Alan, you know, everybody knows who you are and they know what you've done, but they want to know why you are who you are. Why do you smile all the time and why do you love people up and enjoy them and appreciate them? And so I said, well, how do you want me to describe that? And Frances says, start when you're born. And oh my gosh, okay. So I grew up in the Midwest, in Lawrence, Kansas, and had two wonderful parents.

We didn't have very many resources, but we had a lot of love in our family. And it's really interesting, Whitney, because every morning my mom or my dad would say something on my way to school and they'd say they'd ask me questions like this. Like my mom would say, So, honey, what is it? Remember what the purpose of life is? And I said, oh, mom, I sure do. It's to love and be loved. And then she'd say, And Alan, in that order. Oh, thanks, Mom. Yeah, great. Then the next day, my dad would say something like, well, remember, honey, the service to live. Another one was Seek to understand before you seek to be understood. And another one was working together with others. You can make the most positive contribution and the most people expect the unexpected and expect to deal with it. Lifelong learning, continuous improvement. And you can see how you and I are one, because this is all about growth. This is all about smart growth. This is all about the S-curve. This is like continuously improving over your life. And then a couple of more that I really took to heart is respect everyone. We're all creatures of God and we're worthy to be loved, developed an integrated life. That's your life's work of service and the one that I never forgot Whitney, was "Alan, it's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice." So with that I was just a regular, regular child. I just wanted a pair of Levi's and shoes and maybe a car someday. And maybe I could go to the University of Kansas, which was in Lawrence, which was my window to the world. And so I just started serving because that was the only way that I was going to be able to be appreciated and maybe be able to fund my future. So every job that I had, I just loved working together and I loved serving and I love continuous improvement. So my paper route and my lawn mowing business and working at the Dillons grocery store and so I just loved serving and that led that. I followed that through my teenage years and then through University of Kansas and also through MIT and also with through our family and then I was very fortunate to join Boeing. And Boeing is, you know, clearly one of the most phenomenal companies that integrates large scale systems, integration, project and program and business management with all of their commercial airplanes and military projects. So I combined my formation as a person with the finest program business management in the world.

And out of that came our working together leadership and management system. And then I never thought I would leave Boeing and I had a chance to serve on the on the design team of every Boeing airplane. The 707 727737. I love to share these with you. The 747757767. I was asked to be the chief engineer and of the seven, seven, seven. And then when I was a CEO, I was asked to help launch the seven eight. And I never thought I would leave Boeing. And then I get a call from Bill Ford. I'm going, Whoa. Bill Ford, the great grandson of Henry Ford. And he started sharing me what the situation was at Ford in which it got to be pretty tough. The situation they were in in 2006 and at the end of the day, I decided to go to Ford because I thought I was being asked to serve a second American and global icon, which are two companies that are really important for the United States and as well as the rest of the world. And so it's really fun to start out with your first question because I love being able to share this with others so that we all move forward together to serve the greater good around the world.

**Whitney Johnson:** I have a question about your parents. So your mother would say love and be loved in that order. It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice. Do you have a memory of watching your mother or your father putting those principles or values into action? Because you can say it's important to serve other people, but if they're not serving other people, then it's going to sort of go in one ear and go out the other. So do you have a memory of just watching your parents put those values in action?

**Alan Mulally:** Whitney Great question. And I agree with you completely. And the answer is yes. Yes, and yes, because that's who they were. And my dad had a finance degree. He also worked for the United States Post Office. So he interfaced with lots and lots of people. And my mom was associated with the art department at the University of Kansas, and they lived every one of these beliefs, values and the behaviors. And so clearly, I was brainwashed. I mean, I just saw this and I saw the effectiveness. I saw the smiles on the faces of the people they dealt with. And of course, living in Lawrence with the University of Kansas, I had a chance to meet all of these students from around the world. And so my parents would actually invite them over for the holidays, like on Thanksgiving and Christmas. And so I was just in awe of all these phenomenal people from around the around the world. And so not only did I see it with my parents, but also then saw the impact that they had on others. And so when I started serving, it was really clear to me. And then of course, to be appreciated by serving with humility, love and service, then that just built on itself. So it was very, very, very important to me.

**Whitney Johnson:** So there was this positive feedback loop of I can imagine you said that your father worked in the Postal Service. It sounds like he had some customer facing experiences and so he would smile and it would light people's world up.

**Alan Mulally:** Absolutely. Same way with my mom at the University of Kansas. All the people that they interface with, everybody always was great, was glad to see them, but also they were so appreciative of their service and what they were doing to serve the greater good. And so I just thought it was so effective and it was so neat that I just wanted to be the best that I could be.

**Whitney Johnson:** Will you tell the story about when you were working in the grocery store? Tell that story.

**Alan Mulally:** Oh my gosh, you are on top of your game today. So --

**Whitney Johnson:** I've read -- I've read the book, Alan.

**Alan Mulally:** Okay.

**Whitney Johnson:** I've heard, I've heard the stories tell that story. It's a great story.

**Alan Mulally:** Okay. Oh, I'd be glad to. So I first joined Dillons grocery store as a as a bagger. And of course, it's Lawrence. The weather can really vary between hot and cold and snow and rain and so I would bag the groceries and I would take them out to the car and I loved bagging them. And I learned I continually improved how I did it so I could protect the groceries. And of course all the customers would then give me a tip. And so, I mean, it was it was like, holy cow, I'm being appreciated for loving them up and supporting them. And so then they promoted me to a checker at

the Dillons grocery store. So I'm checking the groceries and one day the manager of the grocery store saw the customers coming through the line, take out some extra money and give it to me. And he was and he told me later he was wondering, well, did Alan ask for that or why are they doing that? So he walked over to the counter and he said to the customer, he said, Well, I've noticed that you have been giving. Now some extra money and ask you why. And they said, oh, well, we love his service. I mean, when we arrived here, he checked to make sure that we had all the coupons from for buying all the things we did. And he asked us if we had it, found everything in the grocery store. So we love his service. So we're giving him this, giving him a tip. And the manager said, we've never had a customer give the checker a tip going through the checkout line. And so I, just to your -- to our point, loving them up and serving people is fantastic. And not only are you appreciated, but it really results in a lifestyle of continuous improvement.

**Whitney Johnson:** And what was so useful for you? I mean, this idea of continuous improvement is your parents are saying, hey, you know, love and be loved in that order, etcetera, and you're getting this immediate feedback loop, which as a 16- or 17-year-old is incredibly useful.

**Alan Mulally:** Well, and you know, Francis had a great comment about that, Whitney, because when she said, I want you to share your story from the day you were born, I'm going, Whoa. So I had and I had even said that to Francis. Well, Francis, people don't know this about me, the why part, because I never share that. And she leaned forward Whitney and she said, "Exactly, that's why we want you to share it, because who you are is going to have more to do with your effectiveness and what you do and how you do it than anything else." And we all learned that from Francis and you and other leaders that that that understand this. And so starting out, going back and then trying to remember all of those things that I realized that from the day that I could remember anything that I was learning this and I was doing it and I was getting positive feedback. So I was continually improving it and including all the stakeholders that were associated with whatever I was doing.

**Whitney Johnson:** Were your parents Big Smilers.

**Alan Mulally:** Smiled all the time. All the time. I love their smile and it was so sincere because they were interested in us, their kids, and they were interested in what we were doing. They were interested in what they were doing. They were interested in making a difference and like and like you have been teaching everybody. I mean, this is about growth. It's about learning. It's about appreciating that growth and that change and the ability to do more and do it in a smart way. And so that makes you smile just in general, right? All the way down inside you.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah. It's interesting. I think the one of the reasons why I'm so intrigued by this is that I did not grow up in a smiley family. And I, I have throughout my life, on a number of occasions, people said to me, you're so serious, you should smile more. And then I remember hearing you this wonderful anecdote that Jim Kim had shared with you or shared about you. Do you want to share it or do you want me to share it?

**Alan Mulally:** Well, I think your observation would be pretty.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay. I'll share it. So for those of you who are listening who don't know who he is, Jim Kim was the president of the World Bank. Many accomplishments, but that's one of them. And he was having a coaching session, informal coaching session with Alan and asking Alan for advice. And so here he's talking to this American icon. He's

turned around forward. He was the CEO of Boeing and asking him, "So what advice do you have for me?" And Alan said, and so you can correct me if you want, Alan. And Alan said, you have a nice smile. You should smile more. And the idea was that when you're in a position of leadership, your face is no longer yours. And so people are looking at every single move of your eyelash, of your face as a as a weathervane for how things are going. And so the smile makes all the difference. So that's my story. You can correct me if you would like.

**Alan Mulally:** No, no. It's very accurate. And a key a couple of key things about what you said. No matter what level you are, you're always a leader. And because every time you're interfacing with anybody, people are looking at you. They're trying to understand you. They also are trying to understand you. You see them. And so can you imagine with the more responsibility that you are given and asked and you walk in the room and you're not smiling and you're and you're looking at other people, Well, they don't know whether something's wrong with you, whether something is wrong with the business. Maybe there's something wrong with them. Why aren't you smiling? They're a human being. They're part of the of the solution of what we're doing together for the greater good. And so the smile just has to do with everything. And I also have found and others have shared the same thing is once you start looking at the world that way in a positive growth, find a way, attitude. Also believing in humanity and believing in others because they're part of the solution of creating A777. I mean, when we create A777 Whitney, it has there are probably between 5 and 600,000 people that are working on the airplane during the design phase. And the airplane has 4 million parts. It's going to fly halfway around the world safely and efficiently. The best airplane in the entire world where you can imagine this working together is a huge deal. And so that smile and that including everybody and appreciating everybody is absolutely key to working together.

**Whitney Johnson:** I want to pause here and direct everyone to the show notes on whatever app you're using, Alan's going to run through the principles that working together is built on, and he's got a handy PDF with all of them written down just so you don't feel like you have to memorize everything that he's saying. There are some other great resources in there too. I hope you're enjoying our conversation so far and I'll talk to you again after the interview. So let's then go to talking about your working together principles, practices and connected culture of love. Think the smile is part of that by design. And I'm thinking about that phrase of connected culture of love by design. You're an engineer. You use the word design that means something. You build planes, as you just said, the most sophisticated commercial plane ever, 4 million parts. How did you design a culture, a connected culture of love, and what does that mean exactly?

**Alan Mulally:** Oh, what fun. Okay, so culture is everything. It's who we are. It's why we are who we are. It's what we do. And it's how we do it. And it includes the operating processes that we use. And it also includes the expected behaviors that we have for all the participants. And so you think of the working together with all these 600,000 people. And so what do we want to have and need to do this to create the best airplanes in the world is a connected culture where everybody is connected, everybody knows the vision, everybody knows the strategy, everybody knows the plan. Everyone knows the areas need special attention. And they also know the expected behaviors on how we're going to operate together. And that starts out with humility, love and service, because that's what I learned all the way along, is that's what that's what it takes to create value for the greater good. And so it's a design job. So creating the culture is a design job. And so the working together includes very clear. And we'll go over this, as you wish, with the operating process we're going to use, plus the expected behaviors with zero tolerance for violating because that is the essence, that culture is the essence of how we're going to work together. So the very first one is you just said is people first love

them up. So now we're back to humility, love and service and why I mean, these are these are people from all around the world. They're dedicated in their life to creating the best commercial airplanes in the world, just using airplanes.

Same thing with cars and trucks. And they are providing their absolute all of their talent and their enthusiasm and their and their attitudes and their behaviors. And so the most important thing is to appreciate people share all these principles and practices that we're going to talk about with them, because that's the most respectful thing you could ever do to love them up. Now, the next one everyone is included, is really important because that means we include all of the stakeholders. A lot of people, as we know, they don't do that, but we need all the stakeholders. And that's why every Boeing airplane has been so successful, because not only are we included in the airlines, but we're including all the suppliers, all the employees, all the investors, all the governments around the world to certify the airplanes, all the communities in which the airplanes operate out of all the bankers that are helping finance it. And so including everybody on the team in the same way is really important and coming together around a compelling vision where we're going with Boeing and with Ford, a strategy for achieving it, and a relentless implementation. Clear goals, one plan, facts and data. We care what people think. We also want to know what the data is you're looking at. So when we do have an issue and we can work together with confidence to turn the reds, yellows and greens. And what I mean by that is that when we do a business plan, review, every one of the leaders every week shares their contribution to the strategy and the plan. And then they also do a status on every element of their plan and they put a color coding on the chart. Green It's on plan yellow. It has an issue, but they have a solution. Red They have a new issue, but they don't have a solution yet. And of course, you can imagine that psychological safety is really, really important because they've got to feel comfortable that they can share what the issue is. And of course, the most important thing we're doing back to love them up is they're not the problem, they're the answer. And they have now shared the issue so that we all can work together. Everybody knows all everything about the plan, the status, their attitudes and behaviors are key. Propose a plan positive, find a way, attitude, respect each other, listen to each other. Help each other, appreciate each other. As you can see, Whitney, very sophisticated words, all super sophisticated.

All things that you can see and the emotional resilience trust this process and the one that's really, really important to have fun, enjoy the journey and each other. Now, the corollary to this one is really important. Never a joke ever at anybody else's expense. And as you know, jokes at others expenses are never funny and people will go along to get along. But what happens to their working together attitude? They're going to be very careful about sharing things if they think they're going to be the brunt of a joke or made fun of. And so the psychological safety and loving them up and that smile and saying thank you for a read is really important to creating this working together culture.

**Whitney Johnson:** All right. So I have a bunch of questions for you. I think the first question let's start with never a joke at anyone else's expense. And I would love for you because you and I can both say that. Agreed? Of course. Talk me through a situation and it can be at work. It can be at home. Doesn't matter where you've been in a you've been in an environment where someone has made a joke at someone else's expense. Role play for me. What you say or do?

**Alan Mulally:** Wow. Um, well, absolutely. A key question. Whitney. Because the most important contribution. Uh, of the leader is the hold themselves and the entire team, including all the stakeholders. Responsible and accountable for following these principles and practices with zero tolerance for violating them. Okay. So I'll give you I'll give you one big example. So I start the business plan review every week. The whole team is they're all networked around the world and they've asked me all about these principles and practices. I've shared them with them hour after hour. They had

never seen a culture like this. And they're operating all around the world. They don't know each other so well. So this is all new for them. And so we start the business plan review. And every once in a while, one of the key leaders would go after one of the other members. And he's very smart person and he had a lot of knowledge, but the way he was asking questions was not conducive to creating psychological safety. So, you know, I followed him up to his office after the after the meeting a couple of times. And I said, what do you think? And you think this fits our principles and practices? And he said, oh, you know, and I you know, I know I wasn't as respectful as I need to be.

And but that's just the way I am. That's who I am. And I've been promoted. I've really made a big difference. And I don't know whether I can change these behaviors. And I said, well, you remember why we're doing it. We need their hearts and their minds because we're competing against the best in the world and we need the best out of everybody. We want everybody to be able to grow and learn, he said. I know, but I don't know whether I can do it. Alan And Whitney, I said. I understand. It's okay. And he looked at me. And he said, Oh, Alan, that's great. You mean because I'm so important to this organization that I can continue with my command and control, intimidating behavior? And I said, well, that's not quite what I mean. What I mean by okay is that you understand this is a decision that you're making. It doesn't work for all of us, and we wish you the very best going forward. But it's not here with us or we'll see if we can find you a job where you're not going to be influenced a lot of people. And he looked at me and I said, and what I want you to do is, I want you to think about this because I don't want to guess what you're going to do. And I'd like I'd suggest maybe you go home, talk to the people that you love and love you and maybe discuss the situation. And then I want you to come back tomorrow and tell me what you decided. If you want to move in this direction and learn these behaviors, then we can get you a coach. A No Whitney really? Well, she's really great, and if you don't want to do it, then let us know and we'll wish you the very best. And of course, remember the first principle. We still love you. You're a human being. And I stayed in contact and he left. I came back the next day and said he couldn't do it, didn't think he could do it. So he left. And I actually stayed in contact with him for a number of years after he left. And he even said to me one time, Whitney, you know, I really wish many years later that I would have done that, had another person.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, that makes me sad, doesn't it? Because he had this opportunity and he didn't like there were the doors and he chose one over the other door.

**Alan Mulally:** Well, and to your point, I think of what that means to everybody. All those 600,000 people, all those stakeholders, I mean, they know exactly that we have committed to this. Every one of us has committed to this. And also, they also learned another word from me, and that was, say you're sorry, you can we're not perfect. I mean, you may be you're frustrated or you got you're excited about it and you went after somebody or you weren't respectful and then just stop. And we would actually stop the meeting and look at them if they're doing that. Can you imagine how fast they changed? And once they say they're sorry and then they start again and in a positive way, they rarely ever violated these principles and practices Again.

**Whitney Johnson:** Something you just said that was really important to me and powerful is love people up. They're not the problem. They're the answer.

**Alan Mulally:** And isn't that something you think about it? In most organizations, the culture is you only bring an issue, a problem to your supervisor, to your manager, let alone the CEO. If you have a solution. Okay, now you're managing

a secret. No one knows what the issues are. And the person that has found the issue is now getting stressed out. They can't sleep at night. They're trying to figure out the solution. They can't tap into everybody. Well, think how different that is when you can share that with the entire team and they actually plant the first few times they turn the chart to red over green, I clap and they all thought when I clapped that the two doors behind me were going to open up and two large human beings were going to come in and extract that leader from the room because that's that was the culture. And so I clapped and I said, Thank you, thank you, Mark. That is such great visibility. And turned around the team and said, now what do you think we can do to help Mark out here? Think of that. What that person feels like is they are part of the solution to share the issue. Oh, my goodness. You are the answer.

**Whitney Johnson:** So good. All right. So I have a I have a wondering and I want to noodle on this and then see where you come out because. So you're not the problem. You're the answer. You've got these expected or operating processes and expected behaviors. Yes. And. And there's this notion. So oftentimes you hear people say, we need to hold people accountable, which can mean I just finished rereading Ed Catmull's book and had him on the podcast and he said, oftentimes accountability is just code for we're going to bludgeon a person. And so as I'm hearing you say this, there is this element of we need everyone to take 100% responsibility. We're going to work together to solve whatever we need to solve. You're not the problem. You're the answer. But that presupposes that people are taking 100% responsibility. And when they do, then you'll move forward. And when they don't, then they may need to go. But as long as they're taking 100% responsibility and working together, then everybody's holding themselves accountable. So that's where my head is going. Thoughts?

**Alan Mulally:** Well, no, it's absolutely right. And think it the way you said. It really gets at the main issue. We now think of a think about the process and you have a business plan review. So you and I are on the team. We have every discipline on the team. We have every stakeholder represented. We're in a meeting once a week, hour and a half. I start out as a leader status and the vision strategy and plan. Every one of the members of the leadership team does the same thing and they share their greens and yellows and reds. I've missed ten business plan reviews in 45 years. No matter where I am around the world. I just make a phone call in and the kids would do it with me. All five kids, they'd be with me and they're looking to see the reds to turn to yellows turned to red. I mean, they just absolutely loved it. Well, the person that's presenting that. Now think about their meeting every week. They shared a red item the week before. And I've been asked this many times, not as clearly as you just did and about why they would take responsibility. Look, if they just shared a red item with the entire team, that data flowed all around the world, not as a problem, but as a gem. That red not an issue. It's a gem because we're not going to have to manage a secret now. We're all going to be able to do all our talent.

So people say, well, can you imagine the person coming back the next week and saying, you know, it's still a red and I didn't have time to work on it? The heck with all of you guys. Really. Can you imagine what that conversation would be like on the playground? No way. See, they're not working for me anymore. They're working for the purpose of the organization to create the best airplane in the world on schedule. And the only way we can do that is if we work together to do it. So now they're looking at all 12 of those members on the team. They are not working for me now. They're working for what we are doing together, that greater purpose. And they would never, ever come in that next week and say, to heck with all of you. So that responsibility gets to be a very highly motivated and inspirational thing, and they're going to do everything they can to include everybody to turn the reds, yellows and greens, and sometimes we'll have a red. I mean, it's a it's an innovative project. Sometimes we couldn't find the solution for that specific plan.



So what did we do? We used all of our innovation to create a different solution that would turn the reds, yellows and greens. So this this accountability and this feeling of responsibility to each other, but also to the greater purpose is the most highly motivating aspect of working together that I can even imagine.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah. So the, the accountability becomes a byproduct of people taking 100% responsibility. And if they don't want to take 100% responsibility, then they get to go work for another company and it's okay.

**Alan Mulally:** Remember, we love them.

**Whitney Johnson:** We love them. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Alan Mulally:** We only had I only had two people in eight years. Two people in eight years at Ford that we found helped them find another job. And one of them actually left. And 80% of all of the leaders that I selected when I first arrived all were there either in that job or even a even a job on the leadership team. They're even more effective. And most of them were offered senior leadership positions at other companies and they stayed.

**Whitney Johnson:** You know, one of the things as I'm listening to you, Alan, is. It is not an easy thing to be able to separate out behavior that you don't like. From the person. And something that I've observed that you know how to do and your parents probably modeled it for you, is you're able to say to a person, this isn't acceptable. And. I love you.

**Alan Mulally:** We just described. These are on a card. And on the one side of the card and everybody carries this card. All people around the world carry this card. It has the principles and practices. On one side, it has the business plan of what we're going to do to create value for the greater good. And all the stakeholders on the back side of the plan there on the wall in the meeting, you can imagine if somebody starts to look at their computer, have a side conversation, we just stop the meeting and look at them. See, it's not me telling.

**Whitney Johnson:** Them your pressure is a very effective.

**Alan Mulally:** Yeah, right. It's not me telling them just because I'm saying it. We have agreed to this. And think of you. Whitney mean, you're. You are. People first love them up. Well, and if you're not and you arrive and now you've agreed to do this. No matter what your beliefs are, no matter what your values are, all these things that we can't see, you notice all of these are behaviors. We can see these. So what happens is that 90% of the people that when they agree to this and they the vast majority do and they join and they operate this way and they're successful, all of their values and their beliefs in addition to these behaviors, move in a really positive direction. That's the coolest thing about this, is it elevates all the participants. And they people tell me once when they leave one of our programs and stuff and they they're following another career path or whatever is the first thing they look at another company is what is the status of their working together culture of love by design. And if they if they don't see it at the top, which is going to make the biggest difference all the way down, then they do the best they can and they move on because the leadership is so important for nurturing this culture. Because if the leader doesn't believe in this and you and I know this, you've done so many great interviews, people have pointed this out. I love your interviews and that leadership is really important. And they can't just say it to your point. They got to be it. And remember, Francis, who you are. Dumbest, most unbelievable thing. She said that for everybody. And she was such a good friend with Peter Drucker, who they were

like one on this, who you are as a person. Humility, love and service is going to have more to do with your success in whatever you decide to do to serve than anything else.

**Whitney Johnson:** I was going to ask you about authenticity. What is an authentic definition of authenticity for Alan Mulally? I think you may have just answered that question.

**Alan Mulally:** I just I just want to share with you that I think it's the most phenomenal word next to humility, love and service. And the reason is, a lot of times when you look up, when you look up a word dictionary, it has 5 or 6 different meanings, which is why we don't use analogies or very complicated examples, because we need 600,000 people to actually understand exactly where we are. So every clarity is just so important. So authenticity, the definition when you look it up. Is the alignment. Between your beliefs, your values and your behaviors. Now think about how powerful your authenticity question is or comment. It means we're looking at the behaviors here. We made a big deal about, I'm not a psychologist. I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm not so sure I can help you with how you got to where you are on your beliefs and values. I sure can help with the expected behaviors. And I know I know that 99% of the people, once they move this way on the behaviors that their beliefs and values are going to move in a very positive direction, which is why this system elevates people so much, not just in their work, but in as a human being, their lives and making a difference for the greater good.

**Whitney Johnson:** How are you differentiating between beliefs and values?

**Alan Mulally:** That's another great question. I really don't. And I have in my documentation work of this, I actually put values, beliefs and behaviors, and I put that all under a title of qualities of Leaders because they're so intertwined. Yeah. So just, just list, list the qualities just like we did here. These are the qualities that we expect. And they every one of them has a belief aspect. It has a value aspect, but it also has a behavior aspect. Starting with that smile, what you see and the way they say things and how they treat people. And all I know is when they adopt this kind of approach or this kind of behaviors that their beliefs and their values, no matter what they are, are going to move in a positive direction and they're going to get more authentic because they're going to get more aligned. Now, think about this from a life point of view that, you know, you have one life and you're it's your life's work and occupation is just one of them. And you have your family life. You have your personal life, you have your community life, your spiritual life. Now think of how your life becomes one life as your authenticity gets more and more aligned. That means I don't go to my occupation and act one way, go to my home and act another way. I'm the same person because I'm aligned on beliefs, values and behaviors and every aspect of my life. Now go a little further. I have one life. It's my life's work. It includes all of the work I do in all aspects of my work, which is service. Oh, and by the way, that service is our love made visible and every aspect of our life. And now that's moving to alignment where you think.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, it's beautiful. And it's something. Actually. Alan, I've been thinking a lot about this idea of I have certain situations or contexts in which I show up as my best self. But then. But do I show up that way everywhere? And it's always an interesting moment where I put myself into a new context with people that I don't know. And do I show up the way that I want to there. It's an interesting opportunity to continually test are we moving more into alignment with our behaviors and what we believe and value.

**Alan Mulally:** And Whitney I'd go one step further with you. Would you look at an S-curve and you look at learned growth, positive growth, profitable growth for all, creating value for all. Everything is about growth personally and altogether. And think about what that authenticity does for that. Because no matter where you are on the S curve, just think of every airplane program was different. I mean, it's one short range, long range, a point to point nonstop halfway around the world. Every one continuous improvement in quality and fuel efficiency and safety and reliability and maintainability. Talk about s curves. Wow. Everyone is a new one. And what what's constant is this working together management system and authenticity that allows you to be the same person to deal with these opportunities. The change, the enabling technology, everything in a positive way. So now that's curve is not intimidating. I mean, it's exciting and we're going to deliver something at the top of that's curve that has never been done before. No one has delivered it. A two-engine airplane that could fly halfway around the world safely and more efficiently than any other transportation ever and talk about an S curve. And we did that by working together.

**Whitney Johnson:** All right. So, Alan, um, yes, as we conclude. What was useful to you in this conversation?

**Alan Mulally:** What you enabled was an opportunity for you and me to share our view of life. And I'm not we're not saying this is what you have to do. This is the. This is the only way to do it. But like all of us, when we get a chance to understand, um, people that we that we believe in, we that we appreciate what they do, the difference they make. I think that's one of the most phenomenal services you could ever provide and both of us.

And especially you, have made yourself so available to get in touch with so many people that have wonderful things to share and we all can learn from. And so to get a chance to join your journey has been very special.

**Whitney Johnson:** That makes me want to say, have fun, enjoy the journey and each other. Alan, thank you so much for joining us.

**Alan Mulally:** Well, thanks a lot, Whitney. Thank you.

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It's funny. Selfless action Service, in other words, isn't really wired into our bodies and minds. Sure, we're social creatures and we've learned how to do the whole living in groups thing well. But our behaviors and instincts are wired to take care of number one, find number two, create number three and keep them alive. Everything else is biologically extra. So how does someone like Allen pull together enough stakeholders to build a plane or save a car company? Well, Allen's figured it out and yeah, it is extra. That feeling of responsibility toward others. You have to build that foundation and strengthen that muscle like anything else. His parents started early with their lessons to him, like love and be loved in that order. Or Allen's first experience as a bagger in the grocery store. If responsibility is the muscle service is the bicep curl. Allen's mission became studying how to turn responsibility into a self-motivating instinct, like a feedback loop, like how a strong river deposits silt building a delta. Responsibility, feeding into service, feeding into a stronger sense of responsibility. And if you can imbue others with that feeling, that same feeling as parents imbued him with, you can help them into one of the most positive cycles we have as social beings.

And here's Alan's greatest discovery. If you combine that mindset of responsibility with the action of service, you create love. Love for what you do, love for the people sitting next to you, love for them when they succeed and when they fail. Love pulls thousands of people together to build a plane. Without it, all we have are blueprints and dreams. That's why Alan is one of my heroes, because like Ed Catmull or Stacey Gordon or Clay Christiansen, Alan takes a core truth that he fought and bled to discover and makes it available to everyone. That's responsibility and service. That is love. For more. I just mentioned Ed Catmull. Just like Allen studied service, Ed studied the human spark of creativity using that core truth to build Pixar. That's **episode 328**. For more on selflessness in a transactional world, listen to Steve Young, legendary 40 Niners quarterback. **Episode 289**. Thank you again to Alan and thank you for listening. If you enjoyed today's show, hit subscribe so you don't miss a single episode. Thank you to our producer Alexander Turk, production assistant Ange Harris, and production coordinator Nicole Pellegrino.

I'm Whitney Johnson

And this has been Disrupt Yourself.