

# Disrupt Yourself Podcast

## EPIISODE 340: DIANA KANDER

Welcome back to the Disrupt Yourself podcast. I'm your host, Whitney Johnson, CEO of Disruption Advisors, where we help you grow your people to grow your organization because organizations don't Disrupt people do. The building block of that growth. It's you. There's a saying that curiosity killed the cat. I mean, it's cliché, but there is truth to it. Have you ever seen a cat investigate a glass you left on the countertop or knock over a shelf of books while they try to perch on top? It can be annoying.

Don't get me wrong, I sometimes say that darn cat, but I do think there is something to admire in that attitude, that kind of pure, unabashed curiosity that you can only find in something that is immune to social anxiety. I want to see what happens when this happens. The same curiosity that said, "Hey, I wonder if we can build a bridge across the Golden Gate or put a human soul on the moon. 3.5 million football fields away."

You'll find Diana candor to be the same kind of curiosity. A self-described serial entrepreneur, she played and continues to play a vital role in building up the Kansas City economic area. Today, she's packed what she's learned from pitching those businesses and the case studies of businesses who landed the Impossible Pitch into a book called *Go Big or Go Home Five Ways to Create a Customer Experience That Will Close the Deal*. I suppose you could subtitle the Apollo 11 mission with that, too. Go big or go home. I hope you enjoy.

**Whitney Johnson:** So, Diana, what is the first moment you remember having a real choice between going big and going home? So our producer, Alex, he remembers the very first morning in college finding out that the rowing team had three-mile practice runs, and he still won't go big. So what about you?

**Diana Kander:** You know, I was a first-time entrepreneur. I had been a minority partner in two other companies. This was the first time I owned a business, and it was a legal staffing company. And my first year in business I did \$77,000 in revenue. You know, pretty good. Yeah, it is pretty good. There was an article in the paper about an accelerator that was local, that was for tech companies that were going to be 0 to 100 million in three years. And I was like, I want to be in that program. Like, I don't know what they're teaching over there, but I'm sure it can help my business. And I went and met. I had to use the go big method to even get the meeting but had a meeting with the person running the organization and was like, Listen, I made 77,000 last year. I think I could do 100 next year. Can you let me in? And he was very patient, like really thoughtful. And he was like, "Don't care about \$100,000, but I'll let you into the program if

you can make \$1 million next year." And I was like, Sure, yeah, that sounds totally reasonable, you know? And I remember walking out of his office, like just touching the doorknob and being like, "Do you say \$1 million next year and didn't even leave the building?" I found the first open cubicle outside his office. I sat down, I got out a piece of paper. I wrote down everything I did the previous year to, you know, everything I did at work. And if I did that for 18 hours a day for a whole year, I would make no more than \$150,000. So that was the moment where I was like, okay, I flipped the piece of paper over, and I wrote \$1 million at the top and I worked backwards. Like, what kind of clients do I need? What kind of services do I need to provide for them? And that piece of paper became my blueprint for the next year, and I did not hit \$1 million, but I did \$870,000 the next year, which is like 1,000% growth.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, it's a 10x. You 10xed in one year.

**Diana Kander:** Because somebody gave me the idea to do it.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, that is so good. Okay. But you said something at the very beginning that caught my attention, which is you use the go big idea just to get the meeting. What did you do to get the meeting?

**Diana Kander:** Because he wouldn't return any of my phone calls. I emailed him, I called him, and he was like, I have no time for this person. I don't know. So he worked at this big foundation called the Kauffman Foundation, a centerpiece of entrepreneurship in the US. And my husband and I got out our LinkedIn and we went on LinkedIn and found everyone we knew who knew someone who worked at the Kauffman Foundation, like Third Connection, you know, and there were 22 of those people. And so we called our friends to call their friends to call Bowfish back to meet with me. And I got a lunch meeting with him within three weeks. And when he showed up, we were at this restaurant and I was waiting in the vestibule and he's this towering six-foot seven man who walks in and he's like, who are you? And why is everyone telling me to go to lunch with you? And that is the essence of the go big or Go Home methodology.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, Oh, so good. All right. So. How do you define curiosity, Diana?

**Diana Kander:** I define it as the space between what we currently know and what we don't know. And most of us show up to work with no space. We have a to do list instead of space. And that is, you know, I have my tasks. I need to complete these and we show up to work. The opposite of curious, which is experts. We show up knowing everything we need to know and if we could just make some extra space in our lives for that curiosity. Magical things start to happen.

**Whitney Johnson:** Ooh. So how do you nurture your curiosity?

**Diana Kander:** I literally physically make space for it on my calendar. I think about having special meetings that create curiosity in a variety of different ways. I block certain chunks of time, like you're not going to come up with big ideas, checking off things on your to do list. So what are the settings in which you come up with those ideas and how can you create more of those in your life?

**Whitney Johnson:** So what's a setting where you create curiosity for yourself?

**Diana Kander:** Well, here's an easy example in the shower. So I schedule 4 or 5 showers a day. Whitney. No, I'm kidding.

**Whitney Johnson:** I am very gullible. Diana, I have never met someone who showered 4 or 5 times a day.

**Diana Kander:** No, but I do schedule meeting meetings for divergent thinking, so I have an important problem to solve. I think I have an idea, but I will schedule a 30-minute block with my team to come up with more ideas. And rather than going with the initial idea or I have this process that I teach called zombie hunting, which is finding those projects and initiatives that you're involved in that are taking more time and effort to do than the value that they're creating. And so I schedule a zombie hunting session at least once a quarter where we can say, okay, well, what's not working? What can we put down so we can focus on the eight to nines and tens of the ideas?

**Whitney Johnson:** Where did you get that term? Zombie hunting? You know.

**Diana Kander:** It's something that has not died of its own natural causes, like it's alive enough to suck the ever-living life out of you and your organization.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay, so. I remember when we first connected and it's probably been a couple of years ago now, and you told me that you did not grow up or you were not born here in the United States. Is that right? That's right. Where were you born?

**Diana Kander:** In Odessa, Ukraine, which was part of the Soviet Union at the time. So I came to the United States as a refugee of the Soviet Union.

**Whitney Johnson:** All right. So my question for you is, how do you think being a refugee? Informs. Or led to your go big or go home view of the world.

**Diana Kander:** I think it's about not having the answers. I went to school with people who knew how it worked and they had parents who knew how it worked and would help them. And so they were kind of on a path. There's a lot of people are and because I didn't, I asked the dumb simple questions to understand how things worked. And that actually helped me kind of leapfrog the people that were at my level. So I, I got a job that made like ten times what other kids my age made because I was like, okay, well, what are all the different options to make money? And here's one that's way more than others. I finished college in two and a half years, a four-year school, because I found every credit hour loophole that they had at the university only because I asked. And that's kind of how I went in with it. Like, I don't know how to do this, so I'm going to ask all the questions to understand fundamentally how this works and how I can win.

**Whitney Johnson:** So what was the job, Diana? The job that made more than all the rest of the children.

**Diana Kander:** Kids sold commercial grade water filters door to door at the age of 14.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh. Because you just found out that you could make a lot of money doing that.

**Diana Kander:** A lot of money, yeah.

**Whitney Johnson:** And as a 14-year-old, they probably actually opened the door to you because you're very petite, like, who is this cute little thing? So I hope that was super. Did not sound pejorative, but like, this cute girl is selling me commercial grade water filters and they and.

**Diana Kander:** She sounds like she knows what she's talking about. Yeah.

**Whitney Johnson:** Wow. Okay, so let's talk about your book. Okay? It's full of pitches, real decisions folks make where they believe in themselves, or they give up and try again. So was there a pitch that you read about that started the idea of writing this book? It might be your own life, but maybe something else?

**Diana Kander:** Yeah, it was meeting my coauthor, actually. He's the CEO of a fairly successful company that creates experiences for like universities and sports teams. And we had a mutual connection. He called me up and he was like, I'd like to write a book with you. And I was like, I'm so sorry. Not interested. I took the phone call like walking my dog on my treadmill. Do you understand what I'm saying? Like, I was I was like, not for me. Thank you so much. And he said, oh, I totally understand. Would you just come take a tour of our facility? It's 200,000 square feet of fabrication. And I was like, Yeah, that sounds super cool. So I show up, he's giving me a tour and he points to this giant thing, and he says, That's the world's biggest 3D printer. It looked like a house. And I was like, Well, that's pretty cool. And he said, we used it to make the world's biggest 3D printed thing, which is the torch inside of the Las Vegas Raiders stadium. And I was like, That's cool. How'd you get that project? How did a Kansas City company land that deal? And he said, well, we have this move, and we call it LTF. And when we have a pitch that's really important and we do the move, like usually we'll close 45% of deals. But when we do this move, we'll close 90% of deals. And that was interesting, right? It's 90% of the harder to win deals. And so I said, well, I want to know more about that. So I started interviewing employees at the company, customers of theirs, and I uncovered this process to create connection and trust with customers in record time. And once I learned it, I just wanted to tell anybody I could about what it is.

**Whitney Johnson:** So what's the process?

**Diana Kander:** Well, read.

**Whitney Johnson:** The book, I guess we have to read the book. But can you. No, no.

**Diana Kander:** No, no, no. I'll tell you. I'll tell you right now. LTF is their internal word. We debated whether we would call the book this, but it stands for Land the and then F-word. Okay. And I was like, please don't let me call. Please don't make me call the book that, please. So we called it Go Big or Go Home.

**Whitney Johnson:** A much more G-rated title. Thank you so much.

**Diana Kander:** Yes. And inside the book, we do tell it's really about adding a little piece of magic to your interaction with people and the five tools that we offer. There's like five different ways to do it, and they spell out the word magic in the book. So we make it surprising. We add elements of surprise. We research the people that we're talking to at a much deeper level. We give the pitch in the right order. Let me let me do it in order. We include three dimensional objects and we co-create with them. Wow.

**Whitney Johnson:** That is magical. Oh, so good. Okay, so, um, is there a pitch that you. Would like to share with us, just to give a teaser, that went well because you applied magic.

**Diana Kander:** Yeah, well, let's do it right now.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay, Let's do it.

**Diana Kander:** We're having a podcast and people show up and adding a little bit of surprise is about doing something ordinary in non-ordinary ways. Do you understand what I'm saying? So adding anything that could be shocking to the system. I don't. Starting with some Star Wars music now could really change the dynamic of an interaction. Look at your smile. We are no longer having a professional podcast interview. Now we're having a moment together. And one of the elements of magic is to include three dimensional objects, because oftentimes we talk about ideas that are hard to imagine. Like we're pitching B2B deals, which are usually B2B stands for boring to boring. You know, everybody on the room is thinking about getting their car detailed, getting new tires, other things about their car as opposed to what you're saying. And if we can bring it in, if we can manifest what we're talking about into A3D conversation, it becomes a lot more memorable and a lot more special. So I actually think that people should show up to meetings with some kind of a gift, a thoughtful gift for the people that they're talking to and I brought one here for you today, Whitney.

**Whitney Johnson:** What's the gift, Diana?

**Diana Kander:** Well, I'm a big fan, and you're constantly teaching people about S-curves and I bet you don't have one of these, but I made you a whiteboard with your S-curve so that whenever you're having a podcast or a discussion with somebody, you can be like, Oh, well, you're here, you know, and we need to move up the S-curve. It's really hard for me to do reverse on my camera.

**Whitney Johnson:** I had to practice a lot to do the reverse.

**Diana Kander:** Do you have one of these now?

**Whitney Johnson:** I do. Because you're giving me now. You do? Yeah.

**Diana Kander:** This is like, one of the proudest things. Look how beautiful it is.

**Whitney Johnson:** It is beautiful, Diana, I got to say. Wow. Okay. And there. And you just put magic into the conversation. And another way that you surprised was when you told me you took five hours a day.

**Diana Kander:** Yes. Yes.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, so fun. All right, so. Is there a pitch that decided to go home? So one that you read about that got so close to unlocking the magic and just couldn't?

**Diana Kander:** Yes, I think that there are always opportunities where you do your best and you don't win. But the thing about going big and really the essence is to show people how much you really care about them. Maybe you really care about this deal. I care very much about this interview, and you want to show them. And if you do that, there is no option to lose. Because even if you don't get the deal, you can still start to build the relationship. You know, you lose the deal, and you say, I don't care. You know, we're going to be doing this for 30 more years, so let's stay friends. And they say, okay, because you're cool and you were so fun to interact with. I will continue a relationship with you. And so both my coauthor and I have examples of, you know, times where we did our best and we try to add as much magic as possible. And didn't get the deal. But we also have stories where we didn't get the deal and then three years later somebody comes back and says, hey, I've never forgotten that interaction.

**Whitney Johnson:** You didn't get the deal, but you got the relationship.

**Diana Kander:** That's right. And that's your goal. Your goal. And that's what I learned. Writing this book changed my business, which is keynote speaking from trying to close deals to trying to start relationships. And I found that it actually helps you close a lot more deals and you have more fun, and you build a deeper connection with people than, than ever before.

**Whitney Johnson:** Mhm. Yeah. And I'm thinking about too, I mean we've been on this conversation for a few minutes, and I've laughed. I don't even know how many times it's and smiled even more. And you know, going back to Jennifer Ocker and Naomi Bagdonas research which is when we are able to smile and we're able to laugh, it unleashes all sorts of feel-good chemicals. And so. Which builds a relationship? Yes.

**Diana Kander:** So good. And the last element Whitney is to co-create. And so that is a lot of people show up to a presentation and they have the things that they want to say and get across so that they're understood. But the best of the best. They show up to presentations with holes filled in their content that are for the other side to contribute to so that you can start really driving and creating an opportunity for them to say yes. And so I would love to throw it back to you and say, as you were thinking about this idea and creating magic, are there any pitches where you went big that stand out for you?

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, you know, it's interesting. So as I'm listening to you, I would say. This idea of surprise and delight in three dimensional objects. I think, oh, we could do that, and we don't right now. So that that got my wheels turning. What I would say is that in general, the relationships where we've been able to really build them is we do co-create is we listen and listen and listen and even say, okay, now let's sit down, let's talk through this. What are your thoughts? And literally create something together. And so I think that's one thing. Okay. So walk me through it again, Magic. So walk me through really quickly. M?

**Diana Kander:** M -- make it surprising.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay. A?

**Diana Kander:** Check.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. We did that. A?

**Diana Kander:** A -- analyze them on a deeper level.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay. Yep. I think we do that. G?

**Diana Kander:** G. You give the pitch in the right order. Can we talk about the order?

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, let's talk about the order. See, we already went out.

**Diana Kander:** 98% of pitches are in the wrong order.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay, tell me more.

**Diana Kander:** According to research. So. Typical pitches or start like this. Number one, let me tell you a little bit about myself. Number two, let me tell you a little bit about us. And then number three, I'll tell you why you should work with us. Okay. That feels very natural because we want them to understand us so that they know who they're doing business with. But the thing is, they could care less about us until they believe that we understand them. And we have all gotten smart enough so that when the client says, how much is it? We're like, no, no, no, I'm not going to tell you how much it is until we have some kind of a conversation. Right? But when they say, tell me about yourself, we're like, you got it. You know, let me let me do that one for you. And that's just as much of a trick we need to say. I'm here to tell you about myself. But first, I read about this article that you just published, or I saw that your firm is acquired, this brand-new company that's putting you into this space. What does that mean for your specific practice? And before you can show them how you understand them, they're not really paying attention to anything that you're saying.

**Whitney Johnson:** And as soon as you understand them, I mean, it goes back to the Maya Angelou quote of "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

**Diana Kander:** Yeah, Got it.

**Whitney Johnson:** That's right. Okay. So that's good. Okay then I. What was I again? Is that the three-dimensional objects?

**Diana Kander:** Include three dimensional objects.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay. I love that. Now -- well, like your clip board.

**Diana Kander:** Can we talk about that one a little bit more?

**Whitney Johnson:** Yes! Let's talk about that some more.

**Diana Kander:** Because again, when we're selling B2B services, it's oftentimes this invisible thing. And I have this friend, his name is Abe. He's a cancer researcher. And he has the coolest research. He's trying to figure out how to get T cells to fight cancers on their own, which means if he's successful, no chemotherapy, no radiation for patients like your whole body just does it. When he goes to conferences, however, and he tries to tell other people who could help him about this, they are all working on something also amazing. So everybody just wants to talk about their medical thing. So my friend Abe had a third friend of ours create a three-dimensional version of a T-cell fighting a cancer cell. And it basically looks like a giant golden blob eating a purple blob with some icicles with lights sticking out of it. Okay. So just imagine, just like a giant, blobby blob that he puts on a pattern on it. Lights up and then like moths to a light, everyone at the conference just comes to him and they're like, what is that? And he says, oh, let me tell you about my research. And that's what three-dimensional objects do. There is research that talks about how much our brains remembers, you know, there's a hierarchy, and the more senses that we involve, the more our brains will remember. And the biggest punchline of the go big or go home method is it doesn't matter what you say in your pitch or what it is that you're selling. If they don't remember any of it and they forget really quickly.

**Whitney Johnson:** Huh? Okay. Three dimensional objects. I love that. Blabbity blah. Talking to Blabbity blah. That's what I'm going to remember from the interview, Diana. Plus the lightsaber. Which is also a three-dimensional object and then see co-create. So yeah, so back to your question that you asked me, I think the co-creation piece for me is I'm thinking about the word magic. I'm thinking, okay, three dimensional objects. I'm thinking about asking people more, doing more research. And then like I said, I think we do the co-create pretty well. But there's an opportunity to create that sparkle that you're describing through making it more playful and more delightful.

**Diana Kander:** Yes. And you can add it again, I think about it as doing ordinary things and non-ordinary ways. So my favorite example is this woman who was trying to get a job at Nike and couldn't get anybody to interview her. So she put her resume on a cake and sent it to a party at Nike and got a call, you know, within 24 hours. Wow. And so how can we put our content in non-ordinary ways? So as an example. What you can do is inside your messages. You can change your signature line. You can change how you communicate with people. I've started sending more and more video messages to individuals as opposed to straight text. You can change up the questions that you ask. So if you fill out the form for me, being a keynote speaker for your event after it asks the date and the location and everything, the last question is who's your favorite comedian? Like, why am I asking that? Because it just changes the dynamic of our interaction immediately without me even being there. And so how can you add pieces to your process that can add a little bit of magic to it? And I actually think that listeners should be thinking about their sales process like a movie, and you should think about your customer as like the hero of the movie. And so pick out some scenes like they fill out your online inquiry, you know, your first call and what can you do in each scene to add a little piece of magic to it.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, so fun. All right. So let's talk a little bit more about you. So you've in your on a number of occasions we've seen pop up in your Bios serial entrepreneur. So it sounds like a crime. Can you talk more about that?



**Diana Kander:** Yes. I started ten companies in ten years in my 20s I, I got a law degree because I'm scared of my parents and they really wanted me to get a, you know, higher degree to be safe. But within 12 months of being a lawyer, I was like, this is not for me. What I really want to do is be in business. So I thought about my 20s as my time to like fill my utility belt of skills. And so I tried every different industry, different responsibilities inside companies. So staffing, SaaS, software, consulting companies, construction management, real estate tax prep for truck drivers like. It went everywhere. And through that process, I figured out what I was good at. I figured out what I enjoyed doing, and I figured out what kind of businesses I definitely did not want to have, which was bars and restaurants, among others.

**Whitney Johnson:** So what's your superpower, Diana?

**Diana Kander:** Well, it's got to be curiosity, right? And it's asking the kinds of questions that get the conversation to keep going and to help me learn. And I think maybe my superpower is that I want to know.

**Whitney Johnson:** Mm hmm. All right. So let's talk about Kansas City. So you've spent a lot of time, money, energy improving that city? Yes. What does it mean so much to you?

**Diana Kander:** Oh, it's a great question. I, you know, came here from the Soviet Union, and I have traveled around now as a speaker all over the place. But I went to law school in Washington, D.C., and. To me, Kansas City is like the perfect combination of kind people and parking spots. I mean, when I lived in D.C., you know, there we had this disorder where if I was driving and I'd see a parking spot, I'd want to park in it, even though I wasn't going there, you know, because it's such a difficult, challenging thing to find. And here, like, I love the community that I'm a part of. I love hanging out with the friends of my kids. I mean, I'm sure everybody loves that about their community, but it's just so easy to get to know people and to have people introduce you to others. I don't know. Also, everyone I know am related to lives here, so.

**Whitney Johnson:** Oh, your family helps. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That does help. So what do you think is holding people back from going big? What have you discovered?

**Diana Kander:** What do I think is keeping people from moving to Kansas City? Is that what you're saying? Whitney, I'm just combining your two questions. I'm kidding. What keeps us from going big when we in our research, actually do you know who goes big most often is the underdog? And what keeps us from going big is playing it safe because there's a certain amount of vulnerability about. You know, making something for someone and being like, I hope you like it. This is a little piece of me. And that's scary. And some people don't want to take the time or the effort to be vulnerable. They want to play it safe and not do anything above and beyond. And so I think that's the biggest.

**Whitney Johnson:** The vulnerability.

**Diana Kander:** Yes. Not wanting to be vulnerable, but that vulnerability is what helps us connect with people.

**Whitney Johnson:** Right. So in order to go big, as I like to describe it, you have to step back in order to grow or step back in order to go big. There's you give up a piece of yourself in order to be able to be a part of that broader community.

**Diana Kander:** I think there's got to be a piece that's like, don't I don't know if they're going to like this.

**Whitney Johnson:** But I'm going to try. I'm willing to try.

**Diana Kander:** Do it. And oftentimes it doesn't matter if they really like it. It's like your enthusiasm for it and they feel what you're putting out there.

**Whitney Johnson:** You know, just for the record, I do really like that little white board that you created with the S curve.

**Diana Kander:** Just for the record, it is the greatest gift I've ever given. Like we were high fiving over here when we came up with the idea.

**Whitney Johnson:** The greatest gift ever today. So in the spirit of going big or going home, you had a New Year's resolution. And I know what it is because I have been privy to it. But I'm going to ask you anyway for the purpose of our listeners to do a full split. Actually, I just revealed --

**Diana Kander:** Yes, you came on my podcast to help me.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, talk about it. How's it going?

**Diana Kander:** It's going great. I accomplished the split, but I did not enjoy that goal at all because I thought in my head that doing the splits would make me flexible in every part of my life. And that is not true. It would be like 30 minutes a day dedicated to this one tiny area of my body. And so it was a very unfulfilling.

**Whitney Johnson:** So what did you do? So you got that information? What did you do with that information?

**Diana Kander:** Oh, I just stopped the training and found a new crazy goal.

**Whitney Johnson:** What's your current crazy goal?

**Diana Kander:** Um. I mean, it's so silly. It is the biggest thing I've ever done. This is the ultimate going big. Almost scary to talk about. But I started playing tennis this year. Yeah. And also, I learned that there is a Jewish Olympics that is held every four years. It is the third largest sporting event in the world behind.

**Whitney Johnson:** No.

**Diana Kander:** The World Cup and the actual Olympics. And there are age groups. And so my new goal and people can follow my efforts on LinkedIn, I'm planning to share my whole journey is to represent Team USA at the Maccabean Games in Israel. I'm going to. There's a tryout. There's games in 2024, so I have a year. A year to get really good at tennis.

**Whitney Johnson:** So you're going to go compete in tennis at the --

**Diana Kander:** Yes.

**Whitney Johnson:** -- Maccabean games in 2024?

**Diana Kander:** That is correct.

**Whitney Johnson:** Singles or doubles?

**Diana Kander:** Singles.

**Whitney Johnson:** And how are you doing so far?

**Diana Kander:** Well, I have had the physical therapy and the coaching check off that. People said that my body is physically capable of doing this, and now I just have to learn how to play tennis.

**Whitney Johnson:** Do you have a coach?

**Diana Kander:** It's like a small -- I started this year.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay. And you have a tennis coach?

**Diana Kander:** I have a tennis coach. Deliberate practice. You don't just try to get by yourself.

**Whitney Johnson:** How many hours a day are you playing?

**Diana Kander:** Well, you don't want to injure yourself immediately because I have played it. Never. And I'm 42. So, like, you really have to limit how much you because you could get wrist right elbow immediately. So anyway, my goal right now is to learn technique and not injure myself.

**Whitney Johnson:** Wow. As a lover of tennis, I applaud that goal. So I'm glad that I'm glad that you're doing this. This is amazing. Yeah, you you go. Okay. So for people who are interested in jumping onto a brand-new S-curve and you as a curious person, whether it's rowing or flexibility, how do we get started? Because sometimes we can get overwhelmed by the idea of going big or going home. So what recommendations do you have to people who want to go big? But they're a little overwhelmed to go big, but they don't want to go home? What do you recommend?

**Diana Kander:** Well, I brought a present for you. Whitney. But I also brought one for everybody who's listening here today. And if you want a free copy of the book, a digital version, you just email me Diana at [DianaDecanter.com](mailto:DianaDecanter.com) and I'll send you a copy of the book, because I think this this can make such a big difference to your life and your business, and it'll give you a ton of ideas of how to introduce little things into your interactions with others to add a little bit of

magic. You just start small, you know, you start with your signature line and you change your signature line from sincerely or, you know, respectfully, I don't know, to something fun.

**Whitney Johnson:** What is your saying right now? What is your signature line?

**Diana Kander:** Well, it depends on who I'm talking to, but oftentimes it's Cheers to making new friends.

**Whitney Johnson:** I love that. Okay. So this is kind of an aside, but your ability to give away a digital copy of copy. A digital copy of your book, is it self-published?

**Diana Kander:** Yes. Okay.

**Whitney Johnson:** See, you know, it's interesting. I know this is a total aside, but for everybody who's listening, one of the questions that people oftentimes have is like benefits of going with the publisher or self-publishing. One of the benefits is that you're able to do exactly what you just did is I am going to give away a digital copy of my book.

**Diana Kander:** I just want to I want to share the message, you know, and for me, it's not about making money from the book. It's about getting it out to as many people as possible. I want to give the audio version away to people who buy the physical book. You know, I just -- I want to do as many creative things as possible and to do it in a way like you're not used to. So on page one of the book is my cell phone number for you to text me while you read the book. So it is an experience like you have not had to show you how to create experiences for other people like they have never had.

**Whitney Johnson:** Yeah, very meta. Okay. So as we start to wrap up, it seems like. This book is built on confidence, confidence in what you're pitching, but also confidence in yourself. And I'm just wondering what. You've kind of alluded to this, but I want to be a bit more explicit around this. What has your journey towards confidence looked like?

**Diana Kander:** Well, just like a very steep s curve. You know, from my very first position in a company where my job was cold calls and I would just cry every day about how terrible I am at sales to today believing it is my strongest skill set. You know, I'm like, let me at anybody. Thanks in part to the to this book. I think it's about getting enough evidence. No matter how hard your brain is to show it, you just putting yourself out there even though you're scared and getting enough evidence back, like, oh, look at this thing that I did and that thing that I did, and using that track record to push yourself to do more crazy things. So this I told you about the Maccabean games. That's not the first goal I've ever set for myself. That is, you know, I have accomplished five crazy goals before it that were very difficult and challenging. It is the craziest. But I'm building on, okay, I can do this and I can do this and I can do this. So I have the process to do something really crazy.

**Whitney Johnson:** Okay, you opened a loop. What were the four other crazy goals?

**Diana Kander:** So the first goal was doing a ten-minute plank and I ended up doing an 11.5 minute plank that was part of writing my second book. Somebody in the book did a plank challenge, and I wanted to write about it in a knowledgeable way. So I was like, well, I'll do it. And that felt impossible to me. But I achieved the goal. And then

once I did that, I was like, okay, what else can I do? Because this is a fun game now to play. So after that it was doing a handstand, which took me two years. I'm just like the least coordinated person you've ever met. So these physical challenges are things I've never done before. Then it was I had never done a pull up. It was doing 20 pull ups in a row. I got ten pull ups. So pretty. Pretty solid. Yeah. And then the splits. And thanks to you, I was stuck for a long time on the splits. But you really got me out of my own way.

**Whitney Johnson:** Wait, how did I get you out of your own way? I don't remember what happened.

**Diana Kander:** I just couldn't push myself to practice. And you asked me these, like, really great coaching questions about what was standing in my way and why. Like what I really wanted to accomplish. It was really like a turning point for me.

**Whitney Johnson:** So you invited me to co-create. Even back then, even before you wrote this book. All right. So, Diana, what's been useful to you in this conversation?

**Diana Kander:** My favorite part is you reflecting on your own process and thinking, oh, we could apply this here and that there. And I love hearing people have that kind of reflection as opposed to just going through a set of questions and being like, I'm going to get through this interview. You're constantly, you know, creating your own feedback loop of how you can improve.

**Whitney Johnson:** Mm hmm. Any final thoughts?

**Diana Kander:** I just want people to experience how much fun. They can have by going big in their life. I think, you know, you are your own biggest anchor sometimes, but just try it sometimes in the relationships that matter in your life, it could be your spouse, it could be a customer, it could be a prospect and see how much connection and trust you can create. Mm hm.

**Whitney Johnson:** Diana, this was so much fun. I feel like we went big and. And we're still. We're at home, and we still went big, which is awesome. Thank you so much.

**Diana Kander:** Thank you so much.

I'm trying to find a spot for Diana's board right now. How many podcasts have we all collectively listened to where a guest brought a gift? Not a lot. Certainly not in the history of Disrupt Yourself. But it changed everything. How I saw her; how her words impacted me; a better understanding of how she saw herself and her role. All that over a whiteboard.

But that's how her pitches are memorable. She's curious about what makes a meeting seem stuffy and professional and what makes a meeting seem like you just got blasted in a good way with the Star Wars theme. We don't really see the levers and pulleys of how a room grows to love someone. So Diana's gone on that journey of self-reflection and research and come back with this bag of truths, so to speak, to hand out to

us, to help make us better communicators and better advocates in our own lives. The power of bringing a gift like a whiteboard is just one of those truths.

For more on defining your core values so you can figure out what exactly to be curious about, there's **episode 179** with fellow serial entrepreneur Robert Glaser. And for tackling the confidence aspect of going big or going home, I'd recommend you check out **episode 303** with Seth Godin. That's the one. That one's all about handling imposter syndrome.

Thank you again to Diana 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 Andy Harris, production Coordinator Nicole Pellegrino.

I'm Whitney Johnson

and this has been Disrupt Yourself.