

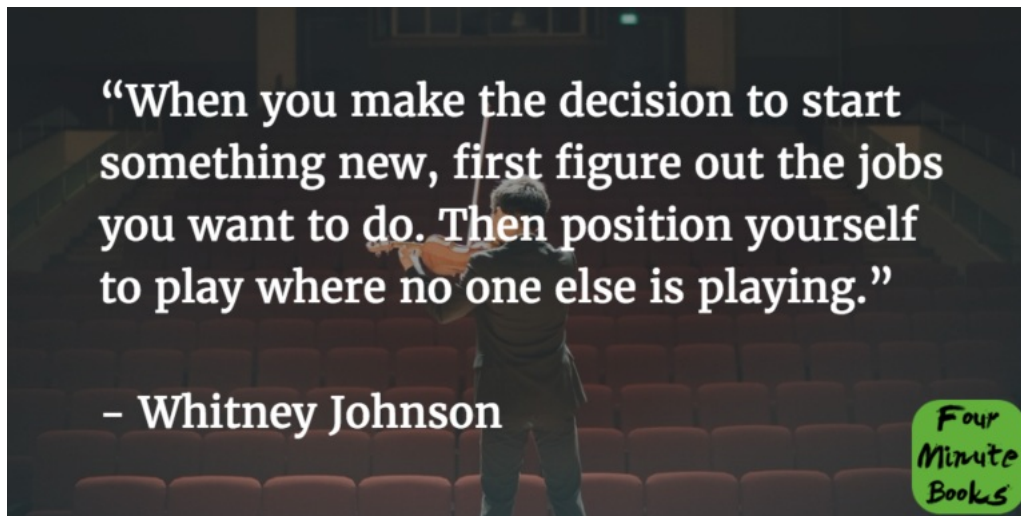
Disrupt Yourself Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/disrupt-yourself-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Disrupt Yourself* explains how you can harness the ever-accelerating power of disruptive innovation in your personal life, be it to advance your career or to build a company that thrives, by embracing your limitations, focusing on your strengths and staying flexible and curious along the way.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Honestly, I'm not a big fan of the word "disrupt." Not just because it's overused and often abused in the wrong context, but also because it sounds self-serving. "We're here to disrupt" and "we are a disruptive company" imply that someone *wants* to cause trouble on purpose, like they're actively trying to push others off the market or destroy an old industry.

But that's never how disruption happens. Apart from being very much out of the disruptor's hands – the world has to be ready to be disrupted and accept the change, after all – successful disruptors never focus on the negative. Instead, they focus on the positive change they're trying to cause.

Call me old-fashioned, but that's why I prefer how Steve Jobs always worded it: challenging the status quo. A challenge is a game, an experiment, a call out to the incumbent. It comes without bad intentions and is not presumed on winning vs. losing.

However, I'm glad Whitney Johnson picked the word "disrupt" in the title of *Disrupt Yourself* – because it adds a whole lot of positive connotation to it, thanks to the brilliant framework she's giving readers to challenge the status quo of their careers, lives and companies.

Here are my 3 favorite lessons:

1. There are two types of risk in starting a business, and one is better than the other.
2. If you can pair your own, unique strengths with an unmet need of the community you live in, you win.
3. Careers and companies are both made successful by staying flexible.

Let's challenge the status quo of work, shall we?

Lesson 1: A new company will face a competitive risk or a market risk, one of which is easier to overcome.

When you have an idea for a new product or company, you can always put it in one of two buckets:

1. It already exists.
2. It doesn't already exist.

Whether what you want to do has already been put into the world by someone else then determines the type of risk you'll face while trying to get your business off the ground.

If what you're planning to do already exists in one form or the other, you'll have to deal with **the competitive risk of having to compete against other companies and players in the market**. Four Minute Books is a good example of this. Non-fiction book summaries have long been offered by other websites, services and companies. The model is proven to work, but that also means there's lots of competition going on already (which I'm working hard to overcome :)).

If you've come up with something totally new and unique, you'll face **a market risk, meaning you have no idea if the world will want what you have and pay you for it**. For example, if you want to make the world's first self-tying shoes, you can't know beforehand if people even want them. They might be a big hit – or a total flop.

According to Whitney Johnson, companies that take the market risk fare better (on average). For example, in a 1995 study about disc drive companies, 6% of competitive risk businesses reached \$100 million in sales, while 37% of market risk companies did.

Lesson 2: Figure out your unique strengths and pair them with the unmet needs of your community to win.

Everybody's good at something. If you love to sleep in and get angry when you wake up feeling groggy, then guess what: you're *good* at sleeping. Maybe you can help other people sleep better too.

Most people try to iron out their flaws and weaknesses, to make themselves more "well-rounded." That's a mistake. Instead, if you just focused on the things you're *already* good at and combined those with what the people around you need, you'd have a chance at creating

something remarkable.

The book uses the novel and movie *The Hundred-Foot Journey* as an example. An Indian family moves to France, their son being a talented cook. They try to get an Indian restaurant up and running, but it's hard, because the French don't feel they need Indian food. Once they combine their skills with the Michelin star French restaurant across the street, however, something new and unseen is created – and the restaurant takes off.

Look around you. **What needs are going unfulfilled and how can you use your strengths to service them?** Answer this question, and you'll succeed.

Lesson 3: Careers as well as companies become successful by staying flexible.

Let's say you get out of high school wanting to be a pharmacist. However, you don't have the right grades to get in, so you switch to chemistry, thinking you'll transition after two semesters. But then, you end up liking chemistry, so you actually finish the diploma. You like it so much in fact, that you decide to get a PhD in it. After you're done, you go to a big chemical company and get into the lab – what you've always wanted to do as a pharmacist!

However, after two years you realize that stirring liquids in glasses is boring you to death, so you put yourself out there and end up with a job at a company that creates and produces sealants and adhesives for the industry. Because you like the work better, you do a great job, and end up being promoted to head of R&D, until you eventually lead the firm's product management, and even their marketing, loving what you do.

Sounds unlikely? Well, that's exactly what my Dad did. Careers aren't a straight line, and **those who end up with great work they love often only do so because they stay curious and flexible**, open to whatever might happen.

Similarly, a business that's bent on selling one thing and one thing only, will have a tough time in succeeding. What if the customers of your pizza restaurant tell you that they come for the pizza, but stay for the wine? Would you embrace it?

Whitney says 70% of all successful companies end up with a different product or strategy than they started out with. It takes a whole lot of curiosity and flexibility to do that.

Disrupt Yourself Review

Disrupt Yourself is a very cool spin on what's often just a regurgitated topic, both valuable on a personal and company-level. Great read!

Read full summary on Blinkist >>

Get it on Amazon >>

Learn more about the author >>

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What a lazy koala's unique skill is
- How one lawyer was made partner at the young age of 32
- Two things where a shortage works out in your favor
- Which two attitudes kill innovation and leadership
- Why you can succeed long-term with even the greatest variety of career moves
- The disadvantage of smart people

Who would I recommend the Disrupt Yourself summary to?

The 25 year old startup founder, who thinks they'll really "disrupt the market", the 45 year old who's worried that his next major career move might be his last, and anyone who thinks they don't have any strengths.