



Season Three Episode Three- released March 2023

A conversation hosted by Jeff Dewing, with Julio Bruno

Jeff and Julio discuss the 'Great Resignation' and how it should be described as a 'Great Re-Assessment' as people reconsider their goals, and values and strive to improve their lives and their relationship with work.

Reinvention, reassessment, and taking time to think

Jeff Dewing:

*Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite: Business Disruptors, the podcast where you get to meet incredible leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book, and changed the way their sector does business. I'm **Jeff Dewing** and I'm the founder and CEO of **Cloudfm**, a business where we thrive on taking risk so our clients don't have to.*

*Today you're going to meet **Julio Bruno**. Julio is an incredible pedigree who calls himself a global citizen. He also operates a podcast called **The Internationalist**, where he speaks to incredible guests from all over the world. Now, Julio's background covers areas and brands and world renowned brands like Regis, the Office Rental Company or Energizer (the batteries that we're all familiar with) and then also TripAdvisor, the one place we go to for reviews, understanding about holiday destinations and hotels, but more recently is **Time***

Out, Time Out Group, Time Out Magazine, Time Out Creative and Design and Time Out Media. Now, Julio drove the digital transformation from taking Time Out Magazine into the digital age, and he did that globally. And his knowledge and experience is simply off the scale, so much so that he's now written his book called 'Passion to Lead' with incredible nuggets of knowledge, philosophy, leadership, and of course the trials and tribulations of running a global organisation.

Julio, thank you for spending your time this afternoon. The first thing I'd like you to do, if you wouldn't mind, is try and set the scene of who Julio is. What's been your journey, what sort of got you to where you are today?

Julio Bruno:

That is a question that is always so difficult to answer because you can talk forever or say very little, right? But as you can tell by my wonderful British accent, haha, I am an international type. I like to say that I'm a global citizen. I'm originally from Spain, although I also have an American passport, later in life I live there. I now live in London and I have lived here for many, many years in a couple of times in my life. I came first in 1993. And I came here because I was looking for my career, my future. I was in my twenties and I wanted to become that leader, that person, that successful person that I imagine in my life. And in my life when I was young I always imagined being this kind of international guy representing companies around the world and doing things like that, dressed up to the nines and all those things that I could imagine.

Jeff Dewing:

So quite ambitious then really?

Julio Bruno:

Yeah, I was very ambitious and I am still. And more or less I think I have done that or I'm doing that, which was looking myself for a career and a path that fulfilled that need that I had of not only being successful but also the curiosity that I have in life of learning about people, about everything. I mean, I'm interested in everything and this is basically what I

am now. I have worked in international companies, I have worked for startups. I now work as an investor in a startup, as a board director in different companies, president in others. And it has been so far a very varied life that continues to change. And last year during COVID, sorry that was the last of COVID, I also reinvented myself, I started a podcast, I wrote a book and started in several new companies that I liked. And I think that this year I'm thinking, "Okay, so what is going to be my reinvention this year?" So that's kind of who I am.

Jeff Dewing:

*Of course, and your book, which is named **Passion to Lead**, which is available on Amazon and all good bookstores, is probably going to contain all those beautiful golden nuggets of the journey you've been on that you obviously want to share with anybody else. So if you get the chance, I highly recommend it, give it a go and you won't be disappointed.*

So thank you for setting that scene. So leading up to that, what do you think the key moments were? What were those come to Jesus moments or moment that happened when you said, "Look, I want to go on this journey. I'm very ambitious, I want to become a global citizen and work for global organizations and really spread my wings and learn cultures and all the other bits and pieces"? Lots of people have those aspirations, but what action did you take to make those things happen?

Julio Bruno:

Yeah, that's a very good question. We all have thoughts and then we talk and then we get excited and we do nothing about it, maybe because we can't, we are busy, we don't have the ability to maybe find that or maybe so on in your imagination. What I did probably or I have done differently or I don't know differently to other people maybe, is that imagination that I first have, those ideas, that vision of myself and my career that I had when I was very young, when I got in my twenties and I saw that this were not going where I wanted, I took the decision to move countries and to find myself, to become an immigrant and to find myself, that challenge. In Spain at the time, in the beginning of the nineties, end of the

eighties, beginning of the nineties, there was terrible unemployment and I couldn't find opportunities or I didn't find them that were interesting. And I wanted to go into the world and I spoke English and it made sense for me to come to the UK.

So leaving my country, leaving my culture, leaving the people that I knew, my family, et cetera, and coming to the UK in 1993, I think that that was what I did different. In my family, we have had immigrants before I have family in Argentina for example. And there is a tradition in the 20th century because of war et cetera, of a lot of people leaving Spain and going around in Europe and Latin America, et cetera. So I guess I had it also in my genes. But the possibility or the ability to put myself in a different country and challenge yourself, that's very different.

And one thing here, I was talking yesterday with another person who is an immigrant and we were talking about this, that when you are in another country, you rely on yourself. You can never get sick because who's going to take care of you? So there is a mentality that you never get sick. No, I was never sick, I was always working. And I think that whole mentality of putting yourself in a situation where you depend solely on yourself, that would make a big difference. And going to a different country, a different culture, started a whole new life.

Jeff Dewing:

People that work in organizations as employees during their journey and they may go through phases of feeling ill or being sick and having time off and complaining about their salary and complaining about somebody didn't do their job, which made their job harder. And this whole sort of mindset function that an employee has and we've all been through that environment. And then they start their own business and suddenly their whole mindset changes. They haven't got time to be off sick, they haven't got time to complain because the buck stops with them, it's their business. And suddenly, there's an automatic mindset change that they have had that mindset whilst being an employee, they probably would've driven their career path even faster.

Julio Bruno:

Yeah, it's funny that you say that because I have always said I was very entrepreneurial in the way that I work. Even as an employee, I always felt in every company that I've been, you could ask all my ex-colleagues, I was always the number one fan, the one that is living the dream and making the changes and feeling that the company was mine. And I guess that's where you talk about being the entrepreneur. Yes, I have had my own companies that I have invested in others, but it is the mentality that you mentioned there that, well I had. And being an immigrant obviously makes me even more sharp into that feeling of, you have to depend on yourself.

Jeff Dewing:

Well you're taking yourself out your comfort zone by default, which means you're sharper and more on the ball because you have to be, otherwise you don't survive.

Julio Bruno:

You have to be.

Jeff Dewing:

Okay. So the one thing I did love that I heard you say in my research of you, Julio, was one phrase I loved and this is a mindset issue, which is why I loved it, and it's when you said, "I decided to give myself a promotion." Tell us what that was all about.

Julio Bruno:

Well, it's something that I have done all my career as an employee. You go to a company and you do this and you do well and maybe you get a promotion or maybe there is no other space for you and you have your own speed and the company maybe has their own speed, which usually it's not the same as yours. And at some point in several times in my career, I got to the position that I wanted to do something more and the company at the time, whether they like me or not, they didn't have something for me.

So then what I did is, well okay, give myself a promotion, which meant find another company, find another role that obviously paid me more, had more responsibility closer to what it was, my original plan. I have to learn this and that and that and have experience in all these different areas. If I couldn't get that in my current company, I would go and look for it. But always with the end in mind, always with a purpose, not just changing just for money. Money was/is very important, clearly looking for financial independence, but it was much more about what is this taking me in my career? And I could not stay still. So that's why I gave myself a promotion.

Jeff Dewing:

And if we have people in our organization or similar organizations that say they're leaving and sometimes they'll say they're leaving for more money or better conditions or whatever the case may be, in reality that's rarely true and you don't really get the answer until perhaps long after they've left. But really it's about they want a challenge, they want a purpose, they want to go beyond where they're being asked to be today. And I think if we could actually educate people to say to us when they were due to sort of move on and leave, because not every company can nourish every single employee for the reasons you've just explained, we don't always travel at the same speed, they need to be challenged, they want something more in life. And I think that'd be a great way to explain to somebody or your employer, "Look, I'm moving on because I've given myself a promotion." I think it's fantastic. I'll even congratulate him for coming out with the phrase because it is about fulfillment, right?

And I think the other thing I've read about you as well, and it's also aligned with how I believe about life and that is, it is about purpose. It's not some American, "Have a nice day type stuff." Purpose is very, very important. And it's one of the things that I guess, and I don't know if you'll agree with me in terms of what your career has been like, but I only really established purpose and a meaning, purpose in the last sort of 5, 6, 7 years. Because we didn't really know what purpose was. We went for a job, we thought we was happy, we realized we wasn't so we got another job, thought that would make us happy but it didn't,

and so on and so on because we couldn't articulate, we couldn't understand what it is that makes us get out of bed every day.

And when you can establish your purpose, whether it be a shared purpose with an organisation that you join or whether you've decided what change you are going to be in the world, suddenly all the mist clears and you get this focus and you get this understanding and then you realise that it's never about money. Money is something that is an enabler. You need to pay the bills, you need to pay the mortgage, these are obvious factors, but it's not about get rich quick, it's not about the Ferrari, it's not about the 50-foot yacht. It's about what is it that's going to make me happy and fulfilled every day? And when you can find that and you can truly live it, then of course that famous saying is, "You'll never work a day in your life." And that's when I think people thrive.

Julio Bruno:

Yeah, although it's difficult when you are young to know exactly what you want. And a lot of people now maybe in the younger generation will say, "Oh, I give myself a promotion." But the only reason they do that is just because they are restless and they just think they deserve it or many other reasons, right? I'm generalising here, but they don't stick to something because they get bored easily because of social media and everything else, we don't have an attention span for more than three seconds. So it's not easy sometimes saying, "Well what is my purpose?" Because we're having to stop and think about your purpose.

And I'm happy to go to a company and see that they're using me and using them. They know what they need from me and I'm going to deliver that a hundred percent, but I also need for them to deliver something for me, which could be experience, obviously money and what else? But also purpose is about the purpose of that company. The younger generations now are looking for companies that they can feel identified with. And that's difficult. In the past, maybe you didn't look at it, now you look at what kind of companies and ESG or is sustainable or is all these other buzzwords that, although I don't want to say

buzzwords, but people want to make a change and they want to work for companies that they feel closer to the values of that company.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah, and also they want to understand whether that company's truly trying to make a difference in the world to some degree and whether they actually feel passionate about that same thing. And if they do, then your values are aligned I guess. But it is, it's something that's become very, very apparent and probably been accelerated in its appeal and its meaningfulness because of COVID, because people have started asking the right questions. Am I happy? Am I doing what I love? Am I making a difference? Is my life pointless? And I think that's where people have now suddenly started to search out. And I think leadership and leadership education has really also helped accelerate that during the process of COVID and whatever else. Because when you look at things like peer groups and coaching and business coaching and internal coaching, these were things, I'll go back to my career, "I don't need a coach. I know how to fix a fridge, I know how to change a valve. I don't need to be coached on that." But what we was missing was the coaching isn't about telling you or teaching you something you don't know you're not good at, coaching is about asking you incredible questions that you've probably never asked yourself. And it sort of helps you understand and articulate why it is you're actually here and what it is you want to do. And that's where people, I guess if someone said to me, "What's your biggest regret in life?" My biggest regret in life is not realizing the importance and the influence of a business coach 25 years ago because it's about great questions, right? That's life.

Julio Bruno:

Yeah. But as you said, I mean when you're young, you don't know maybe that you need somebody to coach you, although it's quite popular now, this thing about mentor, you want to be my mentor, whatever. But I think they do that because they see me somewhere and they want to have a mentor in a check a box.

Jeff Dewing:

I want a therapist.

Julio Bruno:

Or something like that, which is also everything that you get bored of that and you move on to the next fad. But you said something interesting there about COVID, which I have written about this several times. I call it the great reassessment when people call it the great resignation. And I call it the great reassessment because myself, like many millions around the world, stop and think about what we wanted to do more than ever, I think. And COVID also accelerated 20 years at least where we were. I mean, you and your working facilities management, you told me how you have to reinvent your company because you were forced to it. I did the same with Time Out becoming Time In when I was CEO there or other things, which meant you have to do things that you were not thinking about it.

And think about today about hybrid working or working from home. I mean, I remember only five years ago having discussion with people saying, "No, you cannot have flexible working because we come here to the office and if you go and stay on a Tuesday mornings with your children, then what other people are going to think?" I remember those conversations. Today, that's gone. So it's 20 years of progress into one and a half years.

Jeff Dewing:

It is fascinating. But again, just to pick up on something you said there when you called it the great reassessment, I called it the great reset, right? So you've got the great resignation, the great reassessment, the great reset, whatever terminology you want to put on it. But the reason I said I believe I used the term reset was because during COVID, and I don't know, well I'm sure if you was in the UK you realized, but that first year of COVID from March, 2020, for the next four months, the weather was spectacular in the UK.

Julio Bruno:

Oh, I remember that.

Jeff Dewing:

Fantastic summer, right? Everyone's having barbecues every day. They're being paid to sit in the garden with the kids. But what it done is it forced something that people just don't do, it forced them to reflect. They had time to think, they had time to think and reflect. And one of the things that the great Henry Ford said, which is another saying I love to pick up on, he says, "Very few people take time to think because it's too difficult." Because people don't realize the power of reflection, of just looking, reflecting on your day, your week, your month, your life. And what happened is, the reason I believe the great reset has occurred is simply because something happened in correlation at the same time across the world is everybody had time to think and therefore suddenly these different thoughts came out, which made them think, "Oh, I wonder, wonder, wonder, what if, what if, what if?" And that for me has generated a positive outcome because it's made us all rethink about what's important.

Julio Bruno:

But also how scary to be alone with your thoughts for the first time in years. I remember studying very young and it was the first year of philosophy, at the time you studied philosophy at school. And I remember this line, I'm going to translate it, I don't know who wrote it, but it was, "Philosophy started when mankind had time to think." And we were talking about the Greek philosophers because before that, if you are only surviving and the animals are following you and killing you and you have to kill them to eat, you have time for nothing. But let's talk about the Greeks obviously before there were others, but the Greeks had the time to go there and talk about the world and the stars and, well, philosophy. That's how philosophy started. So now in a small part of time, in a way, COVID help us to do that, to have the time to think.

Jeff Dewing:

Of course. And one and of the things that we all had that same time, I mean, I and my exec team had less time because we was obviously trying to plan how to survive and thrive. But

one thing I did, and I did it by accident, I didn't do it because I was some wizard every night I sat in my patio, I'm lucky enough to have the beach at the bottom of my road and I can see the sun go down every night. So I sat in my patio for an hour and a half, two hours every single night without fail and just reflected just because that's how I managed to control and contain the fear and the worry of COVID at the time. And I genuinely believe that because of that time, I was able to steer my team and my business through COVID purely because of that thinking time.

And when I realized how powerful it was, we've since mandated that in our business where everybody has to have two hours a week of doing nothing. And it has to be during working time because I can't demand and want you to do it on a Saturday or Sunday when you've got family time, but you must take two hours and you do not have to create anything as a result, you just have to think. And suddenly creativity goes through the roof. People have gone, "I've just thought about this thing," and that's the bit that I think you're right about when you go back to Greek mythology and Greek philosophy and that is they had the time to look at the stars and worked out well, they were cured. Why is that star over there tonight and not over there that night? Whereas when you are working, working, working, acting, acting, you've got no time to check or see what's around you. And that's when I think you get the power of reflection.

Julio Bruno:

It is a luxury, isn't it, to have time to reflect? It's a luxury.

Jeff Dewing:

But it shouldn't be, should it?

Julio Bruno:

But our lives are so busy all the time.

Jeff Dewing:

That's the point, isn't it? And COVID has helped to slow that down, yeah.

Julio Bruno:

COVID made us stop and we slow down, forced to slow down. And that's what happened. I remember myself, I was going out every day in Hyde Park. I mean, I'm lucky now because I live in Hyde Park. So go out there and I was alone in 700 acres, and I named the squirrels. I was the squirrel whisperer and every day I was bringing my walnuts and all that. I mean, it was funny. I have one that I love, it's called Lola. And they will come all over me like unbelievable. But I was thinking I was in nature and I was lucky enough that I had that time and I was trying to save my company at the time, Time Out. And it was difficult, but we did it all together.

Jeff Dewing:

Nice. Fantastic, fantastic. So I'm going to ask you one quick question before we move on to the final couple of questions. So reflecting on your career and your decision to become a migrant and put yourself under those pressures and take yourself out of your comfort zone and be fully accountable to yourself at all times, what else do you think that you needed around you? What other tools, you clearly wasn't a loner throughout, you clearly had to integrate with people or something, so what was the one thing, if there was one thing, that was really important to you outside of your own grit and determination?

Julio Bruno:

Well, the people around, the friends that I have made around the world and all the countries that I lived in and worked, I mean, I always felt that my own hometown was too small for me and then my country was too small for me and then the UK was too small for me, right? So it was important to me to and it continues to be a man of the world, whatever that means. I am interested in everything that's happening, whether it's Japan or now in Brazil or in Iran. It is something that has always driven me. And putting myself out there, yeah, that means that you have to read a lot and you have to listen a lot and you have to open yourself to very diverse communities. And it's something that I always strive to do and

it's something that has completed me in a way that I wouldn't have found that if I had stayed put in my own town.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah, no, that's fantastic. Again, from my perspective, one thing I wish I'd done 40 years ago, I joined six, seven years ago a peer group because it is very lonely at the top, very lonely, and joined a peer group for me where I had 14, 15 other chief execs from different diverse backgrounds and companies and whatever. Suddenly I was able to show a bit of vulnerability and didn't have to pretend I knew it all. And suddenly the knowledge I gained from those people around me and the support I gained, the support network was off the scale. And again, people would say to me, "What regret would you say you had in life?" I say, "Not establishing or realizing the power of a peer group 25 years ago," because it was so, so powerful. But it is about the people you surround yourself with, isn't it, yeah?

Julio Bruno:

That's very good advice.

Jeff Dewing:

Julio, I'm now going to ask you a couple of questions that I'm interested in, and it's important they come from the heart and it's important you don't get time to digest them. So if you now reflect on your career and your experiences as you've been sharing with us today, what would you say, if there was only one thing you could say, what would you say you are most grateful for?

Julio Bruno:

I'm grateful to have won the lottery of being born in a Western culture country, in my case, Spain, because I think it's a demographic lottery that allowed me to go and study and have a proper education and a proper surroundings and a good community of people and family. And there are billions around the world that don't have that. So I'm grateful that I was born

where I was born. Not that I'm comparing myself or saying that I wouldn't want to live in or have been born in some of the places where you don't have the liberties, whether you don't have the ability to be yourself and the ability to become who you want to become.

Jeff Dewing:

That's a great answer, that's a really good answer. That's very different to any other answer I've had before and I love that, I think that's fantastic. Well done, brilliant. I actually thought you were going to tell me you won the lottery for a minute there.

Julio Bruno:

I wouldn't have mind to win a hundred million or something. Yeah.

Jeff Dewing:

Oh dear. Finally, final question, again, if there was only one thing you could say for bear in mind that people that are listening and tuning into this podcast are curious about people's stories and their journeys, their periods of success and failure and how they learn, it's all about curiosity, about learning how people have sustained them and navigating their journeys. If there was only one thing, what single message would you give this audience on their journey to entrepreneurship or starting a business or to create a startup or going for a scale up? What one message would you give this audience?

Julio Bruno:

Wow, that's a difficult one. But I would say that you have to imagine who you want to be in order to become that. If you don't see it, if you don't think about it and kind of almost like you can taste it, it's very difficult that you're going to be that. You may be lucky or fall into some money or be lucky in a company. But if you want to go into entrepreneurial life, if you are not very clear of what that is, then you'll get there. But you have to first put that plan, that vision in your head, internalize it, internalize it every day, and then plan it.

You have to plan, what do I need? What do I miss? What do I have to learn? What are the people that I have to be surrounded with? But that starts with that vision, with that idea. That idea that sometimes, you have a thing in your mind and you say, "Oh no, that's stupid." No, don't say that's stupid. Go with it, go with it, think about it and see what it takes you. Because at one point that will be your idea and that will be the one that will make you successful.

Jeff Dewing:

No, again, thank you for that. That's brilliant. And again, I probably sum up slightly differently, although exactly the same message. And that is, begin with the end in mind.

Julio Bruno:

That was Stephen Covey, that was Stephen Covey and the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

Jeff Dewing:

Exactly. Yeah, it was, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it is, but it's interesting because although it's this catchy phrase when you think about it, where is it? What is the destination? If you don't know the destination, then you don't know what train to get on. So you have to know the destination and you have to take the time to think about it. And you're absolutely right. And of course the other thing is for an entrepreneurial perspective, which is a mindset is, you never give up. You just keep going.

Julio Bruno:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, there you go.

Jeff Dewing:

Julio, it's been fantastic having a chat with you. I've really, really enjoyed it. Got some inspirational stuff out of that. I can't wait for your book to arrive any day now, where I'll

certainly take some pleasure in reading it, and I'm sure I'll be contacting you with some anecdotes and comments and also some positive feedback. So I'm sure it's going to be fantastic. And I certainly hope our paths cross very soon.

Julio Bruno:

I hope the same, Jeff, thank you for your time and thank you for bringing me to your podcast.

Jeff Dewing:

Wow, what a conversation that was. Well, that was Julio and a big thanks, Julio, for taking the time to share some of your stories with us today. And I guess the bit I loved, and I may have highlighted it in the actual episode itself, but when you realized the difference between a normal person, if there is such a thing, and an entrepreneur, is mindset. And in Julio's case, he created and forced that mindset by behaving like a migrant and becoming a migrant, taking himself out of his comfort zone because he had to push the boundaries. He simply wasn't getting nourishment and fulfillment whilst living in Spain, which basically meant he had to fight for life in terms of survival, lack of the ability to phone in sick and all the other things that would come with an entrepreneurial mindset.

But the bit that really, really hit me hard was that wonderful saying that you came up with that said, "I gave myself a promotion." The ability to realize that you are not being nourished where you are. And we don't want to bad mouth the people that have given us an opportunity and we've learned from. So by giving ourselves a promotion says we are going to seek more than you are currently able to offer us. And that's rarely money. It's opportunity, it's growth, it's knowledge, it's curiosity, it's creativity, it's all the things that drive a human being. So I love that saying, and I'm going to start using that. I'm going to steal that one.

Do listen back to earlier episodes of Doing the Opposite, where you'll hear from guests like Jeroen Van De Waal, who has embarked on a journey of repairing the world's oceans, an incredible feat and incredible journey. And also people like Linda Green who told her

personal story of how she endured dark moments and then incredible highs, and then taking herself to places like Egypt and putting herself in danger before realizing the level of danger she placed herself into. These are all incredible stories that people have, and everybody's got a story.

*And I'm Jeff Dewing, author of the bestselling book, *Doing the Opposite*, and CEO and founder of [Cloudfm](#). Cloudfm are changing the rules of our industry and doing the opposite to create best value for our clients. If you'd like to know more, visit our website at [cloudfmgroup.com](#) or follow us on LinkedIn. You can find out more about the podcast and my incredible guests at [podcast.cloudfmgroup.com](#) or view on [YouTube](#).*

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Thanks for listening.