

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors. The podcast where you get to meet leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book and changed the way their sector does business for good.*

*I'm Jeff Dewing and I'm the founder and CEO of Cloud Facilities Management, an FM business, where we thrive on taking data driven risk, so our clients don't have to.*

*Today you're going to meet Levent Yildizgoren who was born in Turkey has lived most of his life in the UK and has been running a very successful business in translation services. Levent has actually written a book during the same sort of time as I was writing my book called Good Business in Any Language an event's mission and his purpose is to help businesses globalize in multicultural countries and areas where they would never have dreamed of operating.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*He has a simplistic principle or methodology that enables you to address any market that you choose to go. And he's named that term methodology 'lingo'. And if you want to understand how that works, you need to look at his website, go look at Good Business in Any Language book, there is lots and lots of incredible information and is also enjoyed the fact that the book has been promoted heavily on Amazon, and he's now a best seller. So, congratulations to Levent for that.*

*In addition, Levent has also launched his own podcast a few years ago, where he has had the most incredibly diverse guest profile that you could imagine with incredible knowledge and information that is shared on a regular basis. His podcast has now been watched by on a hundred thousand people, and he's an incredible success.*

*Now I'm really interested in understanding how Levent has been so focused on this approach and helping people in working across global markets, because he's actually been doing this now with his business and his wife for the last 29, 30 years. So, I'm going to be fascinated to see how he's maintained that momentum and that resilience and more importantly, understand why he's so passionate about helping so many other people.*

*So welcome Levent. And thank you so much for joining me today for this podcast.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

*It's a pleasure to meet you, Jeff.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*I'm looking forward to today. We've obviously known each other for a while - I'm pleased that you've brought me onto your podcast when you first started it a few years ago, which was a great experience. So, thank you for that.*

*And now of course on our one it's about how do we, how do we come out of our comfort zone? How do we break the rules? How do we change the game? So I guess with that in mind, Levent, if you can perhaps just sort of set the scene and then take us through maybe an example in your career or your life where you've done the complete opposite to what most people would expect or change the rules and how that impacted you or your family or your colleagues and sort of take us on that journey. That'd be great.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Well, thank you for the opportunity, Jeff, interesting, you know, reading, reading your book and talking about doing the opposite, it kind of made me kind of reflect on what, what I, what did I do in, you know, doing the opposite.

And then I realized that actually that started long, long, long time ago. I want, I won't go in a lot of details, but when I, when we started primary school, the first year we had a lovely teacher and the teacher was asking everybody, you know, what do you want to be? You know, what do you do? What do you want to be when you grow up? And people were saying, 'I want to be a doctor'. I think that doctor was the most favorite thing. Engineer, and the solicitor. And then she asked me, she said, what do you want to be?

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

And <laugh> what I, what I said to her, she kind of – I could see her being shocked because in our street we had the waste disposal lorries. And those lorries in a large, huge at the back, they had platforms. So, the waste Binman would hang on the platforms as the lorry is slowing down, they would jump down, collect what they had to collect, and then jump back on that platform and go, and I would watch that sort of amazement, 'how cool is that'?

So, I said to her innocent, I said, 'I want to be a bin man'. And she said, 'okay', <laugh> so next thing I knew, she, she invited my parents to the school. She said 'is there problems at home? And you know, is he alright? And is that something we need to, we need to be aware of'. So, I think, you know, it kind of started there, doing the opposite.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

So, so what else? I mean, I think the biggest differentiator was for me is, is really deciding to work for myself. I think that that was the biggest disruption in my life, but not just in my life, in my family's life.

Cause at the time, I didn't realize that the, my decision, you know, what I decide to do with my life would have such implications <laugh> in my family's upbringing, you know, and that was 1995, 1994. At the time my wife was running the translation business that we have, we have today in a, in a different form. I was, I had a full-time job. I was in print printing, trade directors, you know, company, car, you know, quite promising getting on with the shareholders very well. And then a, a sort of a sizable contract landed on the company.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

And I always wanted to do something for myself, you know, being in control of our, our lives.

So, me and my wife, we decided that I would resign from my job and join the company and it's sweet, but what we didn't take into account is that we had two small children, mortgage. Actually. It was just a couple of years after we had the house. And that was the kind of lurking recession <laugh> at the time. Yeah. And so, we didn't have those Excel spreadsheets or Google spreadsheet calculations. It was purely a decision made on emotions <laugh> and it could have gone wrong terribly, but somehow it didn't. And we said, actually, we did a little bit of risk analysis. We said, 'what can go wrong? This may not work. Are we going to lose our house?

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

No. Or we may, but if we don't do this now, when are we going to do it'? So, we decided that it was the time to do that. So, I resigned my job joined the company, started working from home at the time, there was no home working as such. It is now we are all proud to say that I'm working from home at the time.

It wasn't like that. So, we of course converted our lunch half of our lunch in 10 office. Cause we didn't have a time to look for an office or anything like that at the small children, you know, we had like French doors, and I could, I vividly remember my daughter coming to the French doors, you know, 'mommy, why can't I sit on your lap'?

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

And <laugh>, you know, and luckily, we had a, a child minder that they, they, they really liked, and every time phone would go, we would say 'children turn down the TV, be quiet'. And, and so, so it kind of affected them in a way, but I'm pleased to say it's not all negative. It's you know, now by both of my children, they're grown-up adults, they have their jobs, they can look after themselves. They don't have to rely on us and they're independent, happy adults in, in happy, good relationships. So, so after all it didn't, <laugh>, it didn't end up that, that bad.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Of course. Yeah. Well to them, I guess the fact they were so young to them that was normal. Right. They didn't know any different. So bringing them into that environment and keeping that environment, you know, it's, it's, it's one of the things where children are just so resilient, you know, they, they, they see it as normal, so it doesn't really have the impact that you think it might have when you've experienced both sides of events.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

I agree with that because as a parent, I think we always felt guilty, but for them they knew they were loved. They knew that we were really trying to do things for the family. So yes, you're right. But as a parent, I think it's to this day, I still feel like little guilty of, you know, why, why am I missing? Why, how many, how many school plays I missed and how many Halloween trick or treats I missed. And you know, it is not possible not to think about them, but you are right they are resilient.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*To them it seems and same. Yeah. <laugh> to them, it seems normal guess. But I think when you, when you now reflect the Levent on the way, we've all learned to adapt post COVID. And it's the subject. I speak a lot about that. You've now got this environment, as you've just said, you know, yourself earlier where, you know, even if I look at my situation, you know, I'm spending almost a hundred percent of the time with my wife and I'm lucky enough to now have two of my grandchildren, my daughter, and her partner and grandchildren living with me. Oh nice. And the quality of time that we enjoy is, is priceless. And I'm still able to do my job. I'm still able to work. I can, you know, like in between calls or whatever, I go downstairs, I'll have lunch, I'll have a cup of tea with them. We'll sit and play with them. They're getting our attention a thousand times more than when used to exit the property for 10 hours or 12 hours come back and they're in bed. Yeah. Yeah. And you, you really challenge why we've always behaved that way. You know, why have we, why have we not been doing what we are doing now? Why did it take COVID to catapult us into the reality of what we should have been doing? And it's fascinating.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

I couldn't agree more and, and same applies, applies to me as applied to me as well. Now I'm spending time at home with my wife and wow. You know, why did I? Yeah, absolutely. You know, it's but you said resonated with me, said, 'why didn't I do this before'? You know, and, and leaving home for 10, 12 hours

a day, this seemed perfectly normal. Now we come to realize that this, it actually, this is better. <Laugh>, it's better this way.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah, of course. Of course. It's one of the most famous things I love to hear children say it drives people wild, but it really, it really enriches me when all you hear a young child say is yeah. 'But why'? Yeah. But why. Yeah. But why can't and you think, well, maybe as adults, we, yeah, we don't ask that question enough times. Do we totally*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Totally Agree! Yes. Yeah. We accept things very quickly as children. Yeah. They want, they, they want answers. Yeah. <laugh>

**Jeff Dewing:**

*So Levent, the other thing that I have found interesting when we first met and, and also watching your, your journey that I've watched at a distance through social media and, and various other methods, you, you, you went out and wrote an incredible book. About global business and, and how you can actually quite easily trade globally, as long as you follow a prescribed and proven methodology. But the bit that really struck a chord with me was during your journey, you found this time in your life where you just had this overwhelming desire to help people, right? To help people solve problems that they thought was unsolvable. So, try and tell me what, what, what was that moment when you felt that, that deep desire, when you felt that you know, that you're going to be more enriched by helping other people solve problems that, you know, you can help solve? So, sort of tell, tell me a little bit about that.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for asking that. Well I think there was number of things, it's difficult for me to say one event that has led me to this kind of moment, but number of things I probably the most defining was when I had my ski accident in 2009 I broke my hip really badly in such a way that I was advised not to put any pressure on it at all. Because I then find out that in normal hip injuries after a month or two, they, they want you to put pressure on. So, start walking. So, the pressure helps the blood circulation. It helps with the healing. With my one, I was advised not to move at all. So, for six months I was immobile, another six months on crutches. So that's like took a year of my life.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

So, when people ask me, you know, 'how old are you'? I say a year less because that year was kind of <laugh>. I was out of action. But during that time, what I realized that after the initial shock was over that I had to be taken to the UK by, by road ambulance. And so, after a few days when the friends visiting you stop visiting, you know, because they can't visit you all the time then of course. So, so you kind of have to find your way of coming back to the reality and how to cope with it.

And, and then I realize that actually, you know, I'm probably the luckiest person in the world, you know, I had this horrible accident, but I had my friends around, I had my family around, I had my colleagues around at work.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

So, my life hasn't really, apart from the discomfort I had, like it lying down, which are kind of, you know, okay, this is, I was doing something I loved. So, you know, I, I, I didn't feel sorry. I, it was the right decision I would do it again. So realized that actually I'm very lucky because of the people surrounding me.

So, the life, my life hasn't been affected other than the discomfort, then realize that actually, how can I help support this environment? How can I help others? Not in - ideally, hopefully not in these drastic positions that I was in, but - enriching the life of executives and colleagues. And so that's kind of probably the, the most defining moment in me making certain decisions.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Right. Right. And that's, again, that's fascinating because when you think about it, it's, if you look at COVID, which affected obviously millions and millions of people, but it's, it was at one event that made us rethink what's important to us. Right. So now that was obviously that's a global pandemic, but it's the same thing. If something happens in your life, my, my father passed away in 2017 and that was a massive shock to me and my body and my system and my thought and my mind, because, you know, it happens obviously to everybody, but yeah, but we were sort of so close, he was so fit. He was water skiing in March and passed in August. And you just don't see it coming, but what it does do is it gives you a shock to make you reevaluate what's important. And these things are, are the defining moments in anybody's life to, to a greater or lesser extent. And, and I think that's when we really get to see what what's important to us.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I couldn't agree more.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Following the success of one, writing a book. And of course, I appreciate the impact of writing a book and I appreciate the work and I appreciate the effort. I appreciate the, the stress <laugh>. Because obviously we were pretty much writing, writing our books at the same time. Yeah, indeed!*

*So, once you've gone through that, apart from the fact that you think, wow, I've actually, I've actually published a book and two is, I've had great feedback and three is, I can see how it's helping people. Right. That's the, the biggest enrichment, right? When you see people say to you how much that's helped them in whatever journey they've, they've got. So, since writing the book and then obviously moving into, you could argue now broadcasting because of the podcast. And suddenly you notice, as I'm noticing, because we've done similar things, we are now meeting people we might otherwise have never met.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And we don't even know why we might be speaking to certain people because we don't think that there's any common ground until you start to hear their stories. And that's when you go, 'oh my God', the knowledge, the curiosity. So, tell me what it's been like for you since writing the book and having the podcast and all the people you've met. Tell me how that's made you feel, what you've learned, what, how, how it makes you how it's affected your, your life journey, your purpose, you know, sort of tell me how, how you feel about that.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Yeah. Yeah. Well, great question, Jeff. Actually, I, I didn't expect any of this taking place, what you described. I thought, 'okay, you know, what do I do?' I'll come a hundred percent clean. Now, 'what can I do to do generate leads?' I said, oh, can write a book, the podcast. But what I didn't realize that doing the podcast would give me, reach out to people that, like you said, that I would never otherwise meet or speak, let alone learn from. So interesting and so, so enlightening now initial first episodes, I think you were, you were one of my first, first initial guests. It was kind of very, 'what shall I do? What shall I talk about and how will it go? Will it be fun? Will it, will they like it? You know, will anybody listen?' So, all these questions kind of all of us, but then now I can't wait for my next podcast because there's so much to learn and you are absolutely right.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

I've been speaking with people from Indonesia, you know, I, I interviewed localization manager from Tinder. Normally I would think that Tinder is an app for you know, for people trying to match up and stuff like that. But how wrong I was in certain countries, Tinder is used as a community, building up community for people to get together. Not necessarily one to one, I think in, in far-east countries, they use Tinder in groups. So, it is like four or five people get together, have a chat and stuff. So, it was like enlightening talking to people from talking this entrepreneur from Indonesia. And he says you know what? I have a business in Vietnam. I have a business in Singapore. I said to him, how do you do it? You know, how do you do?

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

He said, well, what I, this take a flight, go to Vietnam, jump in a taxi while I'm in the taxi. I just check up my Google Translate. And, and I say few words to the taxi driver in, in, in Vietnamese. And the next thing I know the driver is speaking with me. He said, look, you know, 'please just, you know, I only know a few words'. Basically, that's my secret. Just, just, you know, taking action and making an effort to connect with people. That's how I set up a co-founder of the business. And he said I think here's some really sort of interesting targets that yeah, by, by this time we'll be covering most of Southeast Asia. I was like, wow. You know, amazing. So yeah, it is. There's so much that, that I have learned come across, met so many interesting people and this, some people that otherwise without the podcast I mean, one of my hobbies is, is cycling.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

I love cycling. Not that I can do too much of it, but you know, I love cycling. And one of the British icons is Brompton bicycles. You know, I, I love the bicycle. It's a folded one down day electrics, but I also love their global reach. They sell 10 times more to globally than they sell in the UK. And their CEO who played a major part in, in the global, global step. He came on my podcast. I was, wow. You know, how else will I meet? Will Adam Butlers speaking? You know, if I, if I went to the company, I love, I love the bicycle. Can we have a chat? He will say, probably call the security <laugh> or, you know, well, you know, I haven't got the time. I'm sorry. You know, if everybody came round to the company, want to talk to me, you know, I couldn't run the company, but for the podcast, we had a, we had a conversation which was enlightening. Interesting. And what he said would be very valuable to, to any, any business executive or anybody who wants to of course, you know, grow their business. So, this part that I didn't expect that part, but I'm loving it. I'm loving that part. And also speaking with you, you know, we met, we met quite a few times, but we never had conversations in this, in this level. And I I'm loving this, this conversation as well.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Well, again, it's one of the things that I learned through COVID because, so I I've, I'm usually very controversial with my views, but there's been people saying, 'oh, well, I'm fed up with zoom. I'm fed up with teams. We need to get back together. We need to be in a room. We need to be in the office'. And I'm very disruptive of that. I don't agree with it. And the reason I don't agree with it is that I do agree people need to meet up - that goes without saying - but what I learned, and you've just proved the point, you know, we've met a number of times, but we've never had an intimate conversation. No, right? No. Yet when we got on your podcast, we had an intimate conversation. Yeah. When you would never have had, if we were meeting in some networking event or whatever.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah. And the same applies to business, you know, every one of my managers throughout COVID during the first three months, everybody declared, they hated being at home because it was unusual. They had nowhere to work. The kids were screaming, blah, blah, blah <laugh>. But three months later, the same group of people said, we love it because they'd adapted. Right. They'd solved the problems that they were initially facing. And then every manager bar, none after five or six months said to me, I know my team more now than I've ever known them in the last five years because of these one to one intimate conversations. And it was game changing and that's, what's created in great engagement levels and inclusion. It it's, it's solved so many problems. So, when you get the balance, right, it's very, very powerful. And of course, when you then do eventually meet up once a week, once a month, once every two months, the value of that meeting is a thousand times greater than when you see them every day.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. I, I couldn't agree with you more

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And that's the bond.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Okay. So Levent - I've got two, two questions for you. The first question is based on your knowledge and experience, and you've obviously run your business for nigh on 30 years now. So, if you, if you try and bring all of that together into your head into one space, and there is somebody that says, 'look, I really want to control my own destiny. I really want to make an impact in this part of my world, but I'm really worried. Cause I've got a mortgage, I've got a family I'm anxious, I'm nervous. I don't know what could happen next week or next month or next year', which obviously none of us do. What is the one piece of advice you would give somebody that had that dilemma?*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

It's a hard question. There are a number of things I can say, but I think the most important thing is really that because what I noticed that I, early years of planning my business, I now noticed that I have been in a survival mode. Survival mode is like I have to be in the office before everyone. I can't leave at six o'clock, you know, I have to leave later so that I can catch up this one, email, this, do this invoice too. You know? So, it was now I realize that it was a survival mode, which was, was it necessary? Now in my, you know, in my old age, I can see that it really wasn't necessary. It was probably draining my energy that I could have used otherwise, more creative at work and also more productively at home.

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Cause it's not just our business now I realize a lot more that - Yes. Okay. Business needs our attention, but so does our families, so one piece advice that I would say I would give is that things work out somehow <laugh> and don't panic. Take your time. It'll be alright. You know, now that's what, that's what I realized that there's no need to go into survival mode and things somehow work out. But for it, for, from the business perspective, one thing that I, I will say is definitely aim high aim, aim a lot higher and, and

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah. The famous saying, I love is shoot for the moon and if you miss it, don't worry because you're landing in the stars.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

<Laugh>

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And if I was to play back what you just said, Levent, which I thought was great and you know, just things will work out. So, I would summarize that by saying 'just do it'.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Just yeah,

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah. Just do it. Yeah.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Just do it. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*My last and final question is again, if you could only name one thing - what would you say you are most grateful for?*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Well, <laugh> again, I'm grateful for a lot of things. Probably the most things that I'm grateful for is my family, but I'm grateful for my health and it's, you know, it's, it's a, it's a gift it's not taking for granted really health is, is almost like a gift. And now it's something that I have to look after it to make sure that I'm serving my family, my colleagues, you know, people who trust me, not just my family, my colleagues, also our customers, our providers.

I know I'm giving you a long version, but one thing I'm grateful for is, is my family - that that makes such a big difference. And now I'm pleased to say that my family's extending with my grandson, who's bringing such a, you know, six year old bringing such a joy to our lives that was beyond our wildest imagination,

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Which is fantastic, which is fantastic.*



**Levent Yildizgoren:**

I, I can tell you one, one story. We went to buy shirt for his football team and the, the assistant said, you know, 'how tall are you'? Because those shirts are apparently to do bit height. He said, I'm only six years old. <Laugh> <laugh> I don't know. Yeah, yeah, yeah. <Laugh> and for me it was like, wow. You know? Yeah. Such a joy, such a lovely, such a lovely play. Yeah,

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah, yeah. Fantastic. And again, it's one of those things where, you know, I'm, I'm lucky enough, not that I compete in any way, shape or form, but I'm now up to eight grandchildren. And I know I don't look old enough to have more than one <laugh>. But when you're a parent and especially when you are running a business, starting a business in exactly the same case where you decided to resign and, and go into business with, with, with your wife, with the mortgages and the kids and stuff we all convince ourselves that we have to work hard. We have to, you know, it's, it's, it's all about, we've got to protect the family. We've got to get a roof over the head. And we do that at the cost of spending time with our family right now, at the time we believe it's the right thing to do, right.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*It's not until you get to our age where you've then got the benefit of grandchildren that you truly get a second chance, right? Because your own children, you've, you've missed that opportunity because you've done all the things you believe to be right at the time, but you then realize actually, you know what and we, we went through a phase of our second grandchild where we, my wife used to have Quinn every Thursday. So, my daughter could go and work and whatever. And that Thursday I'd wake up every Thursday morning. And she would say to me, just as I'm drinking me tea, I'm about to go to work. She'd say, 'Grandad, can you just play with me for a little while'? And normally, you know, back to when I was a parent, I said, 'well, I can't darling, I've got to go to work. I'll be late for work'. Yeah, but in this, in this scenario, when she said, can you play with me? I went, absolutely. So, every Thursday for the year we looked after her, I was late because that was that's. That was the right thing to do. <Laugh> because we get a second chance, and we have different values. Right.*

*Listen, Levent, thank you so much for the time you've spent with us today. It's been great catching up again. We must catch up again soon without being such a gap in between*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Much closer

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Now that COVID is becoming now that COVID is becoming a bit, bit more of a normality. And it's been really brilliant talking to you. It's great to see you smiling and it's great to see the success of your podcast as well. And your book so well done for that. And thank you. I look forward to catching up with you again soon.*

**Levent Yildizgoren:**

Likewise. Yeah. It's been a total total delight speaking with you.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Wow. Thank you so much Levent for the time you've taken to speak to me today and I've, I've learned lots and lots of nuggets as I always do when I speak to people. And particularly since we spoke last.*

*What did I take out of that? There was a couple of real nuggets I enjoyed from that one was that element of vulnerability where Levent said, 'let me come clean'. When I asked him and probed about his working relationship as an employee, before he started his own business and the fear he had and his wife, when they decided that they were going to give up a relatively well paid and secure job to start their own business when they had a young family, a mortgage.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And, and when I asked him at the end 'what's the one piece of advice you would give a budding entrepreneur' that was nervous. Us he basically said it all just work out. And, and then I obviously counted that with, with, with a, a simplistic phrase that said, just do it. So, it's interesting to hear that most entrepreneurs that I speak to say that you can't worry about the uncontrollable. Once you've made a decision, just do it. It will work out because it will, it will attract your attention in the areas that it's needed to make it work out. I guess it's just about making sure that you are passionate enough for whatever it is that you are doing*

*Please do listen back to earlier episodes of Doing the Opposite where you are here from incredible guests across my two seasons with incredible stories and one being Sam White, who has an incredible story of entrepreneurialism and believing that she was unemployable, hence why she started her own businesses that have then gone on to thrive and then the choices she made to go and live in Beverly Hills because she thought it was a great idea and everything in between. So please do take the time to listen to so many other stories because they are absolutely fascinating.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*I'm Jeff Dewing, author of bestselling book Doing the Opposite and CEO of cloud facilities management cloud affair are changing the rules of our industry and they're doing the opposite to create best value for our clients. If you'd like to know more, please visit our website at [cloudfoundgroup.com](http://cloudfoundgroup.com) or follow us on LinkedIn.*

*You can also find out more about the podcast, my incredible guests at [podcast.cloudfmgroup.com](http://podcast.cloudfmgroup.com).*

*Finally, a huge thanks to my team as always Nichola Crawshaw at Cloudfm, Sarah Waddington of Astute PR, Thinking Hat PR and my wonderful production team What Goes on Media who have helped me launch this incredible new podcast. Thanks for listening.*