

## [Transcript] The Ezra Klein Show / Biden, Psychedelics, Twitter, My New Book — and So Much More

From New York Times Opinion, this is the Ezra Klein Show.

Welcome to the Ask Me Anything episode, I'm here with my revered editor, the bringer of Gravitas, Aaron Redica. We've got tons of questions from the hundreds that you all sent in, which I'm always grateful for, that I'm about to get peppered with. Aaron, it's good to actually see you in person. I know, we're live in New York. This is not Saturday night, however. Let's just get rolling. There's so many questions. That's not always time. So you're going on book leave, and many of your listeners were curious what the book is about. I don't think this will surprise anybody listening to the show. So I'm co-writing a book with Derek Thompson of the Atlantic, who, if you don't read him, he's great. And it's a book about what I often call supply side progressivism or liberalism that builds, what Derek calls, you know, abundance or the abundance agenda. But at its core, where do we have problems? Where the fundamental problem is scarcity? We don't have enough of something we need. And when that problem is located, how do we fix it? Sometimes the necessity here is for the government to create more of something we need, right? To do clean energy tax credits or a warp speed for vaccines. And sometimes the government is actually making it impossible or very difficult to create the thing we need, say, housing in California. And so those are the sort of layers of the project. And I think the other layer of it is how did liberalism and particularly places where liberals govern become so bad at building? How did the coalition that imagines itself as behind a strong and effective government actually become often unable to run governments that are strong and effective? And so some of the project is unearthing the secondary history of sort of post-20th century liberalism, sort of the rise of the new left, the rise of Naderite and so on movements that created a lot of ways in which liberals both want an activist government and then want a lot of ways for people to stand in front of that government and say, stop, you're not listening to my needs, you're going to hurt the environment, etc. And the point is not that one of these sides is right and one of them is wrong, but you have to understand the way they've collided in governance to understand a bunch of the problems we have now and to maybe say, okay, the balance on this is off given what we're facing. So that's the project of the book. I'm going to be off for about three months. Hopefully, I'll get the book done or finished in that time. We'll see, but I'm excited about it.

I'm going to push into the content there in a second, but I wanted to ask you one question about collaborating with Derek. So you are a person who is at the center of the process both for your show and your column. How are you envisioning doing it, a book with someone? I'm just very curious about that. And there are a lot of process questions from your listeners. So I thought I'd ask that.

He's been on bookly first due to his schedule and then I'm going on. One of the reasons I wanted to co-write this book is I found writing my first book, Why Were Polarized, to be an incredibly lonely experience. Almost every creative project I've done in my life that I've really enjoyed has had somebody else at the center of it with me. In my column, it's you. On the podcast, it's the team and practically Roget, who's been with the show for so long, Roget Karma, our senior editor. When I launched Vox, I did that with Melissa Bell and Matthew Glacius. When I did Why Were Polarized, it was really just me. It's not that I didn't have an editor, Ben Lane, and who's great. But for months, it was just me

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struggling with the page. And a lot of my best thinking is done when I talk. A lot of my best thinking is done in relationship to other people. And I just think it makes me smarter to be working with other people. And I think that it also helps me actually get things done. And I just wanted it to be a less lonely process. There's obviously advantages to doing projects on your own because you have full creative control over them. But there are real disadvantages to it, too. So this was an experiment that I wanted to at least attempt.

Yeah, we spend a lot of time on the phone. It's like an old school columnist, editor, relationship. All right, let's dig into the actual material, though, because you and I have worked a lot on this and there's been a ton on the show as well. So, Josh Piro, the governor of Pennsylvania faced a sharp crisis very recently where a section of the I-95 collapsed. And Joel D has written in asking us whether the fact that they were actually able to get the section of I-95 that fell open 12 days after it collapsed, what the implications are for a liberalism that builds in that sequence.

So I think this has been a really interesting model because Shapiro is bragging about it. The Biden administration likes to tell me about the role they played in it. And I think it's also important to say they did this with union labor. That's actually been a big part of how they intended it and also how they've narrativized it. It wasn't just that they got this portion built, which was estimated to take months. It's not at all unusual for a government project, infrastructure project, estimated to take months to take years. And instead, it took days. They were going around the clock. They had a live stream on it. But you have to take seriously what he did. So the Pennsylvania governor has emergency powers during a disaster. And Shapiro signed a proclamation that reads, quote, I hereby suspend the provisions

of any other regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of Commonwealth business or the orders, rules, or regulations of any Commonwealth agency. If strict compliance with the provisions of any statute order rules or regulations would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with this emergency event. So I did a piece with you a couple months back called everything bagel liberalism. And the point of that is that liberals often put a huge number of secondary objectives into a single project. So they want to restore American dominance and semiconductor manufacturing. But then there are also these rules in there for onsite childcare and how to break the contracting into small tasks so you can have a more diverse set of subcontractors and what sort of community investments you need to make and your climate action mitigation plan and so on. And one of the points of that piece was you can choose some. Here they chose unions, but you can't choose all of them. And what they did here, what Shapiro was able to do in Pennsylvania was he wiped out functionally everything else. You could not sue and stop this project using say environmental litigation, which happens on a lot of different projects. They just went too fast and they wiped a lot of things out. If you listen to the Jen Paulke episode, all these different states and of course, the federal government have very complicated procurement and contracting rules meant to make sure things are fair, that people who aren't chosen can challenge all that was out the window. So I think it's relevant what they did, but it is also relevant that usually you cannot do this, what they did was radically alter the process by which building happens.

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And I'll make one other point about it that I think is a good way to think about it conceptually. What Shapiro ultimately said here is that I, Josh Shapiro, who won election with a majority of the vote from the voters in Pennsylvania, I should be trusted with acting in a way that ensures the elector gets what it wants. And in his view, in that point, it was the quick rebuilding of I-95. The processes we have are a way of saying, we think that the elected representatives cannot be trusted on this. And so we're going to hamstring them or tie them up with a lot of other processes meant to allow more voice, meant to allow more opposition, meant to allow more litigation. And you could think that's right or wrong. But what's, I think, valuable about seeing what happened in Pennsylvania is that there's nothing about government doing projects. It means they can't be done fast. There's nothing about unions doing projects. It means they can't be done fast. But you have to make some choices. So you could just give more governors and give the president more emergency powers and wipe out a lot of procurement rules. But that would upset a lot of people. And so what Pennsylvania shows is it is possible. But what the invoking of these emergency powers also shows is it cannot be done under the normal policies that the governors use. And the obvious thrill that everybody involved in it now feels should make us wonder if we're not missing something in our normal processes. Emergency processes shouldn't make you feel so much happier than normal processes. That's not normally how that goes. Right. But okay, virtually no one would say, well, we really would like to have I-95 be collapsed. No one wants that, right? So the emergency is going to override very happily the conditions that normally would obtain, right? But how are you going to transfer that kind of emergency process to an ordinary process where people are going to have objections, some of which are going to be reasonable, many of which are going to be unreasonable? I mean, it's easy to say, okay, great, they did it in 12 days. But it was an emergency. And so they acted like it was an emergency. I think first there's a question of what in our minds should be an emergency, right? And I mean, my interest in this topic is driven more than anything else by decarbonization. If you believe that climate is an emergency, and I do believe it's an emergency, now it's an emergency playing out over years and decades, not days. The summer seems to agree with you. The summer seems to agree with me. Then I think you need to, and this is the big argument inside I think this whole area, then I think you need to begin saying our processes don't work for this kind of emergency. This is a point now I've made in podcasts and columns, but the largest solar farm in America is something on the order of 585 megawatts. We're going to need to build two 400 megawatt solar power facilities a week for 30 years to hit a middle of the road renewables pathway. We do not have the capacity to do that. That should be understood as an emergency, not something we can approach with business as normal. This is a point, as you know, I'm making a column that will probably be up by the time this the show comes, but to not choose to change processes is to choose right now. It is to choose to absorb the problems of climate change at a higher level. Now look, everything is about where you put the dial, and you're not going to go to full wipe out all the procurement rules and nor should you. You're not going to go to full wipe out all the environmental litigation nor should you, but there is space between here and there. If we want to do a bunch of things that I think we should want to do, then we're going to have to move in that direction. If we don't want to do it, then we're just going to have to say, okay, we're okay with the housing markets looking like

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they do in superstar cities. We're okay with missing our Paris climate accord targets by a lot, not by a little. We're okay with a lot of things that we could fix, and we're okay with liberal government having the accurate reputation, at least in America, that it cannot build the projects it promises to build. You can't have high speed rail in California. You can't get the big dig done at the cost and time. You said it would. The second Avenue subway is going to be a total cost disaster. Maybe if you try to build a bunch of miles of bike lanes in San Francisco, it's going to take you a decade. That is also a choice to say that's okay. We prefer the outcome of these processes because we think there's enough voice and we think that preventing the bad projects is worth it. You can also hopefully make things quicker for good projects and slower for bad ones. I mean, it doesn't have to be a process. It cannot make any distinctions between what you're

building. Okay, so that brings us to Joel's follow-up question. Joel is the star at the beginning of the show here. So is there a version of permitting reform that would actually be a win-win for environmental justice, community input, and for building faster? Or do you see the values as inherently zero sum? I think it depends a little bit on which values we're talking about. But let's take environmental justice and building faster before we take on community input. And there, I think it's pretty straightforward. People sometimes talk about this as a quote, green pass. I think we know which projects are meant to be environmentally more sustainable.

And I think those should have a streamlined way forward. So there's a good paper that I mentioned in the podcast of Robinson Meyer called The Green Dilemma. And the law professors who wrote that paper, they talk about a number of examples within government of very famous one is base closing commissions that basically identifies questions around military base closing. And it has a streamlined, fast-tracked, up or down vote way of doing that. And you can imagine a certain set of processes that would be fast-tracked into that. If you're working on decarbonization, for instance, it's renewable energy, not fossil fuel energy, maybe you have a quicker path through environmental review. Now, there are a lot of things that aren't just environmental review here, so it does depend on what you're talking about. But we're seeing this begin to happen. Affordable housing in California has been sped past a bunch of points in the process it used to have to go through, whereas market rate housing doesn't always get that. So you can make decisions about what it is you're trying to speed up. Community input is just tough, because I think a lot gets hidden in that term. Which community, having what kind of input? There are times when the processes we have allow communities and particularly affected communities to come to the table, for instance, or come into the process and be heard in a way they wouldn't otherwise. There are also a lot of ways in which these processes often create space for the status quo to take something over. Very famously, I think all over the country, wealthy homeowners are very good at manipulating the planning process. You can't build below market rate homes and you can't build many homes at all

in very, very desirable and very, very economically important areas. So which community is getting input? The community that lives there now, the community that would like to live there, the community that has time to show up to all these meetings that most people don't even know are going on. There's a huge amount of power that is wielded in meetings around the regulatory process for basically any major bill you can think of. Most people never know those meetings happen, but every lobbyist knows when those meetings happen and moneyed interests spend a lot of

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money making sure their interests are heard and their thinking is heard at these meetings. So this is a very tough thing to get right, but a critique that many in this area make, Jerusalem, Demses, at the Atlantic, because I think we're in great pieces on this, and that I agree with is that there is a difference between input and representative input. Processes get captured. And so there is often a question of what level and layer you're having people get engaged at. The fact that there wasn't meeting and some people showed up does not mean that what got heard at that meeting was the sentiment of the community. Like I've sat in SF City Council meetings and one thing that came up was whether or not a 5G tower was going to get built and person after person after person after person there attacked the 5G tower. The only people who showed up at the 5G tower part of this planning meeting were people who think 5G towers potentially give you cancer. Now, most people I think don't care that much about 5G towers and to the extent they had to make a choice, they would have, you know, they want to have fast internet. And so in the end, the 5G tower won. But whatever was happening at that meeting, it was community input, but it wasn't representative of the community. And this is a place where we do have representative government. And to my point about Shapiro, a minute ago, oftentimes I think a good way to have broader community input is to actually give power to elected representatives. I mean, there should be checks on that, but they shouldn't be completely unable to do the things that they just got elected by, you know, most of the voters in a much higher turnout kind of political participation domain to do. So again, it's all about where you hit the dial here, right? You can go too far in any direction, but I think community input is complicated. Oftentimes we are not hearing from the community. We are hearing from a subset of affected interests who know how to manipulate the levers of power. And we should be careful about analogizing those. This goes right to what Tony C wants to know about, which is how should a climate conscious member of society think about the Biden administration in the context of climate change? Do you think a Biden is a net positive or a net negative for environment? And he's thinking, of course, about permitting fossil fuel extraction and so on. I just put this on, and this is meant as no critique of Tony. I just put this on because if you're in an information loop where this question feels really possibly like it could come out either way to you, right? Is Joe Biden, who has presided over the single largest set of climate investments ever and created a whole new structure in which climate infrastructure will be built? The IRA alone at this point is judged at something like \$380 billion over 10 years, but as we talked about in the Robinson Meyer episode, maybe it's really going to be \$500 billion, maybe a trillion dollars in climate investments. And on the other side, they've permitted some near-term drilling and made it a little bit easier during an energy crunch to build more. These things are so out of proportion to each other that I think the way in which people get upset about the places Biden diverges from them, say on social media, it's hard sometimes to keep things in perspective. But Biden is the most successful pro-climate president there has ever been in this country, right? I mean, climate is a relatively new issue, but obviously Trump was a disaster. He's done far more than Obama just because of where the issue is and where the political coalitions are, far more than Clinton, certainly far more than George W. Bush. And he's given us a shot at building this stuff. We may fail, but Biden has completely changed the game.

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For so long, the whole of the environmental fight on climate was, can we just figure out some way to get the money to do what we need to do? Now, to everything we're talking about, the conversation

has actually changed to the money is there. Can we actually build it? Can we actually translate all the legislation into the decarbonization infrastructure we need in the real world? That is an astonishing achievement. And it actually slightly saddens me that anybody would look at the Biden administration and what they've done at this point, where they really, they got this over the line. Maybe it's not everything everybody wanted because they had a 50-50 Senate, but they got it over the line and now the work can really happen. We'll see what happens. We'll see if it all works out. Implementation is really tough. This all has to happen in the real world. It's not just sending checks out from the government, but they have been extraordinarily successful. On a pretty hard issue, climate is not an easy political issue. It's not one where you have naturally very large constituencies, people who will be immediately benefited by it. They prioritized it, they figured it out, they passed it, they deserve to be applauded, and now they deserve to be watched over and scrutinized as the real work has to happen. But the stuff they did on the margin to keep energy costs down, to not completely destroy their power in the midterms, that's just politics. But the bulk of their legislation, it's been an extraordinary climate presidency given what is actually possible in American politics, not just possible in people's minds. They deserve the credit on that one. So, TJM has a really interesting question. This was brought up a lot before Biden actually took office. But let me ask you now, are comparisons between Joe Biden and FDR justified? Have their presidencies been broadly similar?

They're not justified. You're right that before Biden came in and his agenda expanded, and as also Democrats began in 2020 to think they might get huge congressional majorities, you have this moment of maybe it'll be an FDR-sized presidency. And this happened with Obama too. There was like maybe Obama is an extra FDR. And I just have a bugaboo about this, that FDR was only FDR because of the size of the congressional majority he got in 32, because the Great Depression and the anger at Hoover destroyed the Republican Party. So FDR, when he comes in, he has 58 Democratic senators to 36 Republican senators in a much less polarized time. So he could actually get more from those 36 Republicans, but still 58 to 36. Biden has a 50-50 Senate where Vice President Kamala Harris is a tie-breaking vote. When he first comes in.

When he first comes in, right. And in the House, FDR had 311 Democrats to 117 Republicans. And for Biden, when he first comes in, Democrats have a majority in the single digits. You can't have an FDR-sized presidency in a polarized political time, in a closely divided Congress. And I think this is what people just often miss when they're trying to judge other presidents against FDR. How much legislation a president can pass is dependent on what Congress does. Congress writes legislation and passes it. President can only veto it. And so what FDR had was a destroyed Republican Party. And that wasn't true for Biden. It wasn't true for Obama. Probably will not be true for the next Democratic president. And that just makes the possibilities more narrow. I think it is really remarkable how much policy Biden and the Democrats passed with a 50-50 Senate. If you had told me in January 2020 that Democrats are going to have a 50-50 Senate, what are they going to get done? I would have

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said a lot less than they did. A 50-50 Senate is never going to get you a New Deal-sized presidency. It just can't. You mentioned Obama. Michelle O wants to know why you think U.S. health care reform is not much of a hot political item right now. My first love. My first love in policy. So yeah, so I covered, for people who have not followed my work in the past, health care reform for years. That was my first kind of major policy issue. And I think there's a couple of reasons. I mean, one is Obama and how successful he actually was. So they passed the Affordable Care Act. If you look at current levels of uninsured non-elderly Americans because the elderly have Medicare, you have about 27.5 million uninsured. That's down from about 50 million or almost 50 million before the Affordable Care Act passed. And if you look at who that is, you have a bunch of people in the 10 states that haven't expanded Medicaid. You do have a lot of people who still can't afford it. They maybe don't get employer insurance, but they make enough money that they're not really eligible for subsidies. So that's some of the people too. You do have a kind of big issue among non-citizens who, if they're newly non-citizens, are not eligible for some of the subsidies or Medicaid in the program. And of course, undocumented immigrants often are usually ineligible. To mop up the end of the uninsured population, it's pretty tricky and you're dealing with a lot of sort of random issues, a Medicaid issue in states that are fighting Medicaid and so on. So I think that the Affordable Care Act was successful enough that it has drained a lot of the energy from healthcare reform. That's one thing. So then there's another thing, which is that one reason that healthcare reform had so much energy for so long was that healthcare cost growth year after year was growing so much faster than inflation, so much faster than GDP growth. There's been a pretty big slowdown in that over the past 10-ish years. The reasons for it are debated, but the huge cost growth problem we had that led to all this bending, the cost curve talk in the Obama administration that made this a huge problem for employers. It's not that it is entirely gone, but it is not really the fundamental problem anymore. So that doesn't mean there aren't ways you can imagine healthcare being way better, right? I mean, during the 2020 primaries, we had a lot of debates over single payer in the Democratic Party. There's a new interesting book by Laurent A. Neve, and I might be mispronouncing that, and Amy Finkelstein, who are both great health economists called *We've Got You Covered Rebooting American Healthcare*. You can definitely come up with rude and branch reforms of the system that would make something more efficient, more fair, that would cover something closer to everybody. But the system is working well enough for enough people that it is hard to imagine that getting prioritized in the near future. When I think of what I would want, any kind of Congress, right? Any kind of unified Congress and presidency to make their top priority, it is hard for me to say further health reform. I'd be much more interested in universal baby bonds, as with the episode we did recently with Derek Hamilton. I'd be much more interested in universal pre-K. It's not that healthcare is great in this country, it's not. But political capital is so limited, and enough people here are doing well enough, and the sort of moving it that last couple of miles would be so difficult that I think when you imagine what are the single bills you could pass that would lead

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to the largest well-being improvements, it's hard for me now to say that it's healthcare reform, both because its status as an economic problem has abated somewhat, and its status as such like we have this huge uninsured population has abated somewhat. So, I think it's just become more of one issue among many, rather than the central issue that is causing both employers and budget wonks and normal people incredible amounts of pain. Although it hasn't solved the problem of drug addiction that's leading to more than 100,000 people dying every year, right? So... But that's a big thing, right? I mean, when we talk about healthcare reform, we're typically talking about financial insulation from healthcare costs. So, when you think about what would do the most to improve health now, I think it's often not healthcare reform. I think things like an expanded child tax credit would do a lot for people's health. I mean, we know giving people money is good for their health, and baby bonds, I think, have that quality too. I could think of a lot of things that would be really good for the health of the American population that would probably have a bigger per dollar payout than health insurance reform, which is what we are really talking about when we talk about healthcare reform.

Shifting gears a little, Doug A. wants to know what your view on the popular goal of imposing term limits on Congress is, whether you thought about it much either way and obviously would require

probably a constitutional amendment to do it, maybe not necessarily, but probably. So, what are your thoughts on that? I would say look at a couple of things. For instance, look at California where you have term limits for the legislature. I don't think in California or other states where you have that, the legislatures are dramatically better or more effective. I think if you look at Congress, a lot of really great legislators would have been term limited out in a way I don't think we should think of as a good thing. It takes time to become good at being a member of the House or being a member of the Senate. I don't think the country would have been better off if Senator Ron Whiting had had to retire after two terms or if Senator Dick Durbin had had to do the same. There is a return on experience here and on connections and on skills. Joe Biden was in part a good legislator over time because he learned things that he didn't know in his first term or two. He got much more effective over time.

So, I don't think when I look at the House say and I look at people there, a lot of the legislators I think are the worst are the newest. They're there. They're just trying to get booked on Fox News or social media. A lot of legislators who are pretty solid there have been there a long time. So, even if you take away the sort of political science argument, the term limits end up giving a lot of power to the unelected lobbyist staffer class. I just think if you look at it, it doesn't look great. I think that most people would come to the conclusion that the better members of both the House and Senate are the ones who have had time to be there longer. Now, there is a problem that incumbency can just feed on itself and people can be there too long. Look at Dianne Feinstein in California for a very extreme example.

I think it's hard to know what to do about that exactly. I will say the place where I strongly support term limits is for the Supreme Court where I think you should have 12 or 18 year term limits so that the vacancies that come up are fairly reliable so that different presidents get roughly the same amount per term so that you don't have this incentive to name very young people to the Supreme Court so that things aren't just tricks of when people die or when they become too incapacitated. I think that lifetime appointments are a dumb idea



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just in general and probably when you don't have something like elections that do at least oppose some level of accountability you want to think about term limits or you do have elections imposing some degree of accountability. Yeah, the incumbency advantage is a real thing. It is also a real thing that voters are participating in so I think that it is a little bit weird to say that we abstractly know voters are wrong to give the person representing them a third term and we sitting here should tell them they can't. So yeah, I've never been a term limits fan. Yeah, I mean that's exactly what you're saying, right? It devalues elections in both ways, the lifetime appointments for Supreme Court justices and term limits. Yeah, it robs the people of their power. Tom C. has a hard question for you. He says, I seem to be the only liberal alarm by the real scandal involving Hunter Biden but perhaps you feel the same. It seems to have amassed between 10 and 20 million dollars in investments from a coalition of very sketchy Chinese, Ukrainian, Romanian sources, none of which seem to have produced any work product anyone can point to. Then it sounds like Hunter and maybe his uncle Jim as well were trafficking in Joe Biden's name as Tom C. puts it by implying that to their marks that the marks would somehow gain access to Joe Biden with their investments. Biden himself simply says that he didn't involve himself in the sudden business affairs but are we really just going to let it go at that and would we if these were Republicans? I think in some ways that last bit is too easy in and out. We did when it was Republicans. I mean I actually think in many ways what Jared Kushner did raising billions for an investment fund with Saudi Arabia, the amount of direct influence pendulum Donald Trump did in office, the way people would try to get access to him by being part of Trump company investments and staying at Trump hotels and everything. I mean it was more direct, it was much worse, it was much more serious. I think the Hunter Biden scandal is real in the sense of Hunter Biden, the things he's done are really unsavory and the thing that has made it not yet a political scandal that is consequential for Joe Biden except on the right where I think people want to believe something went wrong is that nobody can quite point to anything that came out of it from Joe Biden's governance. No work seems to have come out of this influence peddling and also not much influence seems to have gotten peddled out of the influence peddling. Now I'm not against something coming out that shows this was different, right? If I mean if it turns out that President Biden colluded with Hunter and there was some kind of email exchange or some kind of handshake where if they would give Hunter this job they would get this amendment put on the bill or this thing they want it done. I think that would be a real problem, correctly so like that would be a real problem. The thing where Biden has had a somewhat laissez faire attitude towards the activities of his absolute mess of an adult son, I think there's a kind of sympathy that emerges for people in that towards Biden. I mean what was Biden to do exactly? He probably didn't actually know about a lot of this. A lot of the details coming out with Hunter Biden you know the seventh granddaughter I mean it's very sad. It's incredibly sad. You're watching somebody who was never able to get his life back on track or on track. He definitely influenced peddled. He has hurt a lot of people. He's clearly hurt himself. He's clearly hurt his father and if you read Biden's book that he wrote some years back when running for president and I think it is an O8 actually. I mean the love he has for Bo and Hunter, his belief that Hunter Biden

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would become part of Bo Biden's kind of kitchen cabinet and they would protect each other and then you see how it turns out. I mean the tragedy of it is immense but it's not a scandal for somebody's

son or one of their sons to be a fuck up. It's a scandal for that to become part of how the federal government wields power. I don't think the fact that Trump did much worse than this in a very

obvious and direct way absolves Biden. What absolves Biden so far is that he doesn't seem to have done

it and if it comes out that he did it right. If it comes out that the way Hunter was getting these deals was that he wasn't just kind of wink wink nod nodding that he could get some access to Joe Biden but you were actually getting the access to Joe Biden like that that would be worse.

There's a part of this question that we didn't just to make it shorter that we didn't bring up but Thomas brought up the old idea of the real scandals what's legal and one thing I would say is that the thing that Hunter Biden here is accused of doing actually does happen all the time in a much more efficacious way. So in Congress and in administrations people who are very high

up aides to senators and chairs in the house and of course to presidents do become lobbyists and then they do work on behalf of other governments and other companies and they do use their preexisting relationship with people in power to try to push forward those ideas. Now Biden wasn't correctly registered to be a lobbyist and all this different stuff but the thing being described here happens all the time not from idiot adult kids who don't know what they're actually doing and can't deliver but Bob Dole the late Bob Dole was lobbying on behalf of Taiwan and was able to get Trump to sort of break with presidential practice and talk to the leader of Taiwan on the phone very quickly after being elected. These things actually do occur and they're in a kind of much broader world of more efficacious influence peddling. The Hunter Biden case is sort of a weird version of that turned into an absurdity that looks worse because it's Biden's son but is probably less bad because it doesn't appear to have worked but again evidence could come out that it worked in some consequential way and that would somewhat change my opinion of it. I will say that if Republicans want to make hay of this they're going to have to nominate not Donald Trump.

If this becomes a fight over where was the influence peddling in family oriented business happening in an administration and it's Trump running against Joe Biden and the scrutiny is now on Jared Kushner's Saudi backed venture fund that's not going to work out. So in a lot of ways and it's been a kind of theme on the show recently Republicans are going to have to decide do they want to choose a candidate who is strategically positioned to take advantage of Joe Biden's weaknesses or not. So far it seems not but that's going to be consequential here too.

All right there are just so many good questions here but I'll plunge into another one this one's coming from Colton L. What kind of work do you think is the most undervalued and contemporary American society based on the pay the social prestige and everything else that comes with work anything and everything with children anything and everything with children being a social worker who works with children being a teacher being somebody who's a guardian in the foster care system given how important that work is it is badly compensated it doesn't have terrible prestige compared to I mean some other things but it doesn't have nearly the prestige it should it doesn't have the rungs high on as high in the ladder as it should right there isn't a kind of

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elite teacher designation that is sort of like being partnered a very big law firm where everybody knows like you've really made it and you're one of the best at one of the most important things that happens in American or you know human life we just really undervalue things with children we talk about how the children are our future and we treat them in many ways like an afterthought and we certainly treat the people who are in charge of helping them as an afterthought the pay and benefits and prestige in child care work for young children are just terrible it's a total disaster of an industry this is a place where money really matters I mean and I've said this before on the show that I think in American life for the most part prestige follows money we give the most prestige to things that make the most money and there's some you know counter examples right academia has a little bit more prestige and it has money oftentimes but prestige typically follows money and in not paying well for this stuff we rob it of prestige we rob it to some degree though of course there are amazing people in these industries of talent and it's just not the right societal structure and not something I think we should leave up to the market yeah children can pay a lot you know and the children who need the most help really can't pay the most I think you know the the kids who are in you know highly selective colleges who tell their parents are going to law school that is much more comfortable for their parents than I'm going to become a social worker working with children or I'm going to work in early childhood education because you're assuring ensuring yourself a higher salary in the future and that's a problem right it should be that when you say to somebody I'm going to go become a teacher what they hear from that is both you're going to be doing great work and you're going to be really well off because we've decided to compensate that really well because we want the best people becoming teachers and yeah it's just a place where I think we're failing yeah I mean it's just an incredible thing that in other countries actually teachers do you know you might be deciding I'm going to be an engineer I'm going to be a lawyer or I'm going to be a teacher right and you rarely hear that here which I do think is a critical part of it just like imagine hearing from you know a graduate from UC Berkeley right I'm going into dermatology right what that calls up versus I'm going into I'm going to work in a preschool right there's nothing wrong with dermatologists they do great work but we know what is being said when you say I'm going to work in preschools and that's that sounds great but you're not going to make much money yeah no and then the social prestige thing is more important even than I think you made it sound actually I'd rather that the prestige follows from the money but it's still a critical part of it and you're married to a teacher I am married to a teacher I was going to accuse you of pandering on those grounds yes I am married to it to someone who it works in early childhood and did face that where you have people who are like well why aren't you a lawyer why aren't you a professor why are you a teacher you know and meanwhile she's doing all this incredible work with public school second graders right I'm curious if you see it in the world right when you tell people you babysit New York Times columnists who act like children your wife says she works with children right like I was going to make a different version of that joke earlier I was going to ask whether you believe in lifetime tenure for New York Times columnists and podcasters absolutely not are you kidding me no I know you don't okay we're going to switch gears here into psychedelics to bring a little California into our New York studio jope f is asking whether you've been following the scientific developments and media hype surrounding psychedelics in the last years and I will answer that part and say I know you have because we've written about it but from critical trials to micro dosing to legalization

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processes in Colorado Australia he doesn't mention Oregon but also Oregon indigenous communities like what do you make of all this what do you think about it I have a lot of contrasting thoughts on where psychedelic therapy and help is right now so one is that the the work I'm most interested in I did a piece on this a while back and I'd like to check in on it next year sometime is in Oregon where they are trying to create a legal although it will not be federally legal but a legal pathway and structure for supported psychedelic experiences which notably it's not just psychedelic therapy you don't need a diagnosis to do it right you can just go they're trying to figure out how to do the licensing they're trying to figure out how to do the support it looks like it'll be fairly expensive that's going to be really important because it's not just about whether or not you can legalize them but whether or not you can create a structure in which they can be well used when I look at the the research I think the research on them at this point is quite extraordinary I would expect them in the real world to underperform the research because the research is being so carefully done but we're seeing studies that are suggesting really profound effects on treatment resistant major depression profound effects on different kinds of addictions profound effects just on people's lives putting aside the question of what recognized illnesses and maladies you can help people fix we have these substances that cost functionally nothing I mean in terms of how much it cost to grow silocybin containing mushrooms or synthesize lsd and we can routinely induce experiences that people count as among the most meaningful of their entire lives and that's a pretty remarkable thing to keep locked up I find it kind of astonishing and it's not that there aren't risks but you can go bass jumping legally you can legally be a bass jumper but you cannot legally take a tab of acid and sit in your room and listen to music and have a sublime musical experience like it just actually strikes me as a very strange way we let people take all kinds of risks in society now the thing that worries me a lot is the financial land rush here the number of companies trying to patent it the number of companies trying to distill these into even more potent and powerful and usable maybe even appealing forms and we're going to see where that goes because it has not yet been legalized enough that you can do that there's all this money and investment that is sort of jockeying for the day of legalization whether that legalization be medical which is probably going to be at least nationally that the first step right it seems very plausible that you're going to get FDA approval for certain kinds of MDMA and psilocybin treatments in the coming years but eventually if it does become legalized right the way say cannabis is in a number of states the effects of commercialized cannabis though some of them have been specifically to my benefit are not in my view an unalloyed good the amount of money going into very potent edibles and much more potent strains and packaging and formats that are much friendlier to kids and any kind of user it's fine if you're somebody who has a fair amount of self-control around these things but people do get addicted I mean people say pot isn't physiologically addicting but people very much get addicted and the most money is made on the people who buy the most of them there are certain breaks in psychedelics that make it a little less likely to go down the same route but I worry about the amount of money being spent on trying to figure out ways to basically get around the fact that it's actually really hard on the body and the mind and you develop tolerance to trip a lot right if you get into a situation down the road where the money is made by people who have an out-of-control relationship that could

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be very psychologically damaging to people so I think there's a lot of promise here and I think there's a lot of peril here but I'm overall optimistic I do think these are really powerful compounds that can create experiences in people's lives and both help them get over terrible problems

but also help them live a kind of deeper life in relationship to themselves and to the world and to nature and I think getting that right is going to require though not just the question of how do you legalize psychedelic compounds but how do you create structures for their productive use how do

you create good guides how do you make integration possible that kind of period after you've had an experience and now you have to sort of figure out what that means for your life how do you make that affordable to people that I think is where a lot of the rubber is going to hit the road which is again why I think what organ is doing is really interesting but it's not been untroubled there but if in 10 years you told me this did not go well I would not be surprised by that I'd be sad and buy it but not surprised we're going to shift gears again into the heartland of the Ezra Klein show recently which is AI and Joseph C. is wondering how much if any credence you give to the simulation hypothesis first discussed about 20 years ago by Nick Bostrom and obviously you'll have to tell us what that is because many people will not know I don't just for the record I really don't so the simulation hypothesis is basically the idea that look imagine we became a society capable of running sufficiently technologically advanced we were capable of running simulations of whole societies we're not just running SimCity or playing video games but we can just fire up on the computer and fire up as many of them as we want you know whole universes

obviously in Bostrom's view we would want to do that and obviously the simulants within those universes would outnumber the people and base reality and so if you just assume those two things are true then you come to the conclusion that well probably we're a simulation because there's going to be more simulated people than real people and so why should you think you're one of the real people here's what I will say about it and I've said this I think probably in AMAs before I think this has a quality of watching a very crude form of monotheism get reinvented by computer programmers which is why it's very popular in Silicon Valley if you take the very crude form of monotheism as god is like us like bigger you know big throne long white beard more powers this is god is like us but bigger computer programmer with more powerful computers player of

simulation video games but with a stronger video game system and the reason I just don't buy it and you know maybe this is not a good reason right I'm not a credentialed philosopher I think it is such an extraordinary lack of imagination about how weird ultimate reality probably is just the idea that like the true answer to what's going on here is so unbelievably simplistic just like not what is going on here is exactly what we are already doing just with more GPUs underneath this system I just think it's so unlikely that that is like the full effect here I think it's a kind of a lack of humility about what we do what we almost certainly don't know why in the simulation have we created all these other planets why have we created a physics with such weird rules as such that the world is possibly constantly expanding why are there is there not more life on your bi planets is that really how we would create a simulation a gigantic unimaginably large system of space in which at least so far we only know this one planet with life like the whole thing just

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strikes me as so in curious in a way that I just don't buy it I've always had a negative reaction to it but it's because I think it basically takes our reality holds what we know about it steady and then asks a toy question within that we don't know anything we don't understand how quantum physics works yet reality is going to be so much weirder so much more astonishing than it's just like us but bigger just like us but more power I just don't buy it so talking about power of generative models overall Jordan is wondering given the power of the AI models we already know about and of course there's lots in development as well to produce convincingly human text at virtually no cost it seems like we're likely to see a huge proliferation of AI astroturfing in the run up to the 2024 election which is already upon us in recent years we've already seen misinformation and disinformation be big issues both generally and with regard to elections and so what Jordan is asking is what your thoughts are on if there is anything we can do to get ahead of this problem I personally go back and forth on this problem so there's no doubt that in AI we are creating really powerful machines for creating the raw materials of disinformation deep fakes and endless amounts of auto-generated textual content and images and videos and sound that sound like they came from the person you know you're trying to smear and the various solutions I'm hearing from within the AI world strike me as very unconvincing the main one you typically hear is that they're going to try to figure out a way to do digital watermarking such that something came out from an AI or maybe something comes out from something real it gets a watermark of a certain kind such it can be digitally read to verify its authenticity the issue I think with the solution is also why I'm becoming a little bit somehow less worried about the problem which is that the people who you're worried about picking this stuff up they don't care about your digital watermark that's actually misunderstanding I think quite profoundly the fake news problem fake news works when you're giving people something they already want to believe that they do not want to check that is like the main way fake news works it's not like people can't go to the New York Times to check something they don't want to they don't want to be told this isn't true or they don't trust the New York Times or whatever the reason people believe in QAnon isn't because nobody had said to them 4chan is not a reliable source of information and so we actually also already have so much capacity to alter photographs to spread misinformation to send around email forwards full of bullshit I'm not sure what the delta is I'm not sure what the open space is in terms of people who are the market for this kind of disinformation and like don't have enough of it to work with another way of putting it is it the boundary on disinformation and misinformation at this point in human history really that it is too hard to produce I don't really think it is and I think it's much more likely that you enter into a kind of cynical collapse of trust than an era of like rampant disinformation right if you don't believe that you can trust these videos coming around and you often can't already right I mean there are all these edited videos made to make it look like Joe Biden is having much more trouble speaking than he actually is I mean this stuff is already around if you want it we're perfectly good at creating it now it becomes easier but I think the issue is actually the audience and maybe better stuff increases the audience a little bit although also the knowledge that there's better disinformation floating around might make the audience a little bit more skeptical but I think the issue is an audience problem like a demand problem not a supply problem and worrying too much about the AI side of it frames it as a supply

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problem and not a demand problem so that's kind of my slightly more optimistic take I think that the demand for this is already being fairly well met and I'm a little skeptical at least in the near term that shifting the supply on it is going to radically change the equilibrium I just saw this really interesting documentary about a burrito echo and he talks in there about all these fake documents that have profoundly affected real history right protocols of the elders example that he gives yeah I always say it's about fake news fake news is not worse today than it has been at other points in history

so I mentioned earlier that we were going to there were a lot of questions about the show and your process and how you think about things and we're going to go into a sequence of those now let's start with Audrey C a big chunk of what I seem to take out of listening to the podcast is an understanding of what it is to have a good conversation so example you push back on something a guest argues in an elaborate and a gentle way in response the guest doesn't always really address your point but instead reformulate something that the guest has already said before my brain goes this person should get a second pushback he's not answering but then you don't go for it which I come to appreciate very much as the guest is smart and honest enough it is they didn't answer there has to be a reason maybe that there just is no answer so like the question that Audrey actually wants to ask is while making the show what is it that you're learning about what

makes a good conversation I just so enjoyed this question because it answers itself so well that's exactly true there are certain kinds of conversations where pinning somebody down and making it unbelievably clear that they're not answering a question is important they meet the press approach yeah they meet the press approach when you're trying to understand how somebody thinks if they're not answering a question they often have a reason sometimes their non-answer is the answer it's what they know on the topic it's how far their thinking goes like if they don't have a great answer for it that's where their thinking is at that point so I tend to have a personally and I think this is like how conversations work between people if I've asked somebody a question twice and I find the answer unsatisfying but I think that's the answer they have to give me I'm not asking them three or four or five times just to show that I can embarrass them I don't want to see there's never a time for that there is right if I had the president on right that that requires a different kind of interviewing but I do think there is a problem in a lot of interviewing around politics it becomes performative I think the audience is smart right like it's why I love this question um Audrey understands exactly what's happening here the audience is a full engaged intellectual participant in the conversation they're not talking but they are evaluating oftentimes I will get emails that are really like why didn't you throw the final punch and the answer is like that's not what we're doing here I'm not trying to embarrass a person in front of you so then I just say you know in terms of what makes a good conversation I think that's a very big question and I don't have any one answer to it but sometimes I think it's knowing what you want out of a conversation and I think people are tuned to expect in politics so what makes a good conversation is some kind of persuasion people really want to see somebody persuaded of something they don't believe or see an argument torn down or and I don't think that's mostly what makes for good conversations and I also don't think that typically works or even makes for good persuasion I think a lot of the persuasion that has happened as a result of the show happens after it ends as people think about what they've said or what they haven't said or people you

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know reflect on it certainly it's true for me and I think a good conversation is often people showing up in the same spirit of openness and exchange and if you don't model that as a host they're not going to bring that to you as a guest. When we were talking about the midterms last year we talked a little bit about this right you just alluded to it at the beginning of the show about how so many public conversations as you were talking about community board meetings or as we call them here in New York are so performative and non-real and I think one of the things that's interesting about the show and not just your show but just the whole podcast revolution is that you have like these semi-private conversations that are happening in public right which is much more interesting than the conversations that are happening in public and I think that's a big part of what's interesting as well which actually leads us interestingly to the next question from Chris

M could you share details around your process for digesting and retaining information around you know such a broad array wide array of topics or you would have a note taker and if so what if you found works best? This is a question I think we get basically every AMA and the reason I'm doing

it this time is something in my process changed so we'll talk about this more in a minute but I moved to New York I now work out of the New York Times office in beautiful Times Square and there's

some advantages of coming to the office and some disadvantages commute is a lot of time I get to work near you was a more positive thing but the unexpected advantage is the access to an industrial strength printer and Aaron's probably laughing because just my desk is just covered in paper now and I had a laser jet at home and I would print things out but it felt wasteful somehow to print out every article I'm reading for a podcast but I think I get 50% more 100% more out of my prep doing it on paper particularly when it's articles and shorter things as opposed to books doing it on paper than doing it on a screen doing any prep on my actual computer where I have that many distractions I can do it and I get something out of it but it is much worse and so I don't have a extremely structured process in the sense of you know this is how I take notes or you know here's my system of markings or whatever but at this point my process is I print everything I have this huge pile of paper and I sit at a small table with a pen and I go through it and the focus that that has offered has actually been a really big step forward for me and perhaps from a very simple thing so that's been nice and been a change and obviously something that connects to things like the Marianne Wolf conversation if people want to go back to that and which is very much about the way reading in different mediums will change the way you read absorb and engage with information but I've been surprised how true I've been finding that.

Yeah that episode is a favorite of mine and the person in the squid her book is also incredible on that subject. Okay so let's talk about diminishing focus. Sam M asks well says I used Twitter for a long time I talked about how it was great for three things I like to stay up with news politics and sports the latter of which I will just inform the Ezra Klein audience. Ezra Klein has no interest in so we'll focus on that. That's interesting it's a lack of knowledge and interest. Yeah exactly I know Ezra logged off long ago and that's why I'm writing since leaving I found a much better attention span for reading articles right so that gets to what you were just talking about well with all that I still feel like I'm missing things that I did get from Twitter I'm missing people's thoughts on issues they don't write articles or podcasts about I'm missing that collective feeling when it seems like everyone on Twitter is reacting to the same



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thing so Sam wants to know what your thoughts are and how you handled leaving Twitter is there anything about it that you missed what did you do to compensate for what you missed and how do you stay up to date on current events. I did leave Twitter and I'll note that I've been playing around with threads a bit and I want to come back to that and one reason I left Twitter which is sort of you know before Musk completed his purchase of it but when that was in the offing but the problems with Twitter for me predated Elon Musk that I did a piece about Musk buying Twitter called Elon Musk will get Twitter because he gets Twitter or something like that people can search it I think it has proven like my most presson piece of that year and the point was that he was going to take what was worst about Twitter because he was somebody who likes what was worst about Twitter accelerate that and so heighten the contradictions of an already troubled platform that it would just slowly drive lots of people off of it not everybody but it was just going to turn the balance enough that people are going to leave something or want to leave something they already didn't like but I will die on this hill Twitter is a bad way to be informed about the world it's just a bad way to do it and it's to the point I was making a minute ago about printing out your articles it's about what you're not doing when you're on Twitter and the best way I've found to articulate this is I think there's a really profound difference between feeling informed and being informed and I think Twitter and frankly a lot of things in social media specialize in giving people particularly jittery info hungry journalistic types the feeling of being informed but the people who I think of as most informed are the ones who seem the best at not doing things on Twitter there's almost nobody whose knowledge of things is really Twitter based knowledge or communicated primarily through Twitter who I find like that is where I get my information and really value it like for instance Sam misses a feeling when it seems like everyone on Twitter is reacting to the same thing and I would say typically what they're reacting to is the wrong thing to be reacting to so I have a burner account on Twitter for when I need to read something that's on there and I happen to have to use it on the day there was a huge amount of debate

about Joe Rogan demanding or challenging or offering money for this vaccine specialist to debate RFK Junior on Rogan's show and I mean everybody in my feed you know like Nate Silver everybody was commenting on this and they're all in the same thing and in a way being there made me

feel like I was informed right I knew what the zeitgeist was that day like I was seeing the conversation and it was an extraordinarily dumb conversation it was just a bad thing to allow into your mental space for that whole day you would have just been better off reading a report about homelessness or whatever and so to me in terms of being informed about the world actually one of the really difficult disciplines is not letting the wrong mediums or the wrong people decide what you're thinking about not being too plugged into a conversation if you think that conversation is turned toxic or you think that conversation is turned trivial or you think that conversation is being driven by algorithmic dynamics that do not serve you that's my view on Twitter I've been playing around with threads which I enjoy at this moment in time and may not continue to we'll see how it evolves but I don't fool myself into thinking what I'm doing there is informing myself I would be much better off reading the paper New York Times than screwing around on

threads threads is a fun way for me to sometimes screw around when I have a couple of minutes

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the reason I answer this with some passion is I think this has become a really bad meme inside journalism that has been bad in particular for young journalists who their colleagues are on Twitter their future and current bosses are often on Twitter it feels like you're supposed to be there or threads or whatever and that is time you know when you're spending a lot of time on Twitter

that you know you may not be spending doing the reading doing the reporting seeing things that other people aren't seeing because they're inside the newspaper the magazine in many ways reading an issue of the economist doesn't give me the same feeling of being informed that being on social media does because I don't feel like I know what all the people who I'm supposed to know are thinking

are thinking about but I think it leads me to be much more informed like actually informed I'm reading about things I didn't already know about I'm getting ideas for things I didn't have ideas on before so I don't want to say you can't learn anything on Twitter I mean it does give you some good links and this and that but there are better places to find that stuff in my view

and I would say the same thing about threads by the way and the same thing about Blue Sky and Mastodon and Facebook and all the rest of it I don't think if you just look at the evolution of the news media and like information I don't I just don't think you can look at us today and look at us like 10 or 15 years ago and say this is definitely gotten better like we're just more informed we're focusing on more of the right things the public has a better sense of what's going on there's more agreement on the fundamental questions being debated and if things aren't getting better then I think it should lead you to really be skeptical of claims that the platforms on which people are operating are improving things so besides getting to hang out with me which you mentioned earlier it's a small part of your move Laura C is wondering why you moved to New York where I will just say you have not lived before and she's saying I may have missed it but haven't heard you explain it so can you tell your listeners why you're here yeah I think this is probably our most popular question on this one there were a lot of these and there were some that were sort of offended that had this quality of how dare you move to New York and not explain why and the answer is largely that it's personal that we moved to be closer to my wife's family there were relevant considerations around both of our offices and so New York just made a lot of sense right we had more we haven't had more family support we have a good community here and we have offices here and that kind of explains all of it so Nolan is wondering about something that you and I talked about the last time we did this actually at the end of last year you talked about a goal of incorporating a Sabbath or a day of rest into your life for 2023 and no one is wondering if you have routinely incorporated a kind of Sabbath into your life and what the challenges have been that have prevented you from doing so so you and I talk about this constantly right because we tried to leave Saturday sacrosanct without being particularly religious about it but we have sometimes failed because your column of course appears digitally on Sunday morning although we're pretty good about it but you feel very deeply about stopping time so could you talk about that yeah I put this mainly in to be accountable having done this Sabbath

episode and the answer is I have tried a lot of things that have not yet worked and the issue is that what I would like is a day of rest a cathedral in time a space to slow down and what my children would like is not that and so we've done some you know tachabots and this and that kind of thing

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and I tried pretty hard as you say not to work on on the Saturday but I've definitely found that there is a tension between the thing that I'm often seeking to feel personally like as an individual, individuated human for my children and the thing that just being a parent of a four-year-old and a 22-month-old demands which is you know my Saturdays are spent I mean I've taken them to tachabots and things but they just run around the whole time which is what a tachabot

is and that's really beautiful and I try to have Saturday be more of a family day and all that works out pretty well and it's really still just a lot of going to playgrounds and managing nap times and all the other kids have their birthdays on Saturdays you got to take your kid to the birthdays and it's not bad but I have found the difficulty of actually getting over the hump as a young family to kind of finding a little bit more of that quieter out-of-time feeling like the kids still need their routine and I've taken a fair amount of comfort from Judith Shalevitz who was my guest on the Sabbath episode saying that you know until her kids were about five it was kind of catch as catch can and they were they were working at it so I you know I hope that I am building some foundations and intentions that are a good base on which to work in the future what do you want from not working like what is that you're trying to get it's not the not working I would like to have a day where I have a different experience and relationship to time and productivity and I don't mean productivity just in what I create for the New York Times I mean it in just the constant getting things done the constant feeling that the sand of my hourglass is slipping into google calendar blocks endlessly and that my time is almost always spoken for right what am I doing today yeah look at the calendar I have a real I mean real discomfort with modern google calendar culture I think the fact that anybody can just put anything on your calendar just that this has become the way we act there's a killer there right they say I'm going to put some time on your calendar and I always think well actually you're doing the exact you are taking time away from me it'd be a little bit to me like if everybody had sort of access in a way to your bank account and they could say like you're going to spend I'd like you to spend \$80 on this and you could go and say no I'm not going to but then anybody could allocate your money however they wanted if they had access and then you had to go in and affirmatively take it back it's not a problem exactly I mean I understand why you know modern organizations have to work like this but I would like a different relationship to time I'm really moved by the hashel kind of cathedral and time kind of thing but it does require a certain amount of autonomy and I think the nature of being a parent event kids is that it's just not much autonomy and you know weekends are really for them I mean during the week we have to work or both my partner and I work

full time or even more than that and so you know it does have to be kind of oriented around their needs so I think the fundamental tension between like what I wanted out of shabbat and what I've been able to get with it is that I think what I want is about what I want and what is possible is what my family needs and like that's totally okay that is a phase of life something you and I talk about a lot and that we both this is also another way of stopping or experiencing time that we don't get to talk about really in the column is music I have failed so far in my attempts to get you interested in earlier classical music and jazz and I've been trying to get as you're interested in Keith Jarrett without success but I did want to ask you for three music recommendations for your listeners because I know you're always pushing that thinking

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in that kind of way. Always my favorite question so yeah so I came prepared so somebody we both quite like my first recommendation which is probably the deepest music experience I've had you know over the past six months I'm a big Caroline Shaw fan and she did an album with the Attica Quartet who are also amazing called Orange it won a Grammy

a year or two ago and there are a sequence of songs on that album called Plan and Elevation but I really like this one called the herbaceous border and it's all strings and I think I'm going to try to sell it because I'm worried if I don't sell people won't try to listen to it but one reason it actually unites the the conversation we were just having is somehow it's become a song for me very associated with my children so Shaw has talked about summer for music as being motivated by you know what would it be like to be an ant going through the forest and I can kind of hear that in in this sequence of songs and in this one in particular there's this moment in which it ends up in frenzy and then it's like it stops and it starts to come back very slowly and almost playfully and and curiously and for some reason I'm very moved by it it always makes me think of my children waking up in the morning right you have these days and oftentimes to me the day feels like it ends in a kind of frenzy between dinner and bedtime and you're exhausted and everybody needs a bath and somebody's crying and and then it's like every day with them not with me right me I wake up I'm like what's on the calendar what's happening you know in the news like what do I have to do today I hold everything of the day before with me and they wake up and it's like what's today's adventure what do we do in a day they wake up fresh in this way that to me is really beautiful and somehow this particular song has become very moving to me and wanting to sort of meet them in that so you'll know I think what I mean

or what part I mean when when you listen to it which I hope you do so then the other probably the thing I've listened to most this year and this was a recommendation from our engineer Jeff Geldt but Fred again who is kind of known for sample of he dance music he's a protege of Brian Eno but he did if you are follow MPR's tiny desk series he did the best tiny desk I've ever seen and he live loops his music built entirely out of instruments he can play there they're vocal samples but the instruments are things he can play in that little room so it's functionally analog and it's just virtuosic it's amazing to watch on youtube it's great to listen to a friend of mine made the point that it sounds in in in ways like Steve Reich which I think is absolutely true which I didn't notice until he said it but you know people on the show know I love Steve Reich and I just think it's awesome I kind of can't imagine the person who would watch it and not think it's cool so check out Fred again's tiny desk on on youtube I'll see if you want something much danceier and a little harder his album USB kind of didn't connect for me initially but lately it's been very much living in my head and then the final one which is just a little easier than the other two is Marabu State I find I go back to them a lot for music that is instrumentally interesting but also very warm and very inviting something you know you don't really put on Carolyn Shaw when

you're cooking dinner with your friends but this really works for that I figure the song I'll go with here is Midas okay great well on behalf of everyone here and all your listeners we wish you a very merry book leave and hope you get a lot done so time stops for you in just the right ways

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so that you can dig down deep which is as we've been talking about in a million different ways today really the hardest problem of all right how to focus how to concentrate and how to really drill down into the the things that actually make the world what they are I appreciate that I appreciate you and being here and all the questions I'll be gone for about three months we're going to have a great sequence of guest hosts who are going to do we we're sort of working with them on the guests and my team is working with them on the questions so we've done this before I think the shows are going to be great so keep an eye on it we're going to be going down to one a week for this period so it'll be a little bit easier for everybody to manage but I hope you enjoy it this episode of yes we're going to is produced by Annie Galvin back checking by Michelle Harris with Kate Sinclair and Nari March locker our senior engineer is Jeff Geld our senior editor is Roger Karma the show's production team also includes MFA Gaud, Roland Hu and Kristen Lin original music is by Isaac Jones audience strategy by Christina Samilowski and Shannon Busta the executive producer of New York Times depending audio is Annie Rose Strasser and special thanks on this one to Sonia Herrero