

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E232: Robert Greene: How To Seduce Anyone, Build Confidence & Become Powerful

Some of the greatest seducers were not good looking at all.
What are the qualities of a great seducer?
I'm revealing stuff I shouldn't be revealing.
Robert Greene is one of the bestselling authors in history.
An internationally renowned expert on power strategies.
He's been referenced in songs by Jay-Z, Kanye West, and Drake.
Written six international bestsellers that have become legendary.
Why did you write a book about seduction?
Seduction is in high form of power.
People will do what you want without ever even realizing it.
Seduction is a mating ritual.
You can't just swipe and get it.
But because of all the dating apps,
if you are able to understand the language of seduction,
you're going to have so much more power and success than anybody else.
One thing about words is people can lie.
But body language, it doesn't lie.
You master that language, you can start deciphering all these people are giving you.
It's about psychology and it's about how you carry yourself.
If you feel confident, it will naturally radiate through your gestures.
But what is real confidence and how does one build it?
The confidence comes from...
We've talked about the topic of powers.
But in 2018, you had a stroke.
In that moment, it sounds like your power had been taken from you.
The left side of my body is paralyzed and that was not easy.
I've got to find a strategy to deal with all this shit.
Please understand that the ability that you have now to run, to walk, to type,
it can be taken away from you.
It's miserable.
Please don't take it for granted.
Before we get into this episode, I just wanted to say thank you first and foremost
for being part of this community.
The team here at the Dioverseo is now almost 30 people
and that's literally because you watch and you subscribe
and you leave comments and you like the videos
that this show has been able to grow.
And it's the greatest honour of my life to sit here with these incredible people
and just selfishly ask them questions
that I'm pondering over or worrying about in my life.
But this is just the beginning for the Dioverseo.
We've got big, big plans to scale this show to every corner of the world
and to diversify our guest selection.

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And that's enabled by you, by a simple thing that you guys do, which is to watch.

So if you enjoy this show, I have one simple favour to ask you, which is could you hit the follow button on Spotify or Apple or wherever you listen to this podcast?

What do I need to know about you and your earliest years to understand the life that you went on, that journey you went on and the person you came to be?

Well, I grew up here in Los Angeles, not far from where we are in a neighbourhoods called Baldwin Hills, and then we moved to another neighbourhood.

I had a very nice childhood, very middle-class family.

My father was a salesman his whole life, worked for the same company for 40 years, just sold chemical supplies.

And, you know, my parents kind of left me alone a lot.

I was basically, my sister almost kind of raised me in a way.

And, you know, I had a very nice childhood, kind of left alone, sort of an introvert.

Books kind of shaped me, I became an avid reader in an early age,

knew I wanted to be a writer, got heavily into drugs, I'm afraid, in high school,

because that was the time where I went to school and in college.

Had some great experiences, I looked very fondly back, even on my drug experiences, even though they got kind of depressing after a while.

But it kind of shaped me in some ways.

And, you know, that was me growing up, you know,

and I had an attitude or a lens in which I looked at people from a distance.

Like, I was always sort of obsessed with people wore masks in the way I looked at it, even when I looked at my parents and their friends.

And I said, what is really going on behind there, the masks that they wear and all the social niceties going on?

What is behind, what is really the human animal like?

And so these are kind of the themes that were a big part of me growing up.

From what I read, you had a lot of different jobs in a lot of different industries,

up until the point when you wrote the first of your many books called The 48 Laws of Power back in 1998.

And I was looking at all of these different jobs you'd had,

and they all seemed to be completely different from one another.

So then trying to understand how you arrived at a moment

where you then wrote a book on the topic and subject matter of power,

having not been, you know, a psychology graduate

or seemingly worked in any industry related to like human psychology, seemed to be really peculiar to me.

Yeah, and also I never really had a lot of power up until that point.

So it wasn't like I knew everything about being a leader or anything.

You know, a lot of things that happened in life are kind of by coincidence or serendipitous.

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You don't necessarily plan on it, which is sort of when you look back on it, you can see a kind of an odd plan going on like a destiny or fate. But in the moment, I didn't feel that I had all of these different jobs. As you mentioned, some of them completely unrelated. You know, I worked in construction, I had a construction job. I worked in the detective agency. I was a tour guide to help write an encyclopedia. I taught English and Spain, you know, on and on and on and on and on. But I was searching. I wanted to be a writer and a writer needs experiences. I just was hungry for weird experiences. You know, I never really stuck at any one job. And by the time you're 37, 38, you know, my parents are starting to worry about me. I'm starting to worry about me. I'm getting a little bit depressed, even have moments where suicidal thoughts are floating in my brain like I'm very ambitious. I know I could do something well, but it's never come together. And so here's the serendipity part. I'm in Italy for a job, one of my 80 different jobs. And I meet a man who's a book package there on this particular job we're on. And he's he's a Dutchman. I'm not going to imitate him, but he asked me if I had any ideas for a book. And suddenly all of the painful experiences in my life working in Hollywood, all the assholes I've worked for, all these weird politicking, all the manipulative games, all the crap that I had seen. It just came like almost vomiting out of me. And I said, you know, here we are 20s. Well, this was 19, 20th century back then. Here we are in the late 20th century. And people don't dress like they did in the days of Machiavelli, right? They don't wear wigs and stuff, but it's the same damn thing. It's the same bloody battles going on, the same manipulations, the same kind of, you know, people don't reveal who they are. And it's a timeless game of power, just the same as Louis the 14th or Cesare Borgia or the people, the CEOs in the late 20th century. It's just this timeless thing. And I as I'm telling him this, his eyes are like, wow, this could be this could really be a book. And, you know, he said, look, Robert, I'll pay you to live while you write half the book and then we'll sell it. And I said, I told you before I was desperate. It was my get rich or die try in a moment. I went back to Los Angeles.

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I borrowed money from my parents because I was that poor.
And I wrote a treatment and he loved it.
And then the rest is history.
That's sort of my long winded answer to your question.
That's so interesting.
It's crazy how in life things can just take such a turn out of nothing.
And you never know what that thing is going to be.
And I mean, you say the rest is history there.
Give me an idea of the success of that book, The 48 Laws of Power,
because I mean, I've seen it everywhere for as long as I've been looking at books.
So what's the give me some quantify the global success of that book?
Quantify?
Yeah.
Well, here in the US, it's sold quite a bit over two million copies, which is great.
The weird thing is it's selling now more than it ever has sold before.
In other words, the percentage of books that we're selling here in 2023
is greater than any period before.
So it's accelerating, which is insane.
You know, and even my English publisher is having the same is telling me the same stuff.
So it's kind of accumulated.
It started off a little bit slowly.
I mean, we got press, but it became this kind of cult thing.
I've had very little publicity in mainstream media, which was big back then.
It's not big anymore.
Thank God.
But it was word of mouth.
It's like, if you heard about this book, it's kind of dark, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.
It got on a few television shows.
There was this show, a reality show with boxers.
I think it was called The Contender, in which the finalist held up a copy of the book
and said, this book helped me get to where I am now.
And it sold like crazy.
It got into the hip hop stream.
You know, Jay-Z was the first person I ever saw quoting the book in print and in Playboy
interview.
And then, you know, 50 Cent and all that and Drake and all these people, that really kind
of set it into the stratosphere.
So it's slowly become a bigger and bigger thing.
And I had no idea.
You know, I thought it was a weird book and it could be successful, but I had no idea
the journey I was about to begin.
It's weird.
That journey of writing this book, have your feelings towards the book evolved or changed

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over time?

Because society moves on, you move on as an individual as a human.

You learn new things, you mature, and then the book is kind of held in time.

Not really.

My philosophy in life is never look back, regret nothing, you know?

It's there.

I did it.

It came in a particular moment in my life and in the zeitgeist, and things have changed a little bit.

But I was, it was a very serious effort to try and get it something timeless.

Now, yes, there's a dark side to it, and maybe I've moved on from that.

And I did, honestly, when I wrote my fourth book, Mastery, I was a little bit concerned that young people were thinking that the whole game of life is about politics manipulation.

So I wrote a book to kind of counter that.

But I think the book is true and it's held up.

I think if I look at business, what's going on in the business world, I kind of got, I think I hit it on the nail about what goes on and the dynamics and the power game.

You know, I wrote a book on human nature and the idea is we were formed hundreds of thousands of years ago in particular circumstances.

Our brains are wired a certain way.

Yes, we're very sophisticated.

Yes, we have the internet.

Yes, I'm here being interviewed by you on a podcast.

It's pretty insane, but we haven't fundamentally changed the same raw emotions of envy, of aggression, of, you know, worrying about our status, about having to disguise ourselves and appear like we're saintly and loving that we don't have a shadow, which we all have. None of that has changed.

So yeah, I wouldn't write that book now because I'm at a different place in life.

And I understand that, but I have, I don't, I'm not ashamed of it in any way.

I stand by it and I think I hit it something real.

What is in your definition?

What is power?

You know, I was really compelled when you're talking about the evolutionary roots of power, but like, and it's essence, what is power?

It's not what you think it is.

It's not, you know, Vladimir Putin or Presidents or Biden or all these political figures and these big games.

Power is the feeling.

It's an essence.

It's an emotion.

It's a human need and desire.

And really what power is is a sense of understanding yourself and being able to control yourself.

So the way I look at it, I like to look at it not through the lens of great power politics,

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but as an average everyday human being here in the United States or in England, the feeling that you have with your children, with your spouse, with your colleagues, the people who work for you, the sense that you have no control, that you can't influence them with your ideas, that you can't get them to maybe, you know, soften some of their ugly behavior if they have that, that you can't get them interested in helping you with a project or whatever is the most miserable feeling a human being can have.

Malcolm X had a quote that I love, which is absolute power corrupts, but absolute powerless corrupts even more.

I'm butchering it, but that was the gist of it.

The feeling of powerlessness is actually more corrupting than the feeling of having a lot of power.

It turns people into being passive aggressive, into playing all kinds of weird games, negative games to get power.

You want to feel that you have a degree of control over events in your life, over people, over your future, and that to me is what power is, right?

And so some of that involves these games that I mentioned in there, and some of it goes beyond the 48 Laws of Power, which I've tried to indicate in my other books, but it's the sense that I'm not helpless in this world.

I remember when I first entered the work world as a very naive college graduate with all these ideals and things I'd read because I was studying literature and languages, going, man, this is weird.

People are playing all these kinds of games.

I'm in over my head.

I made mistakes.

I got fired for being too brash for outshine the master.

It was painful, right?

And so learning, you don't have to use the Laws of Power.

I don't advocate crushing your enemy totally.

I hope I don't have any enemies ever that I need to crush ever.

You just need to know these things so that when you enter the work world, you're not naive, you're not stupid, you don't make the same kind of mistakes that I made.

You spare yourself the pain.

You understand the most fundamental thing about human nature.

People have egos.

Even your boss has an ego.

You think he or she doesn't because they're powerful.

They're even more insecure than other people.

You need to be aware of these things so that you don't inadvertently make them feel insecure and suffer the consequences.

So that's, I don't know, that's sort of my idea of power that I was trying to describe there.

The way you describe it is more of a sort of intrinsic force, perception of yourself.

When people think of power, they think of having control over others or their influence

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over others, but you've kind of made it more of an internal force.

Yeah.

Well, if you can't control yourself, then you're in a lot of trouble in this world, right?

Because when you just naturally are yourself doing things, you're going to offend people.

You learn early on we're social animals.

I have to tailor my behavior, you know?

If you go on babbling about all about how you feel and think, et cetera, and you just say, what's the first thing on your mind, you're going to end up having a very, very short career.

You're going to be saying things that are going to offend people.

You're going to be making a fool of yourself.

You're going to be saying things that you end up regretting, right?

You have no self-control.

And if you see somebody who has no self-control, it makes you look like you're not powerful.

If you can't control yourself, how can you control anything in your environment?

How can you be a leader, right?

So you have to learn certain things about your nature, about who you are, and not just be anybody.

You have to kind of tailor your appearances as well.

Because for good or for bad, I'm a believer in looking at the human animal without shame and embarrassment, just as we are, right?

And appearances matter.

It's the animal part of our nature.

We look and we judge people by how they appear, how they dress, their tone of voice, their body language, et cetera, et cetera.

We would be in an ideal world.

We wouldn't judge people by appearances, we would just judge them by what's inside of them.

Yes, I agree with that.

But we're not ideal.

We're not descended from angels, we're descended from primates.

So you have to understand that appearances matter, and this is part of the game.

And so you have to control your appearances a little bit.

You have to tailor it.

You have to be a bit of actor in this world on and on and on.

These are things that people don't like to admit about ourselves.

We like to think that we're much more idealistic, that these things really don't matter in the end.

And I wish it were that way, but it's not.

And so I'm a bit more of a realist when it comes to things like that, but yeah.

As you were talking about this need to keep up appearances to some degree in order to survive and to fit into the tribes that we form in our lives.

You made me think about how many guests I've had on this podcast who work in maybe the

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entertainment industry or other industries, you know, they're famous, whatever. And they report that keeping up appearances had a really detrimental impact on their happiness and their fulfillment in life, because in some cases they, you know, it meant that they were doing a job as a presenter and had to always be happy when inside they didn't feel that.

And maybe the contrast of reality and perception caused them a lot of harm, or they've built a life around things that they're not interested in.

I think you touched on some of that in mastery.

That's the question I have, which is keeping up appearances and the impact that that has on your happiness.

Are you wearing a mask and happiness?

What's the relationship?

I talk about it in the 48 Laws of Power, where you have to play this game in life.

To me, it's a form of wisdom, which is it's a wisdom that used to exist like in the 18th century.

I read a book that had a big impact on me many years ago called The Fall of Public Man by Richard Sennett, in which he described like cafe life in London in the 18th century or France.

And he was saying back then, when you entered the public arena or your cafe, you knew you were an actor.

You left the house, you put on the mask and you had fun, you know, you knew it was like fun.

It was play.

You're a child, you like playing games, you like putting on costumes, you like playing your parents or some character you saw on TV.

It's part of human nature.

We like to play these games where roleplayers were actors.

And he was saying in the 18th century, that was just a given in life, that when you entered the public room, you knew you were an actor.

And then when you went home to your wife, your family or your husband or wherever, you dropped the mask, you breathed a deep sigh of relief, go, now I can be who I am, right?

And it wasn't a problem.

It didn't create neuroses, it didn't create this like, what's wrong with me?

I don't know who I am anymore.

So people now, the problem now is we don't have distance from that social realm.

And so we think that if we're acting, that's who we are, but it's not, it's just that's that part of being a social animal is playing a role.

You know, I did a book with 50 cent and he kind of exemplifies a lot of that.

He plays a role in life.

You know, when I met him, I thought, uh-oh, I was kind of intimidated.

I was a little bit afraid, you know, the thug.

This is a guy and when I met him, he was, you know, just a few years away from being shot and all this stuff.

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And I met him and he was the nicest person in the world.
He was almost kind of sweet.
He'd hate it if I said that word, but he was sweet, right?
He was very down to earth, he was very calm, et cetera.
He's playing a role when he goes out and he plays that person and he knows it.
He knows it's like, he doesn't take it seriously.
You know, he had this big beef with Kanye West back when I was doing the book with him.
And then I met the two of them in Vegas when they were there for the awards and they were like the best of friends.
They were joking.
It was just a game they were playing, right?
So what I tell people is we're all our actors, humans are born actors.
We learn at a very early age to play that kind of game.
It's kind of fun sometimes to do that, you know, have a, enjoy that part of life, but don't think that it, don't get it confused with who you are in your essence.
That's sort of the dance you're playing between those two things.
I understand what you're saying.
And a lot of it has to do, as you said, related to mastery, where people end up in a career that doesn't suit them.
And I look, I think I understand what you're getting at when I look at like presenters or people in the news and they have to smile and be so cheerful and like, man, what a drag. I'd hate to be like that, you know?
That is so false.
Don't you feel kind of, don't you want to take a shower after you being so cheerful and chatty and all that shit?
You know, yeah, I understand that.
But if that's the profession you chose and you love it, then maybe you don't feel that way.
I couldn't do it personally, but you know, I think, I think it's okay to think of yourself as an actor.
I don't think there's anything wrong about that.
The second very curious law in your book that I uncovered was law number two.
I'm talking about the 48 Laws of Power here where it says, never trust friends too much. Learn how to use enemies.
Yeah.
No, friends.
Okay.
Well, everything in the book is context.
So when you take things out of context, it's a little harder to understand.
And what I'm trying to say in that, I'm talking about in the work world, when you're out in the social realm, and one of the worst things that people do is you have a job and I've been guilty of it myself, even after I wrote the damn book.
You're out in the work world and you need to hire somebody.

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You need to find a colleague, you need to find some, a partner or an employee.

Your mind naturally gravitates towards a friend, right?

Because they know you, you trust them, you have a relationship, you know, and you feel comfortable with them and it's a terrible mistake.

So many of the worst things have happened in history are because of that very problem.

Because friends, there's all these emotions involved between people, right?

And those emotions confuse the issue.

So what I'm talking about in that law is when you need to get results, you need to think, when you have a job or something, you have to think in practical terms, not in terms of emotions, not in terms of friendship, et cetera, et cetera.

So you want to keep your work world separate.

It's not everything about life is having to be friends and having nice things and everybody like you.

That's what matters is getting results done and sometimes the best person to work with isn't your friend because they don't have all this other stuff that we're talking about.

In fact, a very powerful move is if there's an enemy out there, somebody who you never got along with.

If you say, if you approach them and say, let's bury the hatchet, you know, I have a job and I'd really like you to work with me.

I know you're really smart.

That the turnaround of emotions is a very powerful thing where they're going, wow, yeah, sure.

That's great.

I never expected that.

And they're highly motivated to now prove that they're worthy of your change of mind.

So it's not about not trusting your friends in the realm of friendship in personal relationships.

It's about being aware that the work world is different from the realm of personal relationships.

The other point I found really curious was point three about concealing your intentions.

I find this curious because I've never really known where to land on this.

When people ask me for advice on the subject matter about how much of your hand should you show, whether it's in business or life or whatever, there's a group of people that think you should always just keep everything you're doing and your intentions totally secret because then people might copy you or they'll attack you or whatever.

And then there's another school of thought that says when you're building something, when you're doing something, when you have a mission, you need to share it with as many people as possible because that will galvanize people to come along with the journey with you and they'll want to support you and help you.

So when I read point number three about concealing your intentions, I wanted to ask you about what you think about that, which side do you land on?

Well, everything depends on circumstances.

So the laws are never meant to apply to every situation, right?

So when it's with your own team and you're trying to inspire them and you're trying to give them a vision, you're trying to get them on your side, yeah, you share your vision with them.

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You share, this is where the group is going, this is where I want things to be in three years.

Let's all get together.

We're trying to do something very positive for the world, okay, here's my plan, right?

But then there are circumstances where revealing everything about what you're planning to do is actually very counterproductive, right?

So the business world in the 21st century is extremely competitive.

It's getting worse and worse by the day.

As more and more people now are entering the power arena, and I think it's a great thing where it used to be just a realm where only older white men had power and now it's the doors have opened to everyone.

The level of competition is that much more intense, particularly now even with the internet.

You have rivals out there, you have competitors out there, even as we talk right now, maybe you're not thinking about them, but they are, they're going to steal your ideas, they're looking to take your business away from you, et cetera, et cetera.

Just be aware of that phenomenon and just always saying what you're planning on doing isn't always the wisest thing to do.

Sometimes if you're in a tricky situation, making, putting people off the scent and giving them a red herring and saying, I'm planning to do this one, in fact, you're planning to do that.

It's a very powerful technique.

It's deception, but all's fair in love and war and business, I'm afraid.

So there are moments where you don't want to lay all your cards out on the table, right?

You want to either create a little bit of mystery so that people don't know what you're going to do next and they're wondering what you're going to do next.

And as they're wondering what you're going to do next, they're kind of on their heels a little bit.

What's the next thing that Stephen is planning?

I don't really know.

Wow.

It's a very powerful approach.

There are other times and other experiences and moments in life where you do want to reveal what you're planning to do because there's a purpose behind it.

I'm just saying, be aware, don't just act in this world.

Be aware, have a strategic mindset.

Sometimes concealing is what you need to do.

Sometimes not concealing is what you need to do.

It's funny when we have this conversation about power and the darkness and the shadows that people have in them, I think a lot of people listening and probably it seems that way because I'm the one asking the questions is if I'm questioning society that I'm not part of, they'll think they might think they don't play these games, right?

They might, you know, so that's the question I have is like, have you ever encountered anybody?

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Do you believe there's anybody out there that doesn't play power games, manipulation, have shadows, have darkness in them?

No, I don't.

But so in my war book, I read the biography of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the saintliest figures in history, right?

And I realized that Mahatma Gandhi was actually a brilliant strategist and I'm not saying his use of non-violence and civil disobedience didn't come from the heart.

He didn't mean it.

He wasn't actually, he didn't actually believe in the peaceful method.

He did.

It was very sincere, but he was very strategic about it and he planned a campaign, several campaigns like the Salt March in the 20s, where he knew, for instance, that the English public was very liberal minded.

They had this ideal of themselves as being this very, they weren't colonialists.

They weren't imperialists.

They were doing the best for the world.

And he deliberately had these marches where he knew that they would be reading in their newspaper and seeing photographs of Indian people being beaten up by Englishmen and their Indian officers on the streets of wherever, it would have a terrible impact on the public.

He thought in terms of strategy, okay, so there's Gandhi, then there's Martin Luther King who's somebody I wrote about a lot in the laws of human nature, another great icon whom I admire, who actually was inspired by Gandhi and had campaigns of civil disobedience. And there was a campaign, I believe it was in Montgomery or Selma, I can't remember which one, where he was getting fed up.

They weren't getting very far.

The civil rights movement, they were reaching a stalemate and he was getting very frustrated.

And somebody, an advisor came to him said, look, we're going to have this massive march and I can get a lot of elementary school and junior high school students to be on this march because they believe in you and they're very fervent.

And I think it'd be great and his advisors go, God, you can't do that.

You can't have put 13 year olds at risk.

And Martin Luther King thought about it very deeply, he said, no, we're going to go ahead and do it because dammit, I want the American public sitting in there all fat and watching their televisions to see these brutal, you know, bull conner, the police chief then.

I want to see these children being water hosed and beaten and it's going to have an incredible impact.

He was being strategic and his advisors were shocked by it, but it ended up proving to be one of the most pivotal important moments in the civil rights movement.

So here you have Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

And Martin Luther King was a flawed individual, as we know, right?

He had a private life that wasn't exactly the same as his public life.

I don't judge him for that because he was a brilliant man and I admire him.

I love him deeply reading his biography, made me even admire him even more, seeing that

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he had a human flawed side to him.

But these are icons that we set up and they reveal what I'm talking about in human nature.

You can't escape it.

Yeah, maybe there was some saint born in some century that I've never heard of that maybe got pretty far away from everything I've talked about.

But you know, we all have this idea like in the laws of human nature, I write about irrationality envy aggression or narcissism.

Narcissism is a good one.

Oh, they're a narcissist.

I'm not a narcissist.

I'm not self-absorbed, but they are.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I don't have any of those traits.

Well, damn it.

Every single human being has self-absorption traits.

We can't help it.

We naturally think of ourselves first.

Yes, there are people who are much deeper narcissists in life, no doubt.

And there are toxic narcissists, but we all have a touch of it.

I want you to be a little more humble in this world and not be so arrogant and not think that you are somehow exempt from having a dark side that somehow you were born with a halo over your head, that you were born different.

You don't have human nature, that you're a saintly person, you're much better.

Get rid of your moral superiority because I find that deeply offensive.

We are all cut from the same cloth.

We all have the same flaws.

And when you look at yourself, and when I wrote the Laws of Humanity, I'm going, damn it, Robert, you have a dark side.

You're a narcissist.

I had to come to terms with my irrationality, my grandiosity, my aggressive instincts, but it's the only way to change yourself is to be aware that you have these issues.

I have the narcissistic tendencies.

Now I see it.

All right.

Now when they pop up, pop up, I can control it better.

I can say, damn, Robert, you're being too self-absorbed to think more about the other person.

But if you go around in life thinking, I don't have any of these problems, I'm not a narcissist.

You're never going to have the awareness to stop the fact that you are actually one.

Being a narcissist, is that objectively a good or a bad thing?

Because when you were, when you was, obviously, I know people are having a bad thing as a narcissist cause a lot of harm and that's very true.

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But in the context of the human animal and why the human animal develops certain attributes and qualities to, to, you know, maybe further its survival or its ability to stay within the social pact, is it just a consequence of being a human to have these like shadow traits and to be coercive and manipulative?

Is it good or is it bad or is it neither?

It's neither, neither, because it just is, right?

So with narcissism, for instance, there's a reason why we're narcissists.

So I explain in the book, it's not my own theory, it comes from some great psychologists like Kohut, the origins of narcissism, right?

So when you're, have to leave you, when your parents have to kind of not abandon you, but have to not give you as much attention as you used to have and you're three years old or four years old, you don't remember it, but it was very painful.

Like, oh, they don't love me as much.

What's wrong with me, right?

You know, I have to get that love and attention, not just naturally, I have to do things to earn it, et cetera, et cetera.

And what happens with a lot of people in that situation when you're a child is, I have to develop my own, I have to be my own mother or father.

I have to find a way of loving myself.

When something bad happens, I have to retreat inward and go, I'm really not so bad at all. I'm actually a decent person.

I like my own tastes.

I like the clothes that I wear, et cetera, et cetera.

You're developing the shreds of self-esteem, right?

And people who never developed that because they were abused or they were abandoned or even if they were suffocated, never developed that self-esteem.

And so what happens in life is whenever, if you don't develop that and you get older and people attack you and yell at you or criticize you, you can't retreat inward to that self-esteem that love you have.

The only thing you know is to get angry, to get the call it narcissistic rage and to yell at people and say, God, get away from me.

You're evil, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

And then the other problems evolve where the only way I don't have that inner self-esteem, the only way I can get people to love me is by being incredibly dramatic and overly dramatic and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and always making myself the center of attention.

That's what creates a deep narcissist.

That's their only way of getting the love that they need.

So children, we all need that degree of self-esteem, that anchor in our life.

So narcissism, self-love is not a bad thing.

But what happens is as you get older, if you go too deep into it, it becomes a problem.

And so what I say is you need to take that self-love and it has a good function and turn it outward as much as you can and turn it into empathy and love and consideration for other people.

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That's your task as you get older in life.

That's how I approach all of these flaws.

You can't run away from them.

You can't run away from your shadow, your dark side.

You can make it work for you.

You can make it positive and productive and healthy.

You can become a healthy narcissist, which is a name that I use in the book.

You can use your dark side for positive purposes.

Let's say you have a lot of anger in your inside and I had a lot of anger when I was younger.

I was a very angry young man, right?

Channel that into some kind of cause, like, and you know, I have a lot of causes that I believe in very deeply and when I was younger, I was like that.

Channel that energy into something productive and helpful and put it into something that goes to something that helps society.

That's using your dark side for positive purposes because the dark side of human nature has a lot of creativity, has a lot of energy.

An artist has to have a dark side.

You use your dark side because all those dark emotions, all the people that shed on you in your life, they inspire you.

They create your best work.

Don't run away from your shadow.

Don't run away from your narcissism.

Use it in a healthy way and acknowledge it.

I think that's the hardest thing for people to do.

So few people I think, including myself, like have really fully understood what their shadow in their dark side is.

I mean, doing this podcast has really helped me because I learned things from other people vocariously and then I look at reflect on myself or keeping a diary has helped me to understand that.

But that first step in someone having the self awareness to understand their dark side.

I mean, there's even a lot of people who confronting their dark side would be so, it feels like it would be so impactful on their self esteem, their negative sense that they spend their life putting up a wall to never go there.

I mean, there's some people who you even mentioned something to them and they would triggers triggers them.

You know, we can all think of those people.

We can all think of those people that the really interesting thing there is the role that your early is play on your relationship with power.

Because when I think about some of the nicest, I don't know if this is just a general stereotype or a narrow observation I've had, but some of the nicest people I've met in terms of, you know, being the opposite of whatever and toxic narcissists is seem to have really comfortable, loving, secure, safe, early experiences.

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And then is that is that broadly true in your view?

It's a generalization, but there is some truth to it.

I mean, there's things that called attachment theories where psychologists have looked at the kind of attachment you had to your parents and they categorize it in four different ways.

And there's the ideal, the best one where you have this incredibly loving mother and father, and then they're they're giving you unconditional love, but they know also how to give you your independence, etc.

It's not terribly common.

I don't know what the percentage would be.

Then there's levels and levels and as you get to the fourth level, it's like the abandonment one where or abusive and abandonment where you basically leave the child alone.

You don't give it any attention, any love, and it's very crippling, right?

But the thing is, children are much stronger than we think they are.

They're very resilient.

They're very resourceful.

They're going to find their love.

They're going to find a way to compensate for it in some way.

And what's something very interesting when I was doing seduction in some of my other books, and I look at people who were like very charismatic, like a Malcolm X, like a Marilyn Monroe.

I could go on and on and on.

These are people that came from very, very bad families, right?

They had no love.

Marilyn Monroe was an orphan, essentially, raised in an orphanage.

Her whole life was, I got to get people to love me.

I need love so desperately.

And her way of doing it was to literally make love with the camera.

Nobody ever done that before.

You could sense that she needed it and it was so powerful that you sensed it that she drew it to herself.

Great charismatic individuals.

John F. Kennedy is someone who had a lot of charisma.

He came from a very bad childhood, right?

His father was very mean to him, et cetera.

Some children, in the worst circumstances, it ends up bringing the best out of them.

They have to find their way in life.

And some people who have everything don't go very far because they don't know how to find things for themselves.

So life is weird.

Some people who have great childhoods do well.

Some people who have great childhoods are spoiled and never learn how to get things on their own and some people have the shittiest childhoods, learn how to be resourceful and get what they need on their own.

You mentioned seduction there, the art of seduction.

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Why did you write a book about the topic of seduction?

Seduction is in a high form of power because you make people feel pleasure.

You make them feel excited or interested in you.

And then their resistance to your ideas slowly lowers and you have the ability to influence them and to move them in the direction that you want.

If you yell at them, like, are we talking about your child and you tell them, do this, do that, they resent it and for good reason.

But if you're a subtler, if you're more seductive in your approach, if you're more indirect, people will do what you want or go in your direction without ever even realizing it.

So it was a sub theme in the 48 Laws of Power.

And so I was sort of interested in the psychology of that and why some people are good at it and some people are awkward about it.

So when I finished the 48 Laws of Power, I thought this would be a natural segue the next book.

What are the qualities of a great seducer?

Well, I like to distinguish between cold seducers and warm seducers.

A cold seducer is something you don't want to be.

That's the typical image that we might have of a male seducer, but even of a female seducer, like the great courtesans, set up whether it's just after money or the men are just after sex.

That's not my ideal.

My ideal is kind of a back and forth quality where it's not domination.

It's sort of like a game that you're playing.

It's like a mating game.

It's like a courtship ritual where both part people are kind of seducing each other.

And so what makes for a great seducer is very simple.

I can summarize it very simply.

You are outer directed.

So when you meet somebody for the first time or you're on the date or whatever it is, you're not having that internal monologue going, does she like me or does he like me?

Am I dressed well?

Am I saying stupid things?

What can I do to impress them?

No.

You're off and you're outer directed and you're listening to them and you're entering their spirit and you're hearing them say things that, that give you idea of what they're missing in life, of what they want, of what their needs are, of what makes them an individual.

You're absorbing it.

You're entering into their spirit and then you can reflect it back to them.

You can give them gifts.

You can take them to places that show that you're attentive to them because if you look at how we are in our day-to-day life, normally people never pay us attention.

They're always so self-absorbed, they're never thinking about us.

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I mean the times where you get the sense that people are actually interested in who you are as an individual is pretty rare.

If you give that feeling to someone, it's incredibly powerful because we all want to be validated.

We all want to be recognized.

So the seducer is not someone who's all worried about himself or herself and thinking.

They're involved in the other person.

They're absorbed like a sponge inside their psychology, inside their world.

A lot of this is very applicable to romance and dating, et cetera, et cetera.

It feels for whatever reason, not necessarily something I've read much about in your work, but it feels like dating and romance and relationships have become much more complicated in the modern world.

It's become much more difficult to seduce somebody.

What are the attributes of someone then that is not good at seducing?

Anti-seducer has many qualities.

I have a whole chapter on the anti-seducer, I try and define it.

There are several of them.

I don't have them all memorized, but one quality that's very anti-seductive is preaching and moralizing.

It's like telling people, oh, that's wrong what you just said or your politics are ugly or you're not really good at this or something or other.

Having a moral superiority, a sense of sanctimony in a realm which should be about pleasure or should be that kind of equality, that kind of back and forth dynamic where you're asserting your moral superiority is deeply, deeply anti-seductive, the element of preaching to people.

Not being generous, and I mean, not just with money, money is important, but not being generous with your spirit, right?

You want to be open, you want to give as much as you can to the other person of yourself, of your time, of your money, of your energy, etc.

So being all kind of crimped and I don't want to give, I don't want to spend money,

I want to take you to the cheap place to eat, I don't want to give you much time is very, very anti-seductive.

When you were talking a second ago about the person who goes on the date and they're thinking about themselves and what their hair looks like or whatever else, that spoke to an insecure person.

Is insecurity a seductive quality or is it a anti-seductive quality?

It is anti-seductive.

Now there is a part of weakness that is seductive.

So I would say vulnerability is seductive, but insecurity is anti-seductive and there's a big difference.

Why does vulnerability draw people to you?

Because the sense, so if I can define seduction in simple terms, most of the time we are closed to the influence of other people, particularly now.

We have these walls up because life is harsh.

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People are coming at us with their advertisements, with their pleas, with their wanting money, with this and the other, and we've all learned to be very defensive.

And seduction is an openness, is the opposite of that.

And you felt it when you were child towards your parents, you felt very vulnerable and open and there was an element of your parents and how they treated you that was very much like a seduction.

So seduction is about being open to the other person to the extent where you can even fall in love, you can fall under their spell.

And the sense of letting go of your ego, letting go of your defensiveness and letting another person enter your world is being seduced.

It requires vulnerability.

If you meet the typical scenario is of a man who's not vulnerable at all, he's so powerful and in control and everything has no vulnerabilities, it's frightening for a woman.

It could be very frightening.

Like this, he's so strong, he's so invulnerable that there's something wrong about it.

Maybe he's a serial killer, maybe he's got skeletons in his closet.

Something isn't right about that.

What seduces you about a puppy, about a child, about an animal is their vulnerability.

It makes you want to hug them, it makes you want to help them.

The sense which if you came upon a tiger that's there and they don't need that, well, that's not seductive.

On your screen it is, but if they're there in your living room, that's not seductive.

But that puppy is vulnerability, the sense that somebody needs protection or help brings out qualities in us that we don't normally have that I think allow for seduction.

So that is being vulnerable.

That is, I can be influenced by that other person.

I am open to their spirit, right?

That's being vulnerable.

The word vulnerable, I hate to sound like a professor here, so excuse me, seduction, comes from the root of it means a wound, fullness.

So you have a wound inside of you and you need healing and the other person naturally wants to help you, right?

But being insecure means I'm so self-absorbed, I'm so worried about myself that I can't get out of it and we've all had that experience.

When you meet somebody and you can sense, you can smell their insecurity in them, I'm not judging them because we all have insecurities, it makes you feel insecure, it makes you feel a little bit awkward.

Whereas if you meet someone who's not like that, who's confident, etc., it brings out that quality in you, so if you're on a date and there's someone who you smell that kind of insecurity, it makes you awkward and insecure, it creates a kind of a problem.

So that would be the difference between the two.

There's going to be a lot of people listening to this that are single and ready to mingle.

What advice would you give them in terms of being great at dating, you've talked about

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the importance of vulnerability there and how that kind of forms connection between humans in a very innate way.

What else is great dating advice for the single people out there?

Well, the thing is, okay, there's several things.

So first of all, we live in a culture where people think you shouldn't have to put effort into something like love and romance, you should just be who you are, man.

I don't have to put on a role, I don't have to play a game, that's manipulative, blah, blah, blah, blah.

No, I'm sorry.

Love and romance is something that is almost biological.

If you look at animals and mating rituals, they're incredibly elaborate, seduction is a mating ritual.

And so the worst thing you can feel is that this person isn't putting any effort into something.

Let's just say it's from the woman's point of view, this man, he just shows up wearing jeans and his usual sloppy outfit, he doesn't comb his hair, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

He takes me to the pub for dinner on our first date.

He's not thinking about me, he's not willing to put any effort into it.

If he's not willing to put any effort into it, what's it going to be like three months down the line when he completely takes me for granted, which is what happens in a relationship?

Am I not important enough, whereas the ability to have a little bit of effort, to think of it as kind of theater and drama and that there's nothing evil about it, so I'm going to dress nicely.

I'm going to, I just have to be fancy, just that I'm going to, you know, I'm going to put some effort into how I look.

I'm going to take her to a place that isn't, you know, I'm not talking about candle lights and roses and that kind of crap.

Doesn't that, you can be creative, it can be somewhere that that's scuzzy, that's on the wrong side of town, but it's different and it's appealing to, and you put some thought into it.

There's a reason you're taking her there, right?

I have a friend who went on a date and she came back from the date and was complaining because the person that she date went on that first date with was using a, took her to a spot where he had an available valid discount code, it's like two to one.

Talk about anti-seduction, there you go.

Why is that anti-seductive?

In that case, one might say that male is being, you know, economically savvy, financially savvy.

They, you know, if you're not able to let go of your, of your kind of tightness when it comes to a woman, something's wrong with you, man.

Just let go, spend some extra money, spend the extra 10 quid that you might need to spend on taking her to someplace different, but it signals a kind of cheapness and it's not about money, it's about a cheapness in your spirit, right?

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She's not worth, you know, letting go, okay, maybe you don't have that much, but my God, you have enough.

It's not going to make, if you're that poor, then, then, you know, okay, maybe, but probably not, you could afford it, show that you, that it means something to you.

Seduction is a language, it's not a language of words, it's a language of gestures that we're paying attention to.

We're paying attention to people's body language, we're paying attention to their actions, to the things that they never say.

So when you signal that discounts are so important to you that even on the first date, you have to have a discount, you're signaling that it's not, there's something tight about you in your nature and it's not very pleasant.

From doing this podcast and speaking about topics like love and sex and dating and, you know, dating apps even, one of the comments I saw quite frequently was from young men who are struggling to seduce a woman or vice versa.

Especially young men that, you know, and then I read some stats, I think Scott Galloway came on the podcast and talked about how, going to butcher these numbers, but a staggering amount of men haven't had sex in the, young men haven't had sex in the last 12 months.

And then when I looked at the comments section, specifically on YouTube, I saw, I kind of saw that energy reflected where it looked like young men in particular were struggling to seduce a mate, a partner in the modern world.

Is that real?

In your view, is there, is there something that has changed in society?

Has that always been the case?

Is there anything we can do if we're a young man that's struggling in the modern world because of the internet and computers and this and dating apps and well, a lot of it is, I'm afraid to say is internet porn, where you get the idea that, you know, sex is something that should be very easy and quick and that women should have, look at that kind of body and physique, et cetera, et cetera, and that becomes your norm, et cetera.

That can be, that can be very damaging.

But the idea that things must come easy and quick is, is very prevalent.

And to win over someone like a, say you're a man and it's a woman who might be reluctant to have sex for good reason or reluctant to have a relationship requires some effort.

It requires some thinking.

You can't just hack your way, you can't just swipe and get it.

You can, you can have your internet sex, but you're not going to get that in real life.

It doesn't work that way.

It takes time.

It takes patience, you know, and you're going to have to work and you're going to be rejected.

Being with people is a skill being a social animal.

Although there's a part that comes naturally, if you spend all of your time here, you're losing that skill of how to respond to people's body language, you know, half of the thing is you're sitting in a bar opposite, let's say it's a woman and how she crosses her legs, how she sips her drink, how she looks at you, how she touches her hair.

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She's signaling things.

It's a language, it's a beautiful language, right?

You have to learn it and you're not going to learn it here because you can't.

You have to be in person, has to be skin to skin.

You have to get a feel for what other people are thinking and feeling.

And we're actually really, really good at that.

Humans have, that's what makes us human.

It's called mirror neurons.

I can sense what's going on in your mind.

I can read your body language.

You have to get out in the world and you have to be put yourself physically out there and try and try and try and have rejection.

And I know it sounds awful, but it is a skill in a way where you're learning how to like understand and deal with people and understand who they are and get inside their spirit.

It takes time and effort and patience.

So for young men, you have to realize that, right?

If you think everything has to be easy and quick, it's never going to work for you.

And then I talk about the actor, the Hollywood actor, Errol Flynn, who is perhaps numerically the greatest male seducer ever, because estimated that he had seduced close to 3,000 women and he died when he was 50.

And if I did the math one day, how can that possibly be?

And I tried to research what was his secret and it was hard to find out.

Finally, I found a book written by a woman whom he had seduced, another actress.

And she said, he was so relaxed and so comfortable.

It was like being, it was like an animal type thing.

And then what I would sit with him, it was almost as if I had drunk two martinis just sitting next to him.

His comfort and his security and his confidence, his relaxed attitude, it just made me drunk.

So feeling relaxed, feeling confident and not defensive and comfortable with yourself is a very powerful, seductive quality.

I mean, there are many of them, but that's one that I would point out.

Have you ever figured out what builds confidence?

You, earlier on, you were talking about how children need to experience things firsthand.

You can't just tell them.

You can't just tell someone, for example, to be confident.

Preaching doesn't seem to work.

What is it in your view that, that does build that true, you also can't fake confidence.

I remember, I tell you, we talked about rejection a second ago.

I was rejected by pretty much every girl that I was pursuing between the ages of 16 and I'd say 22.

Really?

Yeah.

Do you know what it was?

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I was faking confidence.

It all changed when I was actually had a sense of security in myself, but in the period where I was faking confidence, I was pretending I was confident, it was like they just could read past it.

That's almost how I look back on the situation.

So I came to learn that you can't fake confidence.

You can't pretend to be it because there's so many sort of micro expressions that end up reading more like insecurity than confidence, but what is real confidence and how does one build it in your view?

Well, you've kind of answered your own question there in a way.

So fake confidence is like bravado, right?

And you're putting on an act and particularly women who've had to deal with this for millennia, they can smell it, they can sense it, they don't have to, it's not in your words, it's the body language, et cetera, et cetera.

Real confidence comes from actions, from your actual things you've accomplished, right?

So when you're 22, 21, it's hard to have that confidence because what is it based on?

Maybe it's based, okay, maybe you're really good looking if you happen to have that good fortune and you can feel confident about that and you don't have to try so hard, all right, maybe that might work or maybe you're really good at sports or maybe you're a really good dancer or you're a really great singer, but it's based on something real.

You have a skill, you have something that separates you, you have something that you can do, that you can accomplish because when you're 21, it's hard to have those.

I look back on myself when I was at age, I had nothing, no wonder I got rejected.

So it comes from what you do in life, okay, the finest sense of confidence is actually creating things and having success and meeting goals and achieving things and having a record of that, you know, and maybe what goes with that is having some money, but it's not necessarily because you don't have to have a lot of money and you don't have to be good looking to seduce.

That's a myth that I try to explode in the art of seduction.

Some of the greatest seducers, male and female, were not good looking at all.

It's about psychology and it's about how you carry yourself, but the confidence comes from actually what you can do, not how you feel or what you say, well, it is how you feel, but the feeling is based on things that you actually can do, skills that you have that separates you, that make you feel really confident, you know.

So body language, I find it fascinating that, you know, there's quotes and things that say 80% of our communication is non-verbal, et cetera, et cetera.

Body language is so interesting to me because again, I think that's one of the things that it's just impossibly hard to fake.

I was reading, you know, a couple of books on, there was a phase when I was, I don't know, 20, probably just after being rejected all the time, when I was maybe 22 where I started reading books from pickup artists and they would obsess on the topic of body language.

And one of the things they'd say is, and I was explaining this to my girlfriend a couple of weeks ago, that when a man is lower confidence and when he's desperate, he does this thing

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called pecking in a nightclub where he'll like lean in and like shout in your ear.

And when he's higher confidence, he kind of leans out and he'll wait for you to lean in.

Small things like that, subtleties like that, that intuitively we're reading and understanding and communicating and et cetera, but someone that doesn't have the confidence probably isn't even aware that they do.

So when I reflect on my rejection phase, I think, gosh, my body language must have been exuding desperation and low status and low value, low self-esteem.

What's your thoughts on body language?

Well, in my last book, Human Nature, I wrote a whole chapter on it.

I quoted the figure 95%, but who knows what it really is.

The thing it is that we evolved for hundreds of thousands of years before language existed.

And our earliest ancestors depended on the group for their survival and getting along and their powers came from observing other people in their body language.

You could read it.

So it's a skill that's wired into us, wired into our brains.

It's a very unique skill that we humans have.

It's just that you don't learn that.

When you're a child, when you're two years old, you have it because your life depends on it.

You have to see what if your mother is loving you or your father is kind to you, because if not, you could be abandoned.

Your life depends on it.

You're great at reading that.

And children are incredibly adept at picking up body language.

So if someone is fake, if someone's an imposter, they hate being around children because children see through you like radar, right, because they're so attuned to it.

You had that skill when you were very young, but you lost it because you became so oriented with words and you became so self-absorbed that you're not paying attention.

But it's extremely important, right?

So the whole body is involved in it.

So you've got to first stop thinking about people's words so much, because the one thing about words, unfortunately, is people can lie.

They can say whatever they want.

They can say, I love your screenplay.

That was fantastic.

You were great in that movie.

I thought you were great, etc.

They can say anything to please, to flatter, to control you.

But body language, man, it doesn't lie, right?

So I talk in that book about the eyes and the fake smile.

The fake smile is something you see every single day, but you're not paying attention.

It's kind of tight, right?

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But a real smile, the whole face gets animated and there's a little crinkly thing here as your face, as it lights up and your eyes light up.
It's hard to even put into words, but it's there.
You can see it.
It's real.
It's not faked.
Knowing the difference between a fake and a real smile is really important in seduction, in business, or whatever, to know if someone is like, yeah, I like that idea.
No, you don't really.
They're saying that to please you.
They actually hate your idea.
You master that language.
You can start deciphering all this bullshit people are giving you.
The face, you can disguise it a little bit.
Actors know that, but you know what?
You can't fake.
It's your voice.
If you're nervous, not even the finest actors in the world can fake that.
Your voice betrays so many things about you.
It betrays your weakness.
It betrays your lack of confidence, or it betrays the other quality, et cetera, right?
So pay really attention to the tone of people's voices, to how fast they talk.
People who talk fast are very nervous.
Someone who's talked, I know I'm probably talking a little too fast here, sorry.
My mind races, so I do that.
Normally, I don't talk so fast.
But you talk slowly.
You have a certain tone.
You have a certain intonation that kind of reveals confidence, okay?
Body language, posture, you were talking about pecking, right?
When you go and look at a meeting of people in a business meeting, you'll see all the employees kind of leaning forward and nervous, and you'll see the boss kind of leaning back arms like this.
I'm the powerful one.
You come to me.
I'm the leader.
I'm the top dog where she is a woman.
I don't need to be like this.
I'm like this.
Body language reveals a lot about leadership qualities, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.
If you go, you're at a party, and you come up to someone that you're meeting for the first time, and they're talking to you, and you notice that their feet are angling away from you.

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That means that they're not really interested in looking for any moment to try and walk away and escape.

They're not really into you, because their feet are facing you.

They're engaged.

They want to talk to you, right?

This is a whole art you can learn.

You can sit there and you can read it, and I talk about, I give this story in Laws of

Human Nature of a man named Milton Erickson, the founder of NLP and hypnotherapy, probably one of the most brilliant psychologists who ever lived.

When Milton Erickson was 19 years old or so, he had polio.

He nearly died.

His entire body was paralyzed.

The only thing he could move, the only muscle he could move were his eyeballs.

Now imagine that he was a young man with a very active mind.

He can't talk.

He can't do anything.

All they can do is move his eyeballs a little bit.

He was so bored.

Can you imagine how bored you'd be like that?

You can't read.

You can't do anything.

People would come in to visit him.

All they could do was look at them and study them.

He became the greatest reader of body language ever in the history of mankind.

People said he was almost had ESP.

He could read everything about who they were just by looking because he ended up recovering.

He became a psychologist because his life depended on developing this skill.

He was going to just die from sheer boredom if he didn't learn how to read body language.

He mastered that language much like somebody could master French.

It's an incredibly powerful language that I can't emphasize enough.

We can go about learning the language of body language.

I'm sure that will help, but it's such a complex, there's like a thousand things with my body language at all times, like how I'm speaking, my eyeballs, where I'm looking, my posture, my arms.

Am I crossing my arms?

My legs, all of these things.

The challenge of mastering all of that feels a little bit overwhelming.

Am I right in assuming the easier challenge to master is, in fact, just like my sense of self?

Very well put.

If you feel confident, if you feel secure, if you're not all inward and insecure and worried about yourself, it will naturally radiate through your gestures.

You don't have to sit there and pay attention to your fingers, your arm, your ears, your

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eyes.

It's just there.

It's natural.

That is the solution.

The two parts of the game, it's your own body language.

Be aware that people are judging you for that.

You can't, as you say, be monitoring everything or you'll drive yourself crazy and you'll look very weird.

The best solution is to feel these certain things that are going to radiate and not give the fake smile, but when you're really happy to just show it and show your emotion that way.

The other side, which is more, I think, really important is learning other people's body language.

That can come from study and is much more a logical thing than constantly thinking about everything that you do.

Your next book that I have here, Mastery.

Why did you write a book called Mastery?

To be honest with you, the idea for it was around the year 2010, 2009.

I was getting a little worried that people who were reading my books, particularly young men, were reading Power and Seduction, they were thinking, that's all I need in life, man.

I just need to be a manipulator.

I just need to play political games.

That's what success is all about.

I was worried that if you don't understand how to make something, it's going to be the future of mankind.

Our bridge is just going to fall down, our hotel's going to collapse.

People don't know how to make things anymore.

We don't know how to use our hands anymore.

Being able to be good with people is extremely important as a social animal.

Perhaps higher up in the hierarchy is being able to do things, to be able to have great skill and to be able to create something and know how to master a subject and to build something that can last.

That's really important.

I'm feeling like because young people, this is back in 2010, imagine now, have this idea that everything comes quick and easy because you can click, click, click and things come to you.

That everything in life should be that way, that we're becoming alienated from the human brain and how the human brain operates because the human brain requires time.

If you know how the human brain operates, we have what are called neural pathways.

Every time you repeat something, a neural pathway is created and strengthened and strengthened and strengthened.

It's why we get addicted to things, but it's also why we develop skill.

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So if I'm sitting there shooting free throws day in and day out and day out, my brain is wiring it, it's learning it, it's learning that motor skill, that hand, mind thing and it's getting better and better and better at it.

It takes time, it takes repetition to build those pathways.

And I explained in mastery that you reach the proverbial 10,000 hours, which some people dispute nowadays, so it's just a number.

It's not, it's not a fact.

You ever spent so long learning something that there's so many pathways.

It's like this amazing inner landscape with all these connections going on in your brain.

And now you can be creative.

Now you can come up with things that nobody's ever thought of.

You can play chess on a higher level.

You can be Pele and soccer or Lionel Messi making passes that no one had ever seen before because you're not having to think, right, you don't have to think anymore.

Your body just does, does what it wants.

Imagine 20,000 hours, which is possible just people sometimes attain in certain fields.

You're almost like a genius.

You're almost like superhuman, right?

If you're someone who's so logged into the internet to getting things instantly, you can't get past 100 hours, let alone 10,000, you're never going to develop skill and you're going to find life really, really difficult for you.

So I wrote the book because I was actually deeply worried that we were losing a part of how the human brain operates as something elemental part of our wisdom.

The interesting throughline between that and the subject matter we've discussed in power and seduction is that by learning to master something you build, that sense of self-esteem and confidence that we're looking for to be good at the former topics mentioned.

But on the topic of mastery, the first chapter in this book and really the first question a lot of people ask is this question about finding your passion.

And I've always had a difficult relationship with this question because it sometimes assumes that there's one of them and that you have to go in search of it somewhere.

In the first chapter of your book, you talk about discovering your life task.

Why is it important?

Is it the same thing?

Is finding your passion and finding your life task the same thing?

No, I just recorded this yesterday on my own podcast.

I went on a rant about how it's not about passion.

It's not about finding your passion.

I actually don't like that word passion.

It kind of makes me cringe because if you think about it passion to succeed at anything requires time and effort and boredom and tedium.

So let's just say a simple example.

You're learning to play the piano.

When you first sit down at the piano, you have to play these really insipid tunes.

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It's so boring.

You have to learn, what they call it, finger exercises and scales.

On any instrument, you have to learn scales, etc.

It's tedious, man.

If you think it's got to be passion, forget it.

You're never going to get far.

The thrill comes after a year of playing the piano and you get better at it better and better.

And now it starts coming fun.

It's been 10 years, it's more fun than 20 years, it's fantastic.

I'm not trying to name drop here, but the other night I had dinner with Stevie Wonder.

It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen.

He's absolutely, I wish I had interviewed him for my book, speaking of genius.

He's blind obviously, everybody knows.

But I was watching him perform for us, we were friends at his recording studio.

I was watching him play the piano and he's blind, right?

And he's improvising and it's just absolutely brilliant and amazing.

And as I'm seeing this, I'm thinking, I could see the thousands of hours he's been putting in just touching these keyboards and knowing where the keys are, you know, it was just mind blowing how amazing it was.

That is the power that the human brain naturally has through hours and hours and hours of effort that's how it works.

So you know, he didn't get there because it was passion.

He got there because he was a child prodigy at an age of 11.

He was signed to a contract with Motown Records, right?

He was playing that as he was a kid, hour after hour after hour after hour.

He had a love for the piano, but it wasn't like every time he sat down it had to be passionate about it.

He had the patience to put up with all of the boring stuff, okay?

So you want to discover what you were meant to, what you have a connection to, what you have a love for, right?

When you're a child, hopefully, or when you're 18 or 19 or 20, that's the best time to discover it, all right?

You decide and it doesn't have to be something highfalutin or worth, you know, like intellectual.

You could be great with your hands.

You could be great with your body.

You could be great with images and visuals.

You could be great with words.

You could be great in many different areas, okay?

They're all equal.

They're all great.

You as a child are naturally, so there's a book I always recommend for people called The Five Frames of Mind by Howard Gardner, in which he talks about the five forms of

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intelligence that humans have.

Each brain, genetically, is wired in one direction or the other.

You want to know that you want to feel it inside of you.

It's like a feeling.

It's not an intellectual thing.

You feel when you're doing sports that it's good, it's a natural thing.

It's what I'm meant for.

When you're involved with words like I was when I was eight years old, it felt right.

It felt like a natural fit.

I have to follow this path.

When you're three or four years old and it's music like Stevie Wonder and you're hearing this in your head, wow, that's it for me, right?

Okay?

You feel it.

You feel this connection.

All right.

Now you fast forward to when you're 18 or 19 years old and you're having to make a career choice.

Okay?

So I call that your 20s, the most important phase of your life that's going to make or break you in some way.

If you spend your 20s trying to learn skill in something that connects to you deeply, right?

Then things are going to happen to you by the time you reach 30.

You've discovered your life's task.

It may not be something so specific.

For me, it was writing and words, but I didn't know what to write.

I tried novels.

I tried journalism.

I tried theater.

I tried screenwriting.

But you know what?

It gives you a direction and you try and you try and try and you know, that's what you were meant for.

That's what you were destined for.

You feel connected to it.

You feel a love for it.

And so when it comes time to do the tedious stuff, you're able to do it because you know in the end, it'll pay rewards, you'll get better and better at it.

And the connection is so deep that to not do it would be miserable.

So you can't think of everything in life having to be pleasurable and having to be passionate.

It's going to be boredom is going to be teething.

How do I deal with it?

You have to feel a greater love than just mere pleasure or passion.

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It's got to be something so deep within you that to not do it will make you deeply unhappy. For me, not to write or be a writer, I don't think I'd be alive right now.

I would have been so miserable and so alienated from who I am.

So that's what'll get you through.

That's what a life's task is.

When you think about that in the book, you talk about the first phase, which is you know, your apprenticeship on your journey to mastery.

When you're in that apprenticeship phase, you know, when you're maybe early in your career, you're early on your journey to becoming the pianist, the violinist, the podcaster, the entrepreneur, whatever.

These are the most important things to be selecting for as it relates to the job you take, the people you're around, that kind of thing.

Like if there's a 23 year old listening to this that is an apprentice at a floristry shop making bouquets of flowers and they're being offered five different jobs in the industry of floristry, which one should they be looking at if they're in the early steps of their apprenticeship?

Very easy question to answer.

Thank you.

You want to look for the job that offers you the most possibilities of learning.

So if you're going to go to a florist shop where there's only one other person there, it's like an entrepreneur who started it and you're going to be like their right hand man or woman and you're going to learn and the pay is half of what you could get at this very fancy.

You could be working at the shop at some department store where they'd pay you triple, take the job that pays one third, where you're going to learn the most, you're going to learn about the business, you're going to learn from the ground up and there's going to be a level of excitement where we might not survive another few months.

We've got to work hard.

We've got to be motivated.

We're all on the same page here.

A lot of people when they're 23, they grab the job with the biggest paycheck and that's a mistake because if you go to like a large firm, you're kind of lost.

You don't have as much responsibility.

You suddenly have to deal with all the political games, the 48 laws of power.

You're not paying attention.

You're not developing skills as much.

You don't have as much responsibility.

Take the job that has one half the salary, but you're responsible.

You're going to be learning and it's up to you.

That's the most important thing you can do when you're at that point in your life.

You say there's three steps in that apprenticeship, deep observation.

Is that what you mean?

When you say deep observation, you mean like being able to observe the job happening or

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do you mean something else?

Well, it means that.

It also means... So, most people when they start a job, they're the first impulses of got to impress people.

I've got to make them like me.

That's that inward direction that's so deadly in seduction and it's deadly in life.

You want to be outer directed.

You want to observe the codes and conventions of your field, the social codes, what's acceptable behavior, what's not acceptable behavior, the skills involved, the various heuristics, the various things that you have to learn that create skill.

You want to be a sponge absorbing what's going on around you.

What are the things you need to learn?

What are the valuable skills?

What are the things that aren't valuable?

Who are the people you need to avoid, who are the people you need to emulate?

You're a laser.

You're just observing everything around you and not worried about yourself.

That's the proper... That's deep observation.

You talked about skill there.

It's all well and good seeing skills and knowing which skills are important, but acquiring those skills is point number two when you're in that apprenticeship phase in life, skills acquisition.

And this kind of goes to what you're saying with the working in a florist shop next to the entrepreneur.

You're going to be hands-on.

You're going to be doing.

Which also goes to what you said earlier about parents and children, like putting them in situations where they get to do stuff.

Yeah.

A lot of jobs don't offer that.

A lot of jobs don't offer the difficulty, the challenge, right?

Hamilton is that.

Well, we call it learning by doing.

And you see some things play into how the human brain operates.

That's what you want.

I give the image in the introduction to mastery that part of the alliteration here, but the brain has a grain to it.

You want to work with that grain.

You don't want to work against the grain because it's counterproductive.

And one of the grains of the brain, sorry, is learning by doing.

Well, you know, flashback 300,000 years ago and we're sitting there, we're making tools out of bones, out of wood, et cetera.

The way the skill was passed on to other people and didn't die with one generation was you

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watched this person making the tool and then you watched them and you learned and you imitated them.

Flash forward to the medieval period in Europe where they had apprentices, apprenticeship schools, seven years, you're learning masonry, you're learning carpentry, you're learning whatever.

For seven years, you're sitting there watching somebody make things and you're doing it. That's how the brain operates.

You learn by doing, not by thinking, not by thinking, oh, this is how things are fitted in more, you know, with mortars, et cetera, et cetera.

No, I'm doing it with my hands.

The human, the brain and the hand have the most connection of any part of our body because so much of our power as a species dependent on our hands.

We don't have much of that anymore, but learning by doing things with your hands or making things is how the brain is wired.

So you want to go with that grains, you want to do things, you want to make things, you want to be learning through action, not through just a lot of talk and, you know, as you might know, the show's now sponsored by Airbnb.

I can't count how many times Airbnbs have saved me when I'm traveling around the world. Whether it's, you know, recently when I went to the jungle in Bali or whether it's when I'm staying here in the UK or going to business in America.

But I can also think of so many times where I've stayed in a host's place on Airbnb and I've been sat there wondering, could my place be an Airbnb as well?

And if it could be, how much could I earn?

It turns out you could be sitting on an Airbnb gold mine without even knowing about it.

Maybe you have a spare room in your house that friends stay from time to time.

You could Airbnb that space and make a significant amount of money instead of letting it stay empty.

That in-law, that guest house, that annex where your parents sometimes stay, you could Airbnb that and make some extra income for yourself.

Whether you could just use some extra money to cover some bills or for something a little bit more fun, your home might be worth a little bit more than you think.

And you can find out the answer to that question by going to [Airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk) slash host.

One of the things that you referenced at the start of this conversation, I think maybe even off camera was in 2018 you had a stroke.

And that changed your life in a very fundamental way.

Can you tell me what happened and how it changed you?

Well, it was a terrifying experience.

I was in a coma, I emerged from it, and suddenly I'm somebody who's very physical.

Sports was a huge part of my life.

I've swim very long distances.

I love mountain biking.

I was doing all kinds of hiking.

It was extremely important to me.

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I was every single day I did something physical to take my mind off things. Suddenly it's taken away from me. The left side of my body is basically paralyzed. I have no control over it. To this day, I still have problems with it. Can't swim, can't mountain bike, can't hike, right? I can't take my mind, I can't think while I'm taking a hike. I can't type for a rider that's not much fun. I had to deal with crap that I've never had to deal with my life. I had a pretty easy time compared to this. I had to learn new life skills when I'm already 62 years old. That is an easy stuff. I don't want to whine or complain because people deal with worse stuff all the time. A lot of people get cancer, etc. But anybody who's had a stroke knows what I'm talking about. It's very hard because you can practice and practice and practice and practice hours and hours of therapy. I do over an hour of therapy every day, and you hardly notice any results. The frustration, it takes you 10 minutes to tie your shoes. You can't button your thing, you have to get other people to do that. It's hard to cut food. You have to be patient. You have to accept this. You have to find another way of loving your life, of accepting these things that you took for granted before. And I tell people, I look out my window now, where I'm riding, and I see people walking their dog, and I put myself in their shoes and I go, God, that must be so great just to walk your dog down the street. What a pleasurable thing. They don't realize it. You take it for granted. Now, please don't take it for granted. Understand that the ability that you have now to run, to walk your dog, to swim, to tie it, it can be taken away from you. And just appreciate your life for what you have because the things that I love were taken away from me, and I wish they hadn't been. So I've had to adjust myself. You know, when something like that happens in life, when you are the victim of a tragedy or instance or circumstance or something that happens, there's often a degree of unfairness surrounding it. And when I read about that incident in 2018, I read that it was a bee sting that caused a clot that caused the stroke. Yeah, I know.

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It was actually, I think, a wasp.

But if that wasp had been like moving, the wind had been a little different and had moved this way instead of this way, I may not have had a stroke.

But I can tell you this.

So in May of that year, the stroke was in August.

In May, I'd finished *The Laws of Human Nature*, which took me five years, and when I finished that book, I felt like I was near death.

I was so exhausted.

I was so drained.

My wife was really worried about me because I just looked really haggard.

Slowly I kind of recovered, but then in July, I went to New York and I forgot my blood pressure medication that I take.

So my blood pressure was starting to rise.

And then I came back to LA and I walked in this park and the bee, the wasps, stung me here and my whole chest turned red and it was like the most unbearable feeling.

So I went to the hospital, they gave me this drug called prednisone to relieve the itching.

Prednisone increases your blood pressure.

And so when I ended up having this stroke, the blood clot, it was right where the wasp sting was.

So the neurologist said, probably all this cholesterol was released from that wasp sting here and that's where the blood clot occurred.

But there were all these other circumstances that kind of led to a kind of a perfect storm.

And maybe if I hadn't had that wasp sting, it would have happened four months later under different circumstances and I would have died.

Because what happened was I was driving my car when I got my stroke.

My wife was in the other seat.

She saw something really strange going on my face.

I didn't notice it.

She forced me to pull over the side of the road 90% of the time I'm alone.

I'm swimming.

I'm hiking.

It could have happened four months from then.

She wouldn't be there.

I'd be dead right now.

So I can't really think in terms of, oh, if that wasp had been diverted, it would be a good feeling, but it's too painful for me to imagine.

I like to think of, fortunately, someone was there who saved my life because it could have very well happened four months from then because my body was worn down and something much worse

could have happened.

That journey you described of having to rebuild and relearn and redesign your life, we've talked about the topic of power so much in this conversation.

In that moment, it sounds like your power, to some degree, had been taken from you.

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You learn like, at least for me, when I looked at people differently after my stroke, I had more empathy for them.

I'm normally an empathetic person, but I was looking at people in the pandemic who got long COVID, who were having strokes or were having terrible circumstances, or when I look at people who were disabled, because I'm essentially disabled now, I understand them. And also, the other thing is, when I look at people who are really poor, who are struggling in life, they feel really dependent and helpless.

I felt that physically, I don't feel that material because I don't have that problem anymore, thank God.

But I have more empathy, I understand it, not in an intellectual way, but in a visceral physical way, that sensation of, I don't know where my food's coming from, I don't know what's going to happen the next day, I'm weak, I'm dependent, I'm helpless, it's miserable. I kind of understood that feeling now on a different level, on a level that affected me personally, it's a lot different than having it affect you in an intellectual way.

The phases in that journey to where you are today, the first phase after the incident you wake up, you realize that your life has changed, what's going on in your psychology, what's going on in your mind, you talked about helplessness and depression.

To be honest with you, what happened to me was, right afterwards there was a level of delusion in my mind, I kept thinking, well in three months I'll be back at it, in six months I'll be swimming, in a year I'll be hiking again, I deluded myself, I wasn't aware of how hard the process was, and then six months, eight months a year down the road as I realized I was wrong, that's when the depression sat in, that's when it really started hitting me, I thought I'd be back, here I am four years on, I thought I'd be back to my life but I'm not, you know, so that's what was the hardest struggle was actually a year in there and going, there's a phase where you kind of plateau where you're not really progressing anymore, that's the worst part of it, I'm progressing now again because I have a great therapist, but I had to deal with really bad depression about a year, a year and a half in when it started to realize, this is my life man, I'm going to always have this funny arm that's bowing in, I'm going to be walking like this, I never expected this in my life, so I've had to deal with that and I've had to kind of find a way to not let it get me down, to find other pleasures and joys in life, etc, which I have.

How do you find a way to not let it get you down, I'm thinking now about people that are listening to this that might be struggling with their own subjective struggles in life, they've been, they've lost their job, they have a disability, whatever it might be, what are the successful strategies you've deployed to try and remain, how to keep that peace of mind?

Well, I don't know how much of it is applicable because I'm at a phase of life where I don't have material worries, you know, and I could have had this kind of stroke where my physical element would have been untouched but my brain would have been damaged, which is another part, that would have been worse because I wouldn't have been able to write another book and I have a very active mind.

So for me, being able to write another book is my salvation.

So when it's three o'clock in the afternoon when I get down to writing, it's the happiest

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moment in my life, I feel at peace, I'm back to my work and I love my work and I love what I'm writing about.

It's saved me a lot.

I do meditation, I've been meditating now for about 12 years, I think more than that.

Every morning it's a ritual, I have to meditate if I don't, something is wrong and I've never missed a day, I can honestly say, and it just calms me down, it just gives me a strength throughout the whole day, so I get up seven o'clock, you know, the sun's usually shining because it's Los Angeles and I go, it's the morning, I'm greeting the morning, I'm greeting the sun, it's like I'm in, like I'm a, you know, somebody 4,000 years ago in a tribe, here's the sun, it's a miracle that there's even something like that, the birds are chirping, I'm looking at the ivy, the sky is blue, I just calm myself down, intrusive negative thoughts start popping into my mind, you didn't do this, you have a podcast today at two o'clock, Robert, you want to do this, that and the other, I'd get rid of them, I go calm down, put that away, grind yourself and it's helped immeasurably.

The other thing is, always keep in mind that there are people who have it worse than you, so I don't want to feel sorry for, I don't like the sense of feeling sorry for myself, in fact sometimes I turn it around and I look at that person walking the dog or jogging and I go, I actually feel sorry for you because you're not aware of how precarious life is, you're not aware of how this can be taken away from you, you're not aware of how precious it is to just be alive and just to see the sky and the birds, so I feel better than you in a way, I turn it around, I don't want to feel sorry for myself, the thing is there are people who have it worse, I read in the newspaper all the time, cancer, you're in Ukraine or I was dealing a lot with people in Iran right now, what they're dealing with, I don't have to deal with that kind of crap, like being in Iran and dealing with that daily life, how horrifying, these are thoughts that take you out of the moment where you're feeling sorry for yourself and you're kind of grateful for certain things, so those are some of the strategies I've had to kind of create for myself.

I find it so, I find it so I guess powerful to hear those strategies because we all get caught up in our narrow perspective and our own subjective feelings that we're suffering or that life is against us and then that kind of torments us in many ways.

As you've post-stroke in 2018, is there anything else that you have learned about the nature of happiness from that incident that we, that you might not have known before that incident that I might not fully understand now, the things I heard you talk about are the importance of a sense of purpose, how perspective and gratitude are central to our feelings of happiness, but is there any other observations you've had that I'm just saying this from my own selfish perspective because I want to know?

Well, first of all, I don't want to give the impression that I've solved everything because I'm a work in progress.

I have moments where I get so frustrated and it's almost like I have Tourette's syndrome, like I can't, I'm still four years in and my arm is still like this and I still can't brush my teeth the way I want, I get very frustrated, so I'm getting better but it's still a work in progress.

I don't want to give the impression that I've somehow mastered it because it has mastered

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me.

I have a long way to go but I'm getting a lot better at it day to day.

I don't know.

I think I've kind of touched on everything only in the sense of...

What about connection?

You talked about your wife.

Yes, she's helped me a lot.

God bless her soul.

She's had to take care of me.

I was somebody who has always prided myself for being independent.

I was trapped.

That was another thing that was taken away from me.

I was traveling around the world, doing book tours, going to book festivals, doing interviews, doing consulting in various different countries.

I could still travel but it requires a lot more so I lost my independence.

I had to have somebody help me with food every single day.

I need things being done for me and I feel terrible that she's been put in that position but she's been very gracious about it and she understands, she has a lot of empathy because she knows what I've lost.

So having somebody in your life, if I were alone, I couldn't deal with it, man.

I wouldn't have been able to deal with it.

It just would have been too much for me.

It would have been too depressing.

That depression that sucks after a year would have leveled me.

I couldn't have made it.

So that's an incredibly important aspect.

And just appreciating the little things in life that I just, you know, it's a cliché and I hate saying clichés but, you know, I have that feeling almost every day where I'm looking at somebody going, man, that must be, I'm like riding my bike and I'm seeing somebody just sitting in a park reading a book on a bench and I'm going, God, that is so much fun.

I have to be able to do that.

I can't do that anymore but I put myself in their body.

The little things in life that you take for granted are filled with so much happiness and joy that you're not thinking about.

If that person's sitting on a bench reading that book only realized what this person writing by thinks, maybe they wouldn't take it for granted.

So some of those little things that you don't think about have incredible importance at least to me having lost them.

So I don't know if I'm, I wish I had something better but I can only come from my own experience.

I can't make it up.

Well, your books tend to focus on the nature of the human condition, how we are as humans for better or for worse.

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And it was interesting because as you were talking over several topics when you're talking about seduction and the 48 laws of power and mastery, as a part of me that's, you know, started to feel a little bit, I don't know, feel the darkness that is innate within humans a bit, a bit too much maybe, that we're a little bit too contrived and manipulative and conniving and whatever else.

And I was thinking, do I really like humans?

Yeah, I'm one of them.

I'm very conscious of trying to separate myself.

I hear people doing interviews when they're talking about society and I always think, you are society, I am human.

I'm all of the things you've described in many, many ways, but has your journey of learning about humans and human nature made you personally more loving towards humans, more optimistic about the human race?

Or has it made you the opposite, honestly?

Well, it's made me more loving, but it hasn't made me more optimistic.

You know, there's so many things that are seem to be going awry in the world today.

Now I happen to be the former meditation I do is Zen meditation.

And in Zen meditation, there's this idea of what's called the Tathagata, which means it was, it was another name for Buddha.

And it means things as they are.

And one thing you meditate is the world isn't good or bad or ugly or evil or unjust.

It just is things just are, this is just the way the world is.

This is the karmic chain, the wheel of Dharma that's been going on for thousands of years.

It just is, it's just the state of affairs.

It's your discriminating your mind, it's your mind that creates all of these things.

Let go of that and you can connect to the way the world is without judging it and it becomes this very beautiful place.

And so a part of me wants to think of this is just the way things are, but a part of me goes, this isn't good the way things are, and I hope they're changed.

So knowing human nature and knowing how human nature tends to twist things, how whenever we invent a new piece of technology, it could be the telephone, it could be the television, it could be the internet, it could be cryptocurrency, or it can be, you know, AI.

It tends to twist and darken and degrade and pervert anything that was once maybe beautiful or interesting.

It makes me worried about the future.

So there I turn pessimistic and I'm worried, but then I always think that there's hope with young people and here I'm spouting another cliché down, I'm going to shoot myself after this interview.

But I feel like when I was young, I was angry about things.

I didn't like the way the world was.

It was Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and yuppies and ugly, you know, values I didn't have and I thought there was something wrong in the world.

I was angry and I wanted to change it.

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Young people are still like that and I think a lot of young people, Gen Z or whatever the next one is, whatever they call them, I don't know yet, they're growing up in a world that isn't healthy, that isn't right.

When you're young, you have all these energy, all this physicality and you don't like it. You don't feel comfortable in it and I know a lot of young people don't feel comfortable and at some point they're going to rebel and they're going to say, I'm tired of all this virtuality.

I want something real.

I want real experiences.

That spirit of rebellion that I see seeds of and signs of gives me hope and I hope that it continues because I remember once I had a dream probably the most memorable dream I ever had.

It was maybe about 15 years ago or so and I dreamt that I was there in the year 2072 or something like that.

I was walking around the year 2072.

It was the streets of New York, wow, everybody looks so happy.

Humans finally figured out how to do well in this world.

They figured out how to what matters.

There's hope in this world.

That was my moment in that dream.

It's always sort of stuck with me.

Maybe that will happen.

Maybe it won't.

I don't know.

I'm not Nostradamus.

I struggle with that.

I struggle with part of me is pessimistic and part of me seeks seeds of hope, particularly in young people and I really, really, really wish they figure it out because my generation and generations before we've kind of screwed this world over, things aren't good right now and I'm hoping that spirit of rebellion, that young energy will kind of come and kick the apple cart and say, screw all this, we want a different world.

We have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest asks a question for the next guest, not knowing who they're going to ask it for.

The question that's been left for you to answer is, in adult life, when were you most happy and why?

And then brackets it says, are you this way now and if not, why?

Well, I have to say the happiest moment of my life came at that turning point when I was 38 or so and I was given the opportunity to write the 48 Laws of Power and it came out and my life had changed.

And so the contrast from being in a small apartment, rather poor, rather desperate, where people were beginning to worry about me and suddenly things were clicking together and I was having fun and I was having all these adventures and I had a reasonable amount of money.

The shift was so radical and so dramatic that it was extremely exciting and it was almost

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like a drug high, it was pretty damn intoxicating.

I don't have that now because it's 25 years ago and I'm kind of still riding off of that and the high has worn off but I can remember in my body how depressed I was and that feeling and I never lose it.

I'm very grateful for what I have because I know it could have turned out very differently. So I still feel that initial happiness because I know if you have success when you're 24, you're not ready for it.

You don't realize how evanescent it could be, how it can disappear and how important it is.

I never had that because I struggled for so long and it's so many bad jobs.

So the happiness, the euphoria isn't the same, it's not the same intensity but I'm still riding on that wave because I know where I was before it happened and it's been an amazing journey.

My wife who's been there forward with it goes, can you believe that you were having dinner with Stevie Wonder when you were 12 years old?

You told me, Robert, that was the first album you ever bought was Intervisions and what would you have told yourself when you were 12 years old that this was what was happening?

I would have flipped out.

It's been an amazing journey.

I can't complain.

My whining complaint card was taken away from me in 1998 when I published that book and so I'm still feeling the last vestiges of that euphoria from back then.

Robert, thank you.

Thank you so much.

I've been a tremendous fan of your work for what feels like forever in my life and your wisdom, your willingness to confront difficult subject matter that a lot of people would avoid because there is darkness in Laced in a lot of the subject matter that you've written about in some of your books but it's very human, important, as you say, objectively neutral darkness that just is and for you to confront that over and over again in your work is it makes it some of the most important work I think anyone could do because it's the work that a lot of us avoid but your vulnerability and openness today as well have been like a shot at my ass in terms of gratitude and the importance of perception as it relates to our happiness and our sense of self.

So thank you so much.

I've really enjoyed this conversation more than I could express in words.

Thank you so much, Stephen.

It was a great interview I was telling at Juama that I've done thousands of these podcasts and I know I can tell I've done my 10,000 hours.

I can tell a great interviewer from a mediocre interview and you were in that elite category because you ask really great questions and you're a great listener and it's been really fun.

So thank you so much.

I appreciate the opportunity.

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It means a lot to me.

Thank you, Robert.

Okay.

You're welcome.

Quick one, as you guys know, we're lucky enough to have BlueJeans as a sponsor and supporter of this podcast.

For anyone that doesn't know, BlueJeans is an online video conferencing tool that allows you to have slick, fast, good quality online meetings without any of those glitches that you'd normally find with other meeting online providers that you know the ones I'm talking about and they have a new feature called BlueJeans Basic which I wanted to tell you about.

BlueJeans Basic is essentially a free version of their top quality video conferencing and that means that you get immersive video experiences, you get that super high quality, super easy and zero fuss experience and apart from zero time limits on meetings and calls, it also comes with high fidelity audio and video including Dolby Voice.

They also have expertise, great security so you can collaborate with confidence.

It's so smooth that it's quite literally changed the game for myself and my team without compromising quality at all.

So if you'd like to check them out, search BlueJeans.com and let me know how you get on.

For the last couple of how long, maybe four months, I've been changing my diet, shall I say.

Many of you who have really been paying attention to this podcast will know why.

I've sat here with some incredible health experts and one of the things that's really come through for me which has caused a big change in my life is the need for us to have these super foods, these green foods, these vegetables and then a company I love so much and a company I'm an investor in and a company that's sponsored this podcast and that I'm on the board of, recently announced a new product which absolutely spoke to exactly where I was in my life and that is Huell and they announced Daily Greens.

Daily Greens is a product that contains 91 super foods, nutrients and plant based ingredients which helps me meet that dietary requirement with the convenience that Huell always offers. Unfortunately it's only currently available in the US but I hope, I pray, that it'll be with you guys in the UK too.

If you're in the US, check it out, it's an incredible product.

I've been having it here in LA for the last couple of weeks and it's a game changer.