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MBS ([00:02](#)):

Hey it's Michael here, and today or at least the release date of this episode is January the 11th, 2022 or in Canada, we say 1 11 22, which I think is a great number combination. But beyond numbers this is also about the day my new book, *How to Begin: Start Doing Something That Matters* actually arrives in the world. Now I know this is probably no surprise to you because I have been mentioning it once or twice on the podcast.

MBS ([00:34](#)):

You might have heard some of the episodes where I borrow on some of my mates and some of my friends, everything from Jesse, the co-founder of Page Two, to Jenny Blake, who we kind of co-wrote the book together to my friend Mark. I read a chapter of the book and then we chatted about it. So hopefully,



you know this book is out in the world and you've maybe even checked out howtobegin.com website, where it's all happening.

MBS ([01:00](#)):

And in any case, I just wanted to say, thank you for your support. For buying the book, for gifting the book, for reviewing the book, whatever you've done to help that little book get out into the world. So I thought today I'd bring you a short but hard hitting interview with the author. So in other words, welcome to Two Pages with MBS.

MBS ([01:19](#)):

This is the podcast where Michael interviews, Michael, about Michael's book. A little so [obsistic 00:01:26], but whatever, stick with me. So yeah, I'd probably start the interview by going. So, Michael, thanks for being on the show today. Why are you writing a book? Why have you written this book? And that is actually a great question. People come to me all the time saying, I think I'm going to write a book and I'm like, why would you do that? It's hard. And it's miserable.

MBS ([01:46](#)):

And most people probably won't ever hear it and they certainly won't buy it and even if they buy it, they might not even read it. Why would you do that? And then you get to the point where like, okay, so writing the book is pretty hard, getting people to buy the book, to market the book, that's even harder. It's near I impossible.

MBS ([02:04](#)):

So I have been thinking of maybe branching into TikTok and maybe doing a dance for each of the nine chapters of the book, but maybe not, maybe I'll just avoid trying to appeal to the young people and just talk to people like you and me. But if I'm being serious, actually, as I look to 2022, I'm actually trying on for



the first time this idea that I might be a writer, and I know that's going to be surprising for some people because, I wrote my first book, maybe 13 or 14 years ago now, and I've written seven or eight books, depending on how you count.

MBS ([02:39](#)):

So some of you will go, well Michael already is a writer, but I don't think of myself as writer. I think of myself as somebody who has figured out ways of teaching and sharing ideas and putting stuff out into the world and a book happens to be one of the ways that I'm best at doing that. And I do it in the service of business or in teaching or something else. But now I'm really thinking maybe in next year, I'm going to write more than one book, certainly one book, but maybe more than one book next year.

MBS ([03:10](#)):

So part of why I wrote this book is because I couldn't let the idea go and I could see how it fit into a bigger plan that I hope, which is as part of mbs.works to help people be a force for change. And because this idea of being a writer and trying on that coat is becoming kind of appealing to me. Now, another question I might ask myself, if I was being a tough interviewer is like, why are you writing about goals? Isn't that done? Isn't that being done for 30 years?

MBS ([03:43](#)):

And you know when I started writing this book, my first pass at it, the book wasn't about goals, it was about change. It was about how do we change our own behavior? Why is it so hard? And is there a way I can make it easier for people to understand some of the deeper rhythms, the deeper dynamics of the book. And a certain point, I took the first draft of the book, which was like 70 or 80 pages and showed it to a few people.

MBS ([04:11](#)):



One of whom was my friend Misha, who lives here in Toronto. And after three or four days, he wrote back to me and said, "Look, I'm 45 pages into your book. I have no idea what it's about. I'm quite confused. What's going on?" And I was like, "Oh, that is harsh, but fair." So I picked my way through the rubble of this book and discovered that there were a few things that I thought were worth keeping.

MBS ([04:33](#)):

One of them was the line, we unlock our greatness by working on the hard things. And that appealed to me because I'm trying to help people, you, me, others unlock our greatness, be the best version of ourselves. It is kind of connected indirectly perhaps to this idea of what it takes to change, behavior change. And I want people to work on hard things because the world is in trouble. We need people working on hard things.

MBS ([05:02](#)):

So that took me away from directly talking about behavior change to kind of indirectly talking about it. And then that was helped by me thinking about goal setting and realizing that most of what I knew, I didn't love whether that was smart goals, which I've never loved because it's all about, how do you reduce the ambition in your goal and how do you tie things up rather than what's the goal or even OKRs, which are a bit of a kind of Silicon Valley thing.

MBS ([05:31](#)):

And I'm not sure there's a whole lot put into the ambition and trying to identify the ambition. It's more about the tracking it and the measuring of it. So that's what pulled me back towards goals. And I'm not sure I call the book exactly a book about goal setting. It's a book about helping people reclaim their ambition for themselves and for the world and that manifests in naming and claiming and finding and starting a worthy goal for yourself.



MBS ([06:00](#)):

So if you're an interviewer, the obvious question to ask at this stage is, okay, so if it's about ambition, what's your ambition? What's your ambition for this book? Another good question. I have this knack of putting my thumb on the issues that I've been thinking about because I've actually spent the last month or two months, actually a little bit wrapped around the [atsle 00:06:22], thinking about what this book launch is and what it could be and what it should be and more uptight and more anxious about it than I would like to be and also more uptight and anxious than I think I should be because I'm like, come on Michael, you're 50 something years old. You should know better by now. Turns out I don't.

MBS ([06:40](#)):

So I came across this story. I think it was originally, I might have come across it in Eckart Toll, Eckhart Tolle, I'm not sure to pronounce his name. And it's a story about a guru, she's Krishnamurti, I'm probably saying that wrongly, but Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Tolle tells a story of Krishnamurti teaching to a crowd and then at a moment he stops and he waits and he says, "Do you want to know my secret?" And of course everybody becomes quiet. Everybody leans forward because that's why they're sitting there. Of course, we want to know what the secret is. And he pauses again and then he says, this is my secret. I don't mind what happens. And that's fantastic. That is a pure expression of being fully committed to the process, being in the moment, doing the work and letting go of the outcome, which is actually one of the teachings in the book.

MBS ([07:39](#)):

I didn't know the story when I wrote the book, I wish I did because I'd probably squeeze it in somewhere. I don't mind what happens. So the challenge with how to begin is I kind of do mind what happens. At this stage, truth be told I'd love it to do well. I'd love it to maybe make a list, a remote hope, but when a



person can dream. I'd love it to become a classic, be really well known, be loved in a way that *The Coaching Habit* has become a book that's exceeded my expectations.

MBS ([08:12](#)):

But what I'm trying to sit with is, I don't mind what happened, because in some ways another thing for me to keep remembering is that I've already won with this book. I've already won. Doesn't matter if not a single person buys it, I've already won. And that's because the last chapter of the book, which I wrote a lot of when I was in Australia, being with my parents, as my dad had a terminal illness and was dying, the very last chapter is an homage to him, just writing about how is important person in my life, how much he matters to me, how much he's influenced me and been a role model for me.

MBS ([08:51](#)):

And I was able to show him those last pages and have him read them with my mum, with me there and you can imagine it was emotional and wonderful and hard moment. And he died. I flew out of Australia. He died a couple of weeks after I left, but that moment felt like an absolute moment of completion and enclosure and love and appreciation with my dad and has made the time since he died significantly easier. More at peace with what happened. So in terms of what my ambition for the book is, I've already achieved that, I've already won. And even though there's one part of me that does mind what happens, most of me now doesn't mind what happens. I'm interested to find out.

MBS ([09:46](#)):

Any last words, Michael, says Michael interviewing Michael. I don't think so. Just thank you again to say thank you for the support. Word of mouth really does help. It's like a podcast. People saying, read this book, people saying, listen to this podcast, that's the way word spreads. That's the way reputation slowly builds. So if you're so inclined buying a copy of the book would be wonderful.



You're so inclined giving it a review, sharing it on social media, mentioning it to a friend. That's all wonderful, but regardless, you're awesome, and you're doing great.