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

2022 is on the horizon. I'm heads down worrying about a book launch. It's coming soon, How To Begin launches January the 11. If you're so kind enough to pre-order, thank you. Howtobegin.com is where you can find the bonuses and the like.

MBS ([00:16](#)):

But so that I can take a break and be focused on the book launch and the team can take a break and celebrate the holidays we're releasing episodes from the vault. I've got an Australian for you, Roman Krznaric. I bet his surname is mispronounced almost as often as Bungay Stanier's.



MBS ([00:32](#)):

Look, Roman's written a number of books that I love. His latest is *The Good Ancestor*, which is about how do we behave in a way that serves not our children, not our children's children, but generations after that. So such an important question to be asking. And I love Roman because he is a philosopher, but somebody I can understand, somebody I can talk to. And I thought the pages he chose to read were fascinating. He's reading from John McPhee's *Basin and Range*.

MBS ([01:04](#)):

What is empathy? You probably know the standard definition; understand how others feel, be compassionate towards them, walk in their shoes. And this works well enough for those in our lives right now, but how do you practice empathy across time and space?

MBS ([01:26](#)):

Welcome to *Two Pages with MBS*, the podcast where brilliant people read the best two pages from a favorite book. I'm Michael Bungay Stanier, the eponymous MBS, and today's guest, Roman Krznaric, is a philosopher in the very best sense of the word, a lover of ideas. His books have ranged from how to *carpe diem*, seize the day, how to find fulfilling work, and yes, one on empathy. But Roman's new book, *The Good Ancestor*, addresses something that that book on empathy left out, how to step into someone else's shoes across time. And there's a reason the time paradigm didn't make it into that empathy book.

Roman ([02:06](#)):

I almost found it too difficult, but the question would never leave me in all the years after I wrote that book. And so, *The Good Ancestor* began as a quest to try and think about and explore how could we try and imagine the lives of the



billions upon billions of people who we know will inhabit the future? And they have no say in our current system and they can't throw themselves in front of the King's horse, like a suffragist, or they can't block an Alabama bridge like a civil rights protest, so we need to find ways of bringing their voices, their lives into our choices that we make today.

MBS ([02:45](#)):

That's the tough part about empathy. It's difficult to imagine what our great great grandchildren will face or how they'll feel when we're gone. But to understand it better, perhaps you can change the perspective on what our own ancestor did to put us where we are today.

Roman ([03:02](#)):

It never once occurred to me that we disenfranchise those future generations in the same way or a similar way in some ways that we've systematically disenfranchised people of color or women throughout history. And of course, that continues. So once you see it, or once I saw it, I couldn't unsee it.

MBS ([03:19](#)):

And how much will the core of the human race change really between now and two generations into the future? Will we not have the same set of desires, sustenance, safety, shelter, belonging? Some people might be optimistic and others pessimistic about what's to come. And I asked Roman which one he was.

Roman ([03:42](#)):

I'm neither optimistic nor pessimistic, because I try to avoid those words, because I think of optimism as a kind of happy glass half full kind of concept where you're feeling good about the world in spite of the evidence. I would rather use the word hope, which is about recognizing that the thing that you care about might be a difficult thing to achieve, but you are committed to the values, you're committed to the goal or to the outcome in some way.



MBS ([04:13](#)):

Now, Roman mentioned that empathy across time was a question that had stuck in his brain after writing *Empathy*, but there was one moment in particular that spurred him to write his new book, *The Good Ancestor*.

Roman ([04:26](#)):

I was actually on this amazing workshop out in the English countryside some years ago, and I was standing on a hillside in the Southwest of England in a big field with a bunch of people. And it was a workshop all about time, how to extend our time horizons.

Roman ([04:42](#)):

And what we had to do was, in this field, we had to close our eyes and imagine someone from our lives, a young person from our lives who we really care about. It could have been a nephew or niece or child or grandchild. I chose my daughter who was then 10 years old. And then, with our eyes shut, we had to take one step forward and imagine them 30 years in the future and think about what their lives were like, their suffering, their joys and so on.

Roman ([05:08](#)):

And then, we had to take a final step and imagine them when they're 90 years old, at their 90th birthday party, surrounded by family and friends and loved ones. We were asked to look out the window, get a sense of what kind of world it was out there. And then, we were told to imagine that this 90-year-old is about to make their birthday speech. But instead of doing that, suddenly, they see a photo of you, their departed ancestor, on the mantle piece and decide instead to tell the gathered room about the legacy you left them and their world.



Roman ([05:39](#)):

And we had to write that down, do a piece of automatic writing for a few minutes, about the kind of speech they gave, the speech my 90-year-old daughter gave about me, their dead father. And it made my hair stand on end. It still does, as I'm telling you this now. And it was a way of-

MBS ([05:56](#)):

It makes my hair stand on end and I don't even know what you wrote. I can feel the impact of that.

Roman ([06:01](#)):

And I suddenly thought after that, my God, my daughter could easily be alive in the year 2100. She'll be 92 then. And if she has grandchildren, they could be alive towards the end of the 22nd century. Now, I love science fiction books, but I realized that that future isn't science fiction. It's an intimate family fact. That future became so real for me. And that was, I think, one of the key moments where I thought, okay, I'm going to try and unpack this knotty subject of long-term thinking.

MBS ([06:34](#)):

Well, I know the book and the pages you've selected to read are connected to that as well. So why don't you tell us about what you're going to read from?

Roman ([06:43](#)):

Yeah, I'm going to read a couple of pages from a beautiful and profound book by the U.S. writer John McPhee called Basin and Range. And it's really a book about geology, but it's incredibly poetic. And it's about deep time. He's the guy who invented the concept of deep time, the idea that humankind is just an eye blink in the cosmic story. And my two pages are just a couple of the, I think, one of the key points in the book where he tries to convey that very difficult idea.



MBS ([07:15](#)):

Brilliant. So here we go. Roman Krznaric, reading from Basin and Range by John McPhee. This book is about 30 years old. So over to you, Roman.

Roman ([07:27](#)):

David Brower, the founder of Friends of the Earth and emeritus hero of the Sierra Club, has tirelessly traveled the United States for 30 years, delivering what he himself refers to as the sermon. And sooner or later, in every talk he invites his listeners to consider the six days of Genesis as a figure of speech for what has in fact been four and a half billion years.

Roman ([07:50](#)):

In this adjustment, a day equals something like 750 million years, and thus, all day Monday and until Tuesday noon, creation was busy getting the Earth going. Life began Tuesday noon and the beautiful organic wholeness of it developed over the next four days. At 4:00 PM, Saturday, the big reptiles came on. Five hours later when the redwoods appeared, there were no more big reptiles. At three minutes before midnight, man appeared. At one fourth of a second before midnight, Christ arrived. At one 40th of a second before midnight, the Industrial Revolution began.

Roman ([08:25](#)):

We are surrounded with people who think that what we've been doing for that one 40th of a second can go on indefinitely. They're considered normal, but they are stark raving mad. Brower holds up a photograph of the world, blue, green and swirling white. "This is the sudden insight from Apollo," he says. "There it is. That's all. We see through the eyes of the astronauts how fragile our life really is." Brower has computed that we are driving through the Earth's resources at a rate comparable to a man's driving an automobile 128 miles an hour, and he says that we are accelerating.



Roman ([09:01](#)):

In like manner, geologists will sometimes use the calendar year as a unit to represent the timescale. And in such terms, the Precambrian runs from New Year's Day into well after Halloween. Dinosaurs appear in the middle of December and are gone the day after Christmas. The last ice sheet melts on December the 31st at one minute before midnight and the Roman Empire lasts five seconds.

Roman ([09:23](#)):

With your arms spread wide again to represent all time on Earth, look at one hand and it's line of life. The Cambrian begins in the wrist and the Permian extinction is the outer end of the palm. All of the Cenozoic is in a fingerprint, and a single stroke with a medium grain nail file you could eradicate human history.

Roman ([09:42](#)):

Geologists live with a geologic scale. Individually, they may or may not be alarmed by the rate of exploitation of the things they discover, but like the environmentalists, they use these repetitive analogies to place the human record in perspective, to see the age of reflection the last few thousand years as a small bright sparkle at the end of time.

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

That is mind blowing, isn't it?

Roman ([10:11](#)):

It requires a big deep breath through time. Yeah.



MBS ([10:17](#)):

I remember, Roman, the first time I came across an explanation like that. I think it was in Bill Bryson's book, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*.

Roman ([10:25](#)):

Yeah.

MBS ([10:26](#)):

But I think he does the same explanation about, stretch your arms out and you can eradicate human life with a nail file. And I just remember my brain melting as I read that. What struck you when you read this piece? What really got to the heart of it for you?

Roman ([10:40](#)):

I think it was a recognition that to understand the fact that humankind is just an eye blink in the cosmic story requires metaphor. We can't easily grasp that kind of scale. It's not the scale on which, say, a human life is. And I've been staring at geologic tables like in that Bill Bryson book, in fact, that's pointing out when the Jurassic is and the Cenozoic and so on. And those tables do nothing for me. But John McPhee, by talking about these metaphors, particularly the idea that the nail file can eradicate human history, just one little stroke, that really opened my eyes or gave me a kind of a visceral feeling of time.

Roman ([11:25](#)):

And I think it's important, I mean, obviously for so many reasons, but what it led me to think about was about our need to have humility in respect to time. The fact that not just that we are an eye blink in the cosmic story that goes back 13.8 billion years to the beginning of the universe, or five billion years to the end of the sun, but the fact that in such a short period, just a couple of hundred years, that one 40th of a second as Brower would point out, we have wrought such



destruction through our environmental damage and our dangerous technologies.

Roman ([12:04](#)):

And who are we to break the great chain of life with our consumer culture and crazy businesses, and ladder climbing politics and throw away consumerism, whatever it is? Who are we to do that? That is a failure to get in touch with those longer cycles of time, and that I think is what's conveyed so profoundly by that passage.

MBS ([12:32](#)):

When I read that, I'm kind of moved by the metaphor of the reading, but I'm also kind of moved by the anger in your voice just then, as you talk about the who are we to wreak this havoc? I'm wondering what you do with that anger. Now, having written this great book, which is eloquent and metaphorical and a call to action, how are you channeling your own anger and frustration, if those are the right words, around this?

Roman ([13:03](#)):

That's really interesting, actually, because I hadn't really thought about myself as angry, but I am angry about it. I look at the newspapers and I'm angry at our pathological short-termism. And I think anger has always had a place in social transformation. The anger of the suffragists, the anger of people trying to stop oil pipelines, and so on. And that's real, but the anger of Black Lives Matter. But then, the question is how do you turn that into something constructive?

Roman ([13:31](#)):

And I think, certainly for me in my journey and thinking about time, something that really helped me was a question, which I encountered, in fact, through The Long Now Foundation, where you've been a member even longer than I have. And that was a question asked by the great immunologist, Jonas Salk, who in



the 1950s, of course, developed the first polio vaccine. But in 1977, he wrote a speech, which was titled, Are We Being Good Ancestors?

Roman ([13:59](#)):

And he believed that that was the great question of our time. That if we were going to deal with our destruction of the living world and the risks we were imposing on future generations through nuclear waste and weapons and so on, then we would need to expand our time horizons. And instead of thinking on a scale of seconds, minutes and hours, we'd have to think on a scale of decades, centuries and millennia. We need to think about how are we going to be judged by those generations to come?

Roman ([14:28](#)):

So when I was thinking about my daughter turning 90, there was a kind of confluence between that, my interest in deep time, and Jonas Salk's question about, are we being good ancestors, which is a positive question, right? What can I do to be remembered well? And I think that, I would say, is how I channel my anger. And I think it's very good that you pointed that out, because I think, yeah, I am kind of angry about it.

MBS ([14:51](#)):

I mean, I'm not sure how long the book's been out, but it must have been out for a while, because I've seen you talking in all sorts of interesting places about it. I suspect you're speaking to a lot of people who are violently agreeing with you and going, "Preach, brother." What's the challenge in taking this call to arms, be a good ancestor, to the broader world? How do we take it to a world where, as you said, we've got short-term politicians, we've got businesses run on a quarterly basis. We've got all sorts of systems that aren't thinking 10 years ahead, yet alone 10,000 years ahead, like The Long Now Foundation would have us do. What's the challenge or challenges do you see in helping this message land?



Roman ([15:38](#)):

One of the things I've really enjoyed about this book coming out, it's been out for about six months now, is exactly those more difficult conversations with people often in power, in business or in politics, who are caught in short-term cycles. Often, they don't want to be. Not every politician just wants to respond to the latest tweet, but they feel they often have to, even if they went into politics with loftier ideals. And it can be the same with CEOs. They are caught by shareholder pressures, investor pressures, and so on to be short-term.

Roman ([16:08](#)):

And so, I've really enjoyed those conversations because they are difficult. And one of the things I've found, for example, talking to British members of Parliament, whether they are left, center or right wing, I've thought to myself, how do I get this message across about long-termism? And the way I've tended to do it is to talk exactly about legacies, the legacies of young people in our lives we might care about. What kind of world do we want to leave them? And those politicians might have different visions about how to get to the future, but they all get that idea of wanting to leave a legacy when they're gone.

Roman ([16:40](#)):

And I was recently doing an event talking to, it was a sort of a very closed event with top CEOs from some of the world's biggest energy companies. And they were there to talk about shifting to renewables and things like that. And I think one of the things, well, there are two things that I felt worked in that conversation I had with them. One was talking about legacies, as I've just been saying, and the other was talking about the struggle, the difficulty of doing this in practice.



Roman ([17:08](#)):

And one of the examples I was giving them was a Danish, the former Danish state oil and gas company called Dong, D-O-N-G. And back in about 2008, 2009, they decided that they were going to embark on what they call the 85-15 plan. So to switch from 85% fossil fuel production, 15% renewable and switch that around. And they gave themselves a target that that would take 30 years, sometimes what's called cathedral thinking. So you embark on a project that you may never see finished in your own lifetime, your own career in that case. So they had 30 years to do this, but they actually achieved it within 10 years. And in 2017, they changed their name from Dong to Orsted, and they are now the world's biggest supplier of offshore wind technology. They control 30% of the market. They've been very successful.

MBS ([17:59](#)):

Amazing.

Roman ([18:00](#)):

Yeah, it is amazing, but the thing in order to do that, that 10 year struggle, they did it faster than expected, but there was all sorts of arguments, problems with government. They sacked the CEO. It was really tough, but they did it. And I found that admirable. And I think that landed with these CEOs, actually. It's a struggle, but look, if you care about this, if you want to do it, you can do it. Human beings, we can think beyond the quarter report and the next shareholder report.

MBS ([18:27](#)):

I mean, there's lots of stories in your book of just that, cathedral thinking, where people are planning and thinking out for an extended period of time. Do you notice, or in your research or through the conversations you've been having, do you have a sense of the characteristics of the type of people who will take up



this baton, as opposed to the ones who will nod and agree and make some small incremental changes, but not really face into the challenges of that most difficult strategic question. If we're going to say no to this, what must we say yes to, and wrestle with the consequences of that? Partly, I'm curious, Roman, because I want to know how to grow it in myself and I want to know how to recognize it in others, so I can seek to amplify the courage and the focus in others.

Roman ([19:21](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting. Actually, when I first embarked on this journey into thinking about how can we be good ancestors, my slight worry was that this was a thing for the middle-class white privileged people in the world. That if you've got security, let's say financial job security of a certain kind, that gives you a freedom to start thinking beyond the here and now, planning long-term.

Roman ([19:40](#)):

But actually, the more I looked into it, the more I realized was that there was not a direct correlation between long-term thinking and, say, socioeconomic position. That in fact, some of the wealthiest people that I came across in my research were the ones who had the most limited sense of long-term thinking. There might be a British aristocrat, whose only way of thinking long-term is thinking, all right, I want to pass my big manor house onto my kids or my wealth, but I don't really care about anything else.

Roman ([20:07](#)):

Whereas, I then was discovering, for example, in many indigenous cultures, so for example, in North America, Haudenosaunee people, the Kota people, First Nations people in Canada, they're the ones who we're talking about. For example, seventh generation decision-making, making decisions based on impacts many generations ahead, even though they were not socio-economically privileged at all. Or equally in Aotearoa, New Zealand, Maori



culture. There's this beautiful concept of whakapapa, spelled with a W-H, but pronounced with an F. Whakapapa, which is their idea of lineage, that either we're all in a long-

MBS ([20:39](#)):

You've said that line before, I know, haven't you?

Roman ([20:41](#)):

I have said that one before.

MBS ([20:43](#)):

Sorry, I was just laughing at your, I need little subtitles going, this is how you spell this word. I'm not actually cursing on the podcast. But sorry, I took you off your stride.

Roman ([20:53](#)):

That's all right. So yeah, whakapapa is the idea that we're on in a long chain of life that goes far into the past, long into the future. And the light happens to shine here and now, and we need to widen it out. And again, the Maori peoples of New Zealand are not the wealthiest people in society, quite the opposite.

Roman ([21:10](#)):

And then I was thinking, in fact, this only just occurred to me the other day, that if you think about a refugee in a boat, crossing the Mediterranean, holding their child in their arms, they are thinking about the future. They're risking everything for a different outcome some years down the line, decades down the line. So of course, on one level, there's going to be 450 million refugees in the world by 2050, probably. And they are just trying to put food on the table like my dad was when he was a refugee coming from Poland to Australia after the second World War, living in the now.



Roman ([21:41](#)):

So I think on that level, that, that leaves us sort of an open question, an open possibility for us all to think beyond the here and now. But of course, ultimately, this is something about a capacity for self-reflection. It's about an existential recognition of that question of, are we being good ancestors? How do I practice in a daily basis? And the thing about human beings is we're really good at habits, as you've written about so much, about the idea of habits. We can change our habits.

Roman ([22:16](#)):

And just like Steve Jobs apparently asked himself every morning, if this was the last day of my life, would I want to do today what I'm about to do? A kind of carpe diem mantra. You could equally say to yourself every morning or every night, how can I be a good ancestor today? How have I been a good ancestor today? And if you start doing that regularly, it just becomes part of who you are. So when you go to the supermarket and you're picking up the green beans from Kenya that you know have flown on an airplane and chalked up lots of carbon on the way, you can think to yourself, Hmm, maybe I'll make a different decision here. I mean, this is John Paul Sartre, right? It's saying we have agency and most human beings do to some extent.

MBS ([23:01](#)):

I'm not sure if you've read a book by Jacqueline Novogratz, Manifesto for a Moral Revolution. You might enjoy it. She is the CEO of Acumen, which is, I think, I call it a venture capitalist firm who only invest in organizations that are trying to make the world better. It's like a nonprofit venture capitalist. And her book, and she has a TED Talk connected to it as well, she says, the question to ask is what if I gave more to the world than I took? And to imagine that being a call to arms for everybody, if I could give more to the world than I took, on a



daily and a weekly and a yearly basis, that's going to leave the world in a better place. And I think that's really powerful.

MBS ([23:48](#)):

I mean, in the reading, you talk about we're accelerating, we're in a car at 128 miles an hour. And I'm guessing there's a threshold, which is as soon as you go over a certain speed limit, you're now taking more than you're giving. But if you can throttle it back and give more to the world than you take, then that feels like it then speaks to one, two, seven generations.

Roman ([24:09](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I love that idea actually, because it also reminds me of, many cultures have this idea. I want to leave the world better than what I received. And it links to the idea of the golden rule. Almost every religion and ethical system has some sense of do unto others as you have them do unto you. But let's think about that through time, as well as space. Let's do unto future generations how we'd want past generations to have treated us.

Roman ([24:32](#)):

And that's a complex thing in a way, because of course, past generations have treated us well and badly, in some sense. We've inherited positive things from the past, like medical discoveries, like from Jonas Salk, we still benefit from, but we're also the inheritors of colonial and slavery era racism, or we're inheritors of an economic system which is addicted to fossil fuels and endless growth that we've now got to transform.

Roman ([24:57](#)):

And as you say, with that foot on the accelerator, we know we are pushing beyond the safe thresholds of planetary boundaries, whether it's CO2 emissions via diversity loss, and we're using 1.6 planet Earths each year with our global footprint. And once COVID ends, it's going to pop back up even higher. And



once you grasp that sense of deep time, you can't hold onto that idea of constant growth, whether it's for your own business or for the economy that you're part of on a national level. We know that nothing in nature grows forever, whether it is an Amazon forest or your children's feet. Who are we to think that we can buck that law of nature and just keep on expanding, expanding, expanding?

MBS ([25:53](#)):

Yeah. Roman, you've talked a few times and acknowledged and referenced that, is this a way of thinking that becomes a luxury of white privilege? And you've also referenced those abilities to think long-term and not just because you've got a bit of time and money on your hands. You've seen that everywhere. I am curious to know if you've been in conversations with people who are fighting those causes that feel most urgent and most now, North America, the U.S. in particular, racism and Black Lives Matter, gender inequality. I think they just had Fair Pay Day here in Australia, and it's shifted, but it's still March sometime. In effect, it's only on the, whatever, the 15th of March that women effectively start getting paid. They're still being paid 75 cents to the dollar that the man's earning.

MBS ([26:55](#)):

When you've been in conversations with people who are fighting for racial equality, gender equality, things that feel that, of course, they have a term implication, but the pain is so apparent right now, how do they react to the ideas and the concepts in your book?

Roman ([27:16](#)):

Yeah. In fact, when the book first came out, I was concerned, in fact, about how people might respond, for example, in the racial justice movement. But actually, I found a confluence of thought and action around that, because once I started talking to people who are, say, racial justice activists and started talking to them



about time, where we found the connection was their absolutely very clear recognition that, for example, racial injustice is an intergenerational problem. It is so deeply embedded, for example, in policing institutions, in Hollywood culture, whatever. It gets passed on, these inequalities get passed on from generation to generation. And this goes the same for wealth inequality as well. And it goes beyond your own lifetime.

Roman ([28:02](#)):

And I found that a lot of activists are trying to, they're doing things not just for their own lives, but for their children, their grandchildren, whatever. And there's a wonderful book written by Layla F. Saad called *Me and White Supremacy*, and it's about racial justice. And on the first page, she talks about being a good ancestor in the same way that I do, coming from a very different experience as a woman of color, who's experienced all sorts of discrimination throughout her life. But there was a connection there.

Roman ([28:31](#)):

And someone, actually, I did get a bit of pushback from one ... I sent a copy of the manuscript of the book before it came out to a friend of mine who is the head of one of the world's biggest NGOs that deals with children's rights. And he was saying, "Look, I don't like what you're writing here, because there are 150 million children right now dying from malnutrition and you're telling me to think a hundred years from now, or a thousand years from now."

Roman ([28:56](#)):

And so, we had this quite long discussion about this, but actually, we realized that there was much more common ground than we thought. Because I was first to admit, saying of course, there is a moral dilemma there. We've got obligations now. And part of what I was saying was, look, the point is not to say we need to favor the children of a hundred years from now more than those today. It's just about to bring their voices into the room. It's about to not ignore



them. It's about to acknowledge them, but also to recognize there are huge overlaps.

Roman ([29:27](#)):

And in fact, his organization, after the book came out, came out with a report quoting my book, saying that, look, investment in children is a long-term thing. Because if a government properly invests in children's education, the results don't come 20 or 30 years down the line, even if you're just thinking about tax revenues, not even not thinking about the wellbeing of the children or their creativity and so on. So we're all trying to escape the here and now in some form. It's not necessarily a priority for everybody, but it's part of the conversation we need to have.

MBS ([30:02](#)):

Let me finish with this question, which I'm discovering is the question I love to finish the conversation on. What needs to be said in this conversation, Roman, that hasn't yet been said, do you think?

Roman ([30:15](#)):

Ooh, that's a very interesting question. I think it has to do with what the ancient Greeks called a telos, or an ultimate goal or objective. Because you can talk as much as you like about leaving the world in a better place and being a good ancestor, but if your ultimate goal is not aligned with that, then you're not going to get very far. And ultimately, I think the goal for us as a society, whatever you're doing, whether you are an educator or an entrepreneur, whoever you are, I think if you're going to choose a goal, I think a good one is not to follow Elon Musk and say, let's all escape to Mars and that's the great goal of our species.

Roman ([30:58](#)):

I'm talking about a goal beyond yourself, what Viktor Frankl, the essential psychotherapist called it, a concrete assignment. I think it's to live within the



boundaries of the one planet we know that sustains life. And we can ask ourselves how have other species survived for 10,000 generations or more when they can't literally meet those future generations? Well, it's by taking care of the place that will take care of their offspring, by living within the boundaries, by not fouling the nest. That must be our goal if we're really serious about the long-term.

Roman ([31:27](#)):

And so, in a funny way, to think long-term is to care about place as much as time. It's about to fall in love with rivers and mountains and ice streams and savannas, and that kind of stuff. So if you have that goal in mind, you can always ask yourself, is what I'm doing aligned with that loadstar, that ultimate telos of taking care of the place that will take care of our offspring. That's what we haven't spoken about, but that I think is a fair place to end.

MBS ([32:04](#)):

Not optimistic, not pessimistic, but hopeful. That's an interesting word. In the audio book version of *The Advice Trap*, I added additional voices in after each chapter. I just invited who people to reflect on each chapter of the book. And one of them was an Australian writer and thinker, Tyson Yunkaporta. He's the author of possibly my favorite book of 2020, *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Knowledge Will Save the World*. And Tyson said, "We have to kill hope." That's a pretty big contrast to what Roman was saying. But for Tyson, hope can get in the way of action. Now, honestly, I would love to hear Roman and Tyson debate the value and the nature of hope, because they're both brilliant men that have a great conversation.

MBS ([32:56](#)):

But, however the debate pans out, I think they would all agree, and I agree, that action's required. We can't wait. We need to practice being a good ancestor right now. If you want to find more about Roman and his work, the best place to go is



RomanKrznic.com. I know that name sounds complicated, but it's actually not. You spell it like you hear it. So R-O-M-A-N, K-R-Zed, Z, depending on where you're listening, N-A-R-I-C. RomanKrznic.com. And I'm going to suggest another website, literally a partner website. It's a book that's quoted in The Good Ancestor book called Donut Economics. And the author of that is actually Roman's partner. You can find out more about Tate's book at donuteconomics.org.

MBS ([33:52](#)):

Of course, thank you for listening to Two Pages with MBS. If you like the conversations, and you probably do if you're listening to this part of the podcast, I hope you'll consider joining our free community. It's called the Duke Humphrey's. It's named after my favorite library at Oxford, when I was studying at Oxford University. It was the place where the coolest, rarest, most valuable, most hard to find, yet full of gems book were kept. And in my little Duke Humphrey's, there's a free membership site. You'll find transcripts and unreleased episodes and some good downloads, lots of good stuff there. And you'll find it at mbs.works, that's my website, slash podcast.

MBS ([34:33](#)):

And this podcast grows best with graciously, most joyfully by word of mouth. So if my conversation with Roman has struck a chord with you, please think of one other person in your life who'd also be intrigued about long-term thinking, commitment to the bigger game, how to show up as a good ancestor in your world, and let them know about the episode. I'm sure they'd be thrilled to dig into Roman's work. And of course, more subscribers mean I get to invite cool people. I work some leveraged to have great guests on the show, and I certainly win and I hope you win too if we're talking to brilliant people.



MBS ([35:07](#)):

And if you're so moved, of course, a rating and a review on your favorite podcast app is fantastic and much appreciated. You're awesome and you're doing great.