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

I would never claim to be a historian. But, as a reader and as somebody who's just been immersed in business for 30 years, to his own surprise, I have been interested. I've glanced sideways at the way institutions have become part of our world. That's a central part of our world. You could start with medieval guilds, and Florence, and in London, the collective power of craftsman, to in the 1600s, these nationally funded colonizing behemoth, like the Hudson Bay Company in Canada or the East India Company in India. And then, the ebbing and flowing of companies growing, becoming monopolies, breaking up, then merging and growing again. Organizations and institutions continue to be reimagined, rethought of, but certainly in my lifetime have just been a central part of what it means to live a life. And of course, you have your institutions and then you have within all of them, whether that's nonprofit, or government, or



for-profit, the individual is just trying to do their best to bring out their best in others and doing work that matters.

MBS ([01:11](#)):

Now, I've been an employee in a small company in a medium to big size company. And of course, have started a couple of companies of my own. So, I've really seen and felt the paradox, how these institutions are totally shaped by the people within them, and yet are also a completely separate entity from the people within them. So, what does it mean to be part of an organization and specifically to be a manager? Peter Drucker is the name most synonymous with asking this question through his lifetime. And I do wonder how he would answer it now in these turbulent times.

MBS ([01:53](#)):

Welcome to 2 Pages with MBS, the podcast where brilliant people read the best 2 pages from a favorite book, a book that has moved them, a book that has shaped them. I mentioned Peter Drucker, and Zach first is the executive director of the Drucker Institute. An institution founded to carry on Drucker's work and to help people manage with courage. That's a great line. That's their tagline. And I love that. Now, before Zach joined the institute, he was the type who, and these are his words, would dutifully follow the standards and guide poses of the institution to which he belonged, whether that's education, or whether that's the first steps of his early career. But then, at a certain point, things changed. He stopped being a follower.

Zach ([02:40](#)):

Every institution has its beginnings in the messy, random humanity of the group of people who created it. And, it was once I was charged with being one of those creators, with conceiving of a culture, with conceiving of values, and of ways to maintain that culture and those values, that I began to understand just how complex and in many ways uncertain, and shall we say, adventurous, every



institution really is. And, that led me into some graduate study of organizational behavior and leadership, where I discovered that indeed, institutions are wild places with many competing forces. And they are in fact, just as human as the humans who populate them.

MBS ([03:33](#)):

This paints a bit of a different image of our tearing institutions, doesn't it? These 14 500 companies, or nonprofits, or Ivy league schools, or maybe especially government. These institutions are one of the most powerful forces in society today. And, they're not a monolith. They're messy, and they're complicated, and they're contradictory, and they're confusing. Now, here's the thing, the Drucker Institute, which Zach leads, is an institution as well. So, you might wonder how self-aware its creators were about this paradox.

Zach ([04:08](#)):

We are not on the usual academic program of a big name sync tank that gets a large endowment, that pays out enough money every year that you can cover your costs, hold a couple conferences, write a few white papers, pat yourself on back, ad nauseum, rather Peter and Doris gave to Claremont Graduate University, where we're based here in Southern California, the gift of an institution that would bear his name, that would have the right to create products and services based on his name and his work, but they did not leave it a dime of endowment.

MBS ([04:46](#)):

So, Peter Drucker and his wife set up their own institution and in a pretty interesting way, which Zach lays out.

Zach ([04:52](#)):

We were as a result, a social enterprise before that name was popular. And what that effectively means as I think about it... If Drucker were here today to tell us,



we are permitted to exist, as long as we can go forth and be valuable in the world. And, the moment that we cease to be valuable in the world, we no longer need to exist.

MBS ([05:17](#)):

Like Zach painting this picture of the wildness of institutions, and the joys, and the miseries that come with it. And one of the miseries that we've been experiencing lately, and I've become I guess, a little more sensitive to, is it just how institutions, particularly large institutions, tend to dehumanize people? And I ask Zach, does that get him down?

Zach ([05:40](#)):

Absolutely. I think, I wouldn't be paying attention if I didn't. Tend to asking, if you ever get downhearted about people?

MBS ([05:52](#)):

Of course, right.

Zach ([05:55](#)):

People can inspire, and people can hurt, and people can spark our curiosity and makes us feel defensive and angry. And, it is in the nature of a human life to find the ability to connect and live through all of those experiences, and organizations are no different. They are just as mysterious and complicated as the people who populate them. And there are certainly times when I have been odd and inspired by what organizations we work with have achieved, the way they've taken maybe something that I was attempting to teach them and turned it into so much more, and done incredible things for their customers or their society in which they operate.



Zach ([06:42](#)):

And there are also times when it feels like the biblical proverb of casting pearls before swine. And you feel like, "How is it possible that these people who run this organization are missing this? And I am pouring my work and my energy into trying to make a difference here and getting nowhere." And, it can be devastating and exhausting. And so, that is, I think in many ways, no different than what anyone who works with other people, human institutions faces all the time. One has to be aware of that, getting into this work.

MBS ([07:17](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I'm really noticing the human centeredness of your answers, which is like, "It's the people. And, they're glorious, and they're messy, and they're confusing." And all of that is true. I've been pondering this, just you can work with all these people, and as soon as you meet people in organizations, you go, "I'm optimistic." But, my pessimism almost comes from the structure of organizations. And, are people able to thrive within structures that feel dated and sustain power in a way that may not allow for full human flourishing?

Zach ([08:09](#)):

It's extremely difficult. One of the core insights that Drucker built on throughout his career was the rising decade after decade of large institutions for providing the opportunities that people require for a sense of having a meaningful life.

MBS ([08:28](#)):

Right.

Zach ([08:30](#)):

In this day and age, it's quite difficult to achieve that sense of contribution if you are operating completely alone. And, I think it is one of the great social challenges of our time is to deconstruct, I think, the sense that this is entirely an individual problem, a matter of personal virtue. As we can see, there's a history



with some very large social issues that, America particularly, and much of the world has been wrestling with for the last 50 years around this basic tension, is the use of tobacco, is smoking a question of individual virtue or of a larger social set of policies, taxes, interventions as education? It turns out, the latter play is a great deal of importance in the equation. We look at global warming, climate change, is this simply a matter of bring recyclable bags to the grocery store every time we go shopping. No, in fact-

MBS ([09:33](#)):

Funnily.

Zach ([09:34](#)):

... Right. In fact, if everybody did that every day, we'd make barely a dent in the problem, which turns out to be in many ways structural and economic, as Drucker would be quick to note, a tremendous amount of economic opportunity embedded in the solution. That was part of his orientation toward business as really an agent benefit, if run effectively. So the same thing applies at the individual level. We look at people who are being ground down by outmoded and inhumane institutional structures, that is largely not something that they can rectify on their own.

MBS ([10:12](#)):

Right.

Zach ([10:12](#)):

If you are barely making a living, receiving public assistance, as you work full-time at your minimum wage retail job.

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

Yeah.



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

There is very little as an individual that you can do. One of the surest signs of institutions responsibility to be part of the solution to this problem is the decimation of corporate spending on training over the last 40 years, which has dwindled now to the point where here in the U.S., the training that employees receive from large organizations is barely more than the minimum required for compliance.

MBS ([10:52](#)):

Right.

Zach ([10:52](#)):

There is no such thing anymore as a career trajectory and education provided by your employer.

MBS ([10:58](#)):

Right.

Zach ([10:59](#)):

The social contract has really broken down between employers and employees in many cases.

MBS ([11:03](#)):

Yes.

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

It means of course, the institutions that do well shine all the brighter. But, those are the examples from which we need to learn, because the solution's not available at the individual level.



MBS ([11:13](#)):

Yeah. That's interesting. It reminds me of that quote, somebody saying, "Look, what if I spend all this money training this person and they leave?" And they're like, "What if you don't spend that money and they stay." And I love that twist on it.

Zach ([11:27](#)):

Exactly. Well, of course, the question is the lie to the mindset, because it would be absurd on its face to say, "Well, what if I spend all this money on this R&D initiative and the product doesn't work out?" People would say, "Well, that's just business."

MBS ([11:41](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([11:42](#)):

But you do a 100 times that cycle, because one of them is going to be everything you need. Well, the same is true of your people.

MBS ([11:48](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([11:48](#)):

Some come, some will go. But if you invest in them, and help them grow, and develop a sense of loyalty, they will be valuable assets, but just don't show in your balance sheet, which is part of the problem.

MBS ([12:00](#)):

Let's move from the slightly dark place that I've taken the conversation. And I apologize, but it's such a big thing that we're resting with. And let me ask you about which book you've chosen to read for us.



Zach ([12:12](#)):

So I have chosen Peter Drucker's big book, so to speak, called *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. And in particular, the preface to the first edition.

MBS ([12:23](#)):

Brilliant book.

Zach ([12:24](#)):

This was first released in 1974. There are a couple of things to note about the book itself. The first is, this book was published when Drucker was 65 years old. It's a striking thing, I think in this day and age, to ponder what it might mean to have an author's most iconic works published well into the second half of life.

MBS ([12:53](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Zach ([12:54](#)):

And in fact, two thirds of the books he wrote in his career, his 39 books, came after the age of 65. So, the ideas that Drucker was working out, in some cases, really took decades to bring together. And, this book captures them. A former colleague of mine, calls it the physician's desk reference for managers, it's original addition, some 700 pages on just about every topic you could think of, if you're a person who's interested in general management. But I've chosen the preface to this book, because it is, I think, one of the least known aspects of Drucker's philosophy that he describes there. And yet, I think it is also the single most important idea he has.



MBS ([13:39](#)):

That's fantastic. What a brilliant setup. Well, Zach First, executive director of the Drucker Institute, reading from Peter Drucker's iconic book, *Management*. Over to you, Zach.

Zach ([13:56](#)):

"Preface: *The Alternative to Tyranny*. It is fashionable today to talk of a revolt against authority and to proclaim that everybody should 'do his own thing.' This, then, I have to admit, is a most unfashionable book. It does not talk about rights. It stresses responsibility. Its focus is not on doing one's own thing but on performance.

Zach ([14:20](#)):

Our society has become, within an incredibly short fifty years, a society of institutions. It has become a pluralist society in which every major social task has been impressed to large organizations - from producing economic goods and services to health care, from social security and welfare to education, from, the search for new knowledge to the protection of the natural environment.

Zach ([14:45](#)):

It is understandable that the sudden realization of this change in the crystal structure of society has evoked an angry response, 'Down with organization!' But it is the wrong response. The alternative to autonomous institutions that function and perform is not freedom. It is totalitarian tyranny.

Zach ([15:05](#)):

Our society is neither willing nor able to do without the services that only the institutions can provide. And the most vocal among our modern Luddites, the would-be institution wreckers, highly educated young people, are even less to do without the large organizations than the rest of us. For it is only in the large organizations that there exist the plentiful opportunities to make a living



through knowledge, to make a contribution through knowledge, and to achieve through knowledge.

Zach ([15:35](#)):

If the institutions of our pluralist society of institutions do not perform in responsible autonomy, we will not have individualism and a society in which there is a chance for people to fulfill themselves. We will instead impose upon ourselves complete regimentation in which no one will be allowed autonomy. We will have Stalinism rather than participatory democracy, let alone the joyful spontaneity of doing one's own thing.

Zach ([16:03](#)):

Tyranny is the only alternative to strong, performing autonomous institutions. Tyranny substitutes one absolute boss for the pluralism of competing institutions. It substitutes terror for responsibility. It does indeed do away with the institutions, but only by submerging all of them in the one all-embracing bureaucracy of apparat. It does produce goods in services, though only fitfully, wastefully, at a level, and at an enormous cost in suffering, humiliation, and frustration. To make our institutions perform responsibly, autonomously, and on a high level of achievement is thus the only safeguard of freedom and dignity in the pluralist society of institutions.

Zach ([16:52](#)):

But it is managers and management that make institutions perform. Performing, responsible management is the alternative to tyranny and our only protection against it,

Zach ([17:04](#)):

For management is the organ, the life-giving, acting, dynamic organ of the institution it manages. Without the institution, for example, the business enterprise, there would be no management. But without management, there



would also be only a mob rather than an institution. The institution, in turn, is itself an organ of society and exists only to contribute a needed result to society, the economy, and the individual. Organs, however, are never defined by what they do, let alone by how they do it. They are defined by their contribution."

Zach ([17:41](#)):

"This is a long book - though I dislike long books. And yet it is not a comprehensive book, but highly selective, a good many readers, I am sure, will complain that this or that important topic is not even mentioned; many more will undoubtedly criticize the author's decision stress one topic while playing down another."

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

"It was not my intention to include every problem any manager might conceivably have to face. But it was my intention to include those areas of concern with which all managers can expect a deal and in which all managers have to be literate regardless of their functional background, the mission and purpose of their institution, or the size of their organization. And this, then, meant a big book, since the manager's job is big, and the management tasks demanding."

MBS ([18:33](#)):

It's amazing. I mean, written in 1974 in a conversation around tyranny feels more relevant and more powerful than ever. And, I haven't heard it said like that, that the role of the manager is a [inaudible 00:39:40] against tyranny. It's a powerful statement. What is it about this passage? You said it's possibly his most important idea. How would you summarize the idea? And what's so important about it for you.



Zach ([19:02](#)):

Drucker's popularly known as the father of modern management. And when we look backward, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that, for him to have been the father of modern management, the discipline of modern management was not organized yet when he began writing and thinking about it. Which means that, he didn't come out of college as an eager undergraduate saying, "Oh, boy. I want to work on management." There was no real formal way to do that at that time. What drew Drucker to the topic of management was his youth in Austria and Germany during the 1920s and '30s. And, it was when in 1933 he was lecturing in a German university classroom and the national socialist party representative showed up in the back of the classroom to monitor what he was teaching and how he was teaching it, that he began to understand the connection between the breakdown in the management of German institutions and the turn toward tyranny in German society.

Zach ([20:05](#)):

He fled to London, ultimately, emigrated and naturalized the United States. And that was the core of what drove him to dedicate his life's work to management was society, was the people. And it was the role of institutions in protecting people from tyranny, which wreaked horrible damage globally during those decades. And, that I think is the largely invisible beating heart of his body of work, is that, running through everything he wrote was not a love of organizations per se, or a love of profit, or a love of growth, or of innovation. He saw all of those things, as he said, by analogy about organs, he wasn't much interested in what they did or how they did it, he was mostly interested in the contribution that they made.

MBS ([20:57](#)):

Right.



Zach ([20:57](#)):

And so, he built his work around understanding the individual contribution to the institution and the institution's contribution to society. Until you understand that, I think you haven't understood, both why Drucker did what he did, why his philosophy looks like it looks, and that the both thrilling and awful timelessness of his insights, which is that as you state, he could write in the 1970s about the 1930s and here in the 2020s we find equal relevance across each of those 40 to 50 year gaps.

MBS ([21:34](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Zach ([21:34](#)):

These are eternal questions in the society of organizations.

MBS ([21:39](#)):

You bring to mind, I think, Marcus Buckingham and the play to your strengths approach he has. And I just remember him talking a while back and going, "I've been banging on about this for 30 years. And, the percentage of people who feel more engaged at work now has gone up one half a percent over 30 years." It feels to me that there's a rise of tyranny in the world right now in populism and the like. If our institutions are the dike against the waters of tyranny, have our institutions failed? Are they actually up to this task?

Zach ([22:24](#)):

And of course, as Pogo said, "We've met the enemy and it's us." We are our institutions.

MBS ([22:31](#)):

Yeah.



Zach ([22:31](#)):

We get the institutions we deserve. Or that we've earned in any case. And, I would say in some respects, we can find really brilliant examples of institutions that are indeed up to the task. We can find many examples of institutions that are failing miserably.

MBS ([22:45](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([22:47](#)):

I think the single most important thing we can do at the individual level is to hold our institutions to the standards that we need. So, it's really easy. And I spend enough time on Twitter to know from personal experience, it's really easy to sit around and criticize institutions that are underperforming. That's fine as far as it goes, but what we need to also do is hold them to account for greater effectiveness. It's too easy, and in fact, too harmful to throw up our hands and say, "Our institutions are failing. Down them all." As Drucker said, "Tyranny is the next stop after that moment."

Zach ([23:28](#)):

So, we've got to hold them accountable. We've got to expect more. We have to be willing to make our own contributions to that. I feel for Marcus, I think many of us that are in any social change or human change work experience this from time to time, where you can look at the big numbers of the annual Edelman Trust Survey and see, "My gosh, they just seem to go down every year, no matter what we do."

MBS ([23:53](#)):

Right.



Zach ([23:53](#)):

And yet, business remains the leading sector of the economy in that global trust survey. There are things that are going well. We also, I think, would do well to take the very long view as Drucker often did. I was struck, I don't know whether it was by accident or by design, you used a version of a phrase that he used that I still love at the top of this interview, where he talked about the difference between surface turbulence and deep currents.

MBS ([24:23](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([24:24](#)):

And, Drucker said he was especially unconcerned with the surface turbulence of politics. He said, "It is really the deep currents that change society and that affect people." He often pointed to the early 20th century urbanization revolution, which he said was coming regardless of what politicians did. And it was one of the most economically successful and bloodless revolutions in American history, and in many other countries around the world. And, Drucker said toward the end of his life in the 90s, "This transition to a knowledge economy puts the world in for about 50 years of turbulence." Now he was looking over the long view of how social change happens. He would often analogize back to... He would say, "People are worried about the disruption of the printing press. Well, there's disruption of the internet. It's nothing compared to the disruption of the printing press." And he'd pull economic examples from 15th century Germany and all those-

MBS ([25:21](#)):

Right.



Zach ([25:22](#)):

... So when he said 50 years of turbulence, he was looking at patterns he had seen again and again through history. And when he used a word like turbulence, he didn't use it lightly. So we could say today, we are maybe globally about halfway through that period of turbulence-

MBS ([25:36](#)):

No.

Zach ([25:36](#)):

... That he forecast. And so, also there are moments when maybe, maybe Marcus feels the same. There are moments when I feel like those of us at the Drucker Institute and other institutions are a bit like the Irish monks in the middle ages. We're keeping the candles burning in the tower as the hordes bang at the door, trying to maintain the wisdom and the insight that we know will be needed the moment people can return to their understanding that we need performing institutions. And that management is actually a noble task. And, one of the most important in the modern economy. And when that moment comes and as it arrives bit by bit over the coming years, we need people who are ready to do the work. And sometimes, that means you were toiling away with little progress for some years before that moment arrives, unfortunately.

MBS ([26:39](#)):

Zach, one of Peter Drucker's most famous statements is around not doing things right, but doing the right things. I'm wondering how, as the leader of an institution, you decide what the right things are for your institution to focus on, because there must be a 1000 different ways that you could use the influence, and the name, and the learning of Peter Drucker to engage in the world. How do you decide what work to do?



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

Drucker left us with actually a number of different frameworks to use. And, I'll give you a couple of them, that I think are most helpful, that we use most often. Almost all of them begin with some version of being clear about what your mission is. "Why do we, as an organization exist, that is unique and valuable?" Our mission just comes straight from Peter Drucker's body of work, which is, strengthening organizations to strengthen society. That's why we do what we do. So the first thing we have to do is make sure we honor our mission.

Zach ([27:55](#)):

The second thing we have to do is be clear about who we aim to serve and the value we aim to provide. Some of that goes back to the start of our conversation about our need to ensure our own economic sustainability. But, it also means that, we don't want to be inadvertently out in the world doing things just because we think they're interesting. We need to do things that actually provide value to people who have a specific need that we can meet. We need to be clear about what our results are, how will we know whether or not our efforts have won anything for the people we serve? And, we need to, along the way, be mindful a couple of core principles.

Zach ([28:38](#)):

One of them, as Drucker said, is to build on islands of health and strength, be cautioned against the deficit mindset, that is unfortunately quite widespread.

MBS ([28:50](#)):

Right.

Zach ([28:50](#)):

And you noted about Marcus who's work is very much rooted to Drucker's philosophy, about taking a strengths-based approach to individual work in an organization or to teamwork. Drucker saw in all things, the essential importance



of building on strength and making weakness irrelevant. So, for us as an organization, it means we also look around us out at the world and say, as Drucker asked, "What is already trying to happen on its own, and how can we encourage that?"

MBS ([29:17](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([29:17](#)):

Because as he noted, if we go out into the world to try to change people, to make them do things differently, to say no to certain things, and stop them from happening, we could work a lifetime and get nowhere. But if we can find the people who are hungry for what we have, give them more of it, and help them use it more effectively, there's a great deal we can accomplish. The final principle that we always keep in mind as Drucker said, and it's another one of, I think, just his brilliant insights that's part of my life's work is to help it be more widely appreciated, is that, "In this day and age, when choosing priorities, individual or organizational, the most important thing to focus on is not intelligent analysis. The most important thing to focus on is courage." And, it wasn't that intelligent analysis doesn't matter. But as he noted, "The smartest idea in the world is worth nothing if you don't have the courage to actually deliver."

MBS ([30:09](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([30:09](#)):

And he talked about what courage means specifically, it's another interview we could have altogether on that one topic. But in short, it means, choosing to make a difference, aiming high, going your own direction. These are things that we always have to keep in mind, because the drive for conformity and to follow



the data, so to speak, is so, so widespread these days, that it is easy to lose sight of the courage that actually helps us get our work done. And so, those are the principles we try to keep in mind, as we decide where to put our limited efforts.

MBS ([30:44](#)):

What do you draw upon to remain courageous?

Zach ([30:49](#)):

Well, this speaks to, as Drucker said, management. Management, he thought was the consummate liberal art. Liberal in the sense that it is built upon the foundation of all the academic knowledge, and art because it is practical, in the sense of that word. And, he talked about management as a discipline that integrates sociology, and psychology, and economics, but also, theology, and morality, and all the rest. That's true for me in my own daily work as well. There are times and days when it is wonderfully easy, just falling off a log to connect with the inspiration of the organizations we work with, the good they are doing in the world, the change we are helping them realize, that can be a bit more conceptual that way in which I can feel wonderful about things that I may never actually see myself, but that I know are happening.

Zach ([31:51](#)):

There are times when the closest I can get to motivation is the few teammates I have next to me, the people who I've had the blessing of working with for many years. And I know that if everything else fails, I have those relationships.

MBS ([32:07](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([32:07](#)):

And I have our ability to put our strengths to work, to do the very best we can. And that is what is going to be my motivation. That's where my curves will



come from on that day, and everything in between. It's to make room for learning from our failures as well. One of our organizational mentors, A.G. Lafley, who ran Proctor & Gamble twice actually. A.G. has written that, he thought of his failures as gifts, because they were the best opportunities to learn. And, that is also an important part of this, to take time to be present with the things that didn't go as we thought, and to find the insight available there that is uniquely available, actually.

MBS ([32:50](#)):

Yeah.

Zach ([32:51](#)):

So that we can return to the world with some greater clarity and greater courage for the next effort.

MBS ([32:59](#)):

I love that. And, I know A.G., not just because of his role at Proctor & Gamble, but he co-wrote a book with Roger Martin on strategy, which is a terrific book, a really great principled, structurally smart book around one of the five core questions of strategy that ladder up and ladder down in a really interesting way.

Zach ([33:19](#)):

It's a wonderful book, *Playing to Win*, for those of you who don't know it. And, we use that diligently here at the Drucker Institute as well. Roger gave us our great challenge. And, we went back to the drawing board on our own strategy a couple of years ago. He said, "The best strategies I've read are all five pages or shorter. And the closer you get to one, the better they get."

MBS ([33:43](#)):

Right.



Zach ([33:43](#)):

And that was the challenge we set out for ourselves was to get down to a single page strategy, which we ultimately did. And then, decided to just publish it on our website. We thought, "Wouldn't that be an interesting exercise to see if we can use ourselves as a teaching tool for the world."

MBS ([33:59](#)):

Zach, it's been a wonderful conversation. I'm wondering, as a final question, what needs to be said that hasn't yet been said in this conversation between you and me?

Zach ([34:12](#)):

I think, I just want to put in a good word for the managers. We have had some decades of frustration with institutions that has landed on the backs of the managers. And, Dilbert's popularity is no accident.

MBS ([34:31](#)):

Mm-hmm.

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

The TV show, The Office, popular for no small part, because of this dynamic.

MBS ([34:39](#)):

Right.

Zach ([34:40](#)):

And I want to put in a good word for the managers, as Drucker did in the conclusion to the excerpt that I read, managers are the essential organ of these institutions that we need so desperately. Their job is huge and incredibly difficult. And, good managers like good teachers can be transformational for the people that they manage.



MBS ([35:02](#)):

Indeed.

Zach ([35:03](#)):

And bad managers, or disengaged managers can be transformational in all the wrong ways. And I want to put in a good word for the managers for the importance of their job, for the necessity that all of us hold managers to a high standard, and then be willing to give them room to perform, and to learn, and grow in that job. They are so important. And we all look around with our frustrations at our institutions today, let us remember the managers that are doing the right things, that are doing the right things well, that are working effectively, that are islands of health and strength on which our future prosperity must be built.

MBS ([35:47](#)):

Ooh, 50 years of turbulence and we're halfway through, that is hard to hear, because is it just me who have other people noticed the turbulence and noticed it's not that easygoing right now? It feels like, institutions and ice caps are melting shape and structure, turning liquid. Now, I'm not sure I really cottoned onto this phrase when Zach first said it in our conversation, but it stood out for me as I was preparing this interview and recording these voiceovers. And as those opening lines, this is about tyranny. How do we, as managers and as humans, [inaudible 00:36:26], take a stand against tyranny. Perhaps, you know the quote from Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has." This conversation has shifted my understanding of that quote, because I always thought that was about individuals. It's like, "I'm the citizen. I'm the person. I'm making a stand."



MBS ([36:50](#)):

And, I'm realizing actually that the nuance in that quote, the power within it, is in its collective nature. "A small group of thoughtful people." Of, citizens in itself is a collective noun. How do we, us as a small group, us as citizens, us as these people who want to be [inaudible 00:37:11] against tyranny? How do we build structures, and systems, and institutions that will hold firm, keep the candles burning in the darkness? Seems like it's not enough just to do good by yourself. And I know that's provocative, because I want to believe that my small acts of recycling will help save the world. They won't. It's not enough to do good by yourself. I think, it's about needing to find your people and claim your worthy goal. You need to find your people.

MBS ([37:42](#)):

Did you enjoy that conversation? It had a bit more of a business orientation, not all of my conversations do. But, I think you have to... At least I have to think about and engage with institutions. Who are they? What are they? How can I shape them? How can I inspire a small group of concerned citizens to take action? Two people you might want to listen to who, I think, think about this as well. Dig Howitt was actually the very first interview, and he is the CEO of a company called Cochlear, a huge company, billions of dollars. And, they do hearing implants. And, Dig is very thoughtful. He's a friend of mine. I went to high school with him and had dinner with him actually just the other night. And, very thoughtful about, "How am I shaping an organization that does good work and is a good organization to be part of?"

MBS ([38:34](#)):

And then, my friend Dan Pontefract, over on the west coast of Canada, author of many books, a thinking buddy of mine, an occasional drinking buddy of mine. That is another great conversation about how to care, how to lead, and how to win. So, you might want to dabble in either of those two things. If you want to find out more about Zach, actually the place you should go is to the



Drucker Institute and conveniently the website is drucker.institute. So, that should be easy to find. If you want to manage with courage that resonates or mean something to you might want to check out the work that they are doing over there.

MBS ([39:15](#)):

Thank you for listening. It's lovely to have you listen all the way through. My usual request, pass the word along. If you like this, find somebody who else might like it and share it, because word of mouth is the best way this little podcast grows. If you really love it, give me some love on whatever your podcast platform is, or review, or some stars, or whatever it might be. And I just want to say and appreciate you and say, thank you, you're awesome, and you're doing great.