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MBS (00:00):

I've been working on a new book, and it's a book about how to strengthen working relationships. My thought is that, rather than leaving the success or not about working relationships down to luck, we could more actively manage them, and give them the best possible chance of flourishing. Now look, I am going somewhere with this, it's just not a straight promo, but in case you're wondering, June 2023 is the pub date. What this means as I write this book is I've been reading a lot around the subject, and been listening to podcasts and the like, and I can divide the teachers that I've been learning from into two different camps. One, we can call the mechanics, let's call these the people who are laying out what to do, and honestly, they're okay.

(00:51):

But then there are the storytellers, and these are people who realize that it's stories, not rules, that change people. Esther Perel, or Terry Real, or Catherine

Mennox, I love their wisdom, but I really love how it comes alive because of the stories they weave throughout it. It is an extraordinary thing, and it is a learnable thing, to know how to tell a good story. Welcome to Two Pages with MBS, the podcast where brilliant people read the best two pages from a favorite book, a book that has moved them, a book that has shaped them.

(01:29):

Now, Will Stewart is a storyteller and an author, and actually someone who the Times, the fancy British paper, called one of our best journalists of ideas. He's an award-winning author of six critically claimed books including Selfie: How the West Became Self-Obsessed and The Science of Storytelling. He's also got a new one coming out about status. Will started writing professionally in his 20s, but the seed was planted long before that.

Will (01:58):

I had this thing blue tacked to the wall above my bed and my dad came in and said, "What's that you've pinned to your bed?" And it was a column that I'd read in a newspaper, and it was complaining about the tube, or the tube in London, and for some reason I'd loved this so much I'd pinned it, blue tacked it to the wall above my bed. And in retrospect, it seems like a really strange thing to do, but I guess looking from outside in it was pretty obvious then that writing, especially writing nonfiction, was something that I was going to do. Because I was treating this column, newspaper column as if it was art.

MBS (02:34):

Will might have started out writing about London's public transport infrastructure, but over his journalistic career he really covered stories from around the world. However, in the last decade or so, he's gone a little meta.

Will (02:48):

I have a particular interest in the science of storytelling, in the storytelling brain. That's the idea that's really been my focus for the last... at least 10 years.

MBS (03:00):

We've talked with several guests on the podcast about how the mind works, and especially the stories that we tell ourselves. I wanted to get Will's take on his own brain's stories.

Will (03:11):

I've got a lot better at understanding the flaws of the story the brain wants to tell us. So the brain tells us a story not because it's interested in the truth of who you are, or the truth of the world. The brain tells a story of who we are in order to motivate us, and to get us out there in the world doing human things, striving, overcoming obstacles. So that story is often not accurate, and actually the story can often work against you. The brain wants you out there achieving, and when you don't achieve, that's painful. The brain wants... So I've become much better at standing aside from the story, I think, and obviously it is the conscious experience is the story. You can never free yourself of it, but I think the more you understand what's happening, the more you are able to not allow the story to overwhelm you, and to control it.

MBS (04:06):

So I'm wondering then, I mean this capacity to stand outside yourself, and notice your own story, in some ways I think of that as one version of emotional intelligence. This noticing of yourself, and then deciding, hey, is this helpful, or is it not helpful? Now what do you notice the story or the stories you have of you that are most helpful these days?

Will (04:28):

What is the story that's most helpful? Well, I actually think what's helpful is understanding what's going on that isn't the story. And so the great revelation I had, which fueled my recent book, The Status Game, is I've written two or three books now which focus on the story, the conscious experience of life, but what's going on under the hood? What's that subconscious? What's going on

subconsciously? And so the great revelation for me was that subconsciously it isn't a story. Subconscious is a game. We're playing games all the time, and we're playing really I think three games. We're playing the survival game where it's about literally the survival of our ourselves and our genes. We play connection games, we try to get people to like us and love us, and to be attracted to us. But we also play status games. If you think about human groups, any human group, whether it's a corporation, or a political group, or a religion, it's a status game.

(05:23):

The better you play by the rules, the higher you go up. And that was the focus of The Status Game in particular, because I felt like it was a book that hadn't been written yet, whereas there's lots of books about connection. So I think that's been the big transformational thing, where one of the ways that the story the brain tells us gets us wrong is in this idea of happy endings. We believe in the story, we believe in happy endings, we believe if I get X I'm going to be happy. And it's never true because you're not actually living a story, you're playing a game, and once you've got X, you want the next... It never ends. This game never ends. There's no finishing square on this monopoly board. It's a status game and your status... You can't take your status home with you in a box and go, this is my status now.

(06:09):

It's constantly in flux, you can be up there at the beginning of a day and down there at the end. So I think that's made me a lot wiser about life. And even though when you earn status it's joyous still, and when you lose status it's painful, now I'm going, well it's just the game man. It's just the game. It hurts, but it's just the game and there'll be a new one to play tomorrow. And it's also the idea that I think the other thing that when we experience life as a story, we feel like this story that we're living right now is the only one that matters. And actually when you look at life in terms of the game, you realize that actually we're playing multiple games at once. Just because one game ends badly, the

next game meant might end brilliantly. So I think understanding that even though life feels like a story, it's actually a game, I think that that's been a great revelation to me.

MBS (07:01):

If that's a revelation for others, how do you help? How do you figure out the rules of the game?

Will (07:08):

Well I think every game has a different set of rules. It's cultural, in terms of culture we talk about social norms, and every culture has different social norms. If you go to Japan and blow your nose, they'll think it's disgusting, but in Beijing people spit in the street. So it's like everywhere you go there are different norms and those norms are rules by which we afford or remove status from people. So every game we play has its different sets of rules. The podcast game has a certain set of rules. So I think that's true. But I think there are lots of ways that we can play the game better. And I think one of the major ones is that unbelievable finding really of social psychology, which says that status is more valuable than gold to people. It's worth more than money. We all have to feel of value. And major studies have found time and time again that if you give people the option between having more money and a more high status job title, most people will choose the higher status job title.

(08:09):

And if you think about it, it makes sense. We haven't evolved to crave money, because money hasn't been around for long enough. We've evolved to play status games, and money is just one way by which you can measure status. But the great thing about status is that it's free. We have status to give every day, and sometimes we're quite mean about giving that out. And actually we can make everybody around us... We actually have this amazing resource that everybody wants, to give out to people. And I think it makes everybody around

us happier, but also it rebounds onto us because people want to be around us more if we're being free and easy with the status we're giving out. So our status ends up going up. So I think that's just a really basic but quite fundamental almost life hack really. Just that you have great stores of this thing. Use it. Use it, give it out.

MBS (08:58):

I mean before we hit record, you and I were talking about designing training, because we both have designed training based on some of the books that we've written. And I have an acronym around the neuroscience of engagement. And I'm like, the brain five times a second asking is it safe here or is it dangerous? And I'm like, so for me, four drivers that influence that. Tribe, expectation, rank and autonomy. And you can see a lot of what we're talking about there is entangled in that four part acronym. And part of what I say is if you're the teacher, you need to be designing to be giving away as much authority and rank as possible.

(09:39):

Because the more you can lower your status, the more you raise the status of those around you. And of course it differs from person to person. I have a lot of authority and status to give away because I'm tall, white, educated, overeducated, middle-aged dude who wrote a book. So I've got all that things, so I'm trying to give away as much as possible. Other people have less, but I love that call to action, though, which is like, how do you figure out what to give away? Tell me about the book you're going to read from.

Will (10:07):

So the book I'm going to read from is Incognito by David Eagleman, the brilliant neuroscientist and short story writer. I'm just insanely jealous of David Eagleman, because not only is he an incredible scientist, he's also an incredible

writer. He wrote a book of short stories called... Some Adventures, I think it's called Adventures in the Afterlife as the subtitle. Well this is just extraordinary.

MBS (10:26):

It's 41 tales of different ways of coming into the... I haven't read this yet, but I've read about it a number of times so I'll have to pick that up.

Will (10:33):

It's brilliant. It is brilliant, and it's just like, how can a scientist write? It's not fair. Talking about status games, he's just acing two totally different ones and that's so unusual. But Incognito is brilliant. David Eagleman is one of these scientists that has this absolute gift of teaching his trade in a way that's just completely inspirational. And Incognito is a book I quote again and again and again in lots of my books, because he just does such a great job of explaining the wonder and amazement of this stuff. And the passage that I want to read from talks about the research. I think the one piece of research which has been really important to me and my thinking over the last 10 years, and that's the idea that this storytelling brain is just making stuff up. That voice we have in our heads is an unreliable narrator. It's telling us all these stories which aren't necessarily true. And so the bit I'm going to read is discussing some of the research which has led us to understand this.

MBS (11:40):

I'm very excited to hear this because it's so true. We just weave together all this stuff, the little bit of reality that we notice, and turn it into a story with us as a hero at the heart of it, most often. So I'm curious to know what Eagleman has to say. So Will, over to you.

Will (11:57):

"Not only do we run alien subroutines, we also justify them. We have ways of retrospectively telling stories about our actions as though the actions were

always our idea. As an example, at the beginning of this book I mentioned that thoughts come to us and we take credit for them: "I've just had a great idea!" Even though our brains have been chewing on a given problem for a long time and eventually served up the final product, we are constantly fabricating and telling stories about the alien processes running under the hood. To bring these thoughts and fabrication to light, we need to only look at another experiment with split brain patients. As we saw earlier, the right and left arms of the brain are similar to each other, but they're not identical.

(12:44):

In humans, the left hemisphere, which contains most of the capacity to speak language, can speak about what it is feeling, whereas the right, mute hemisphere can communicate its thoughts only by commanding the left hand to point, reach, or write. And this fact opens the door to an experiment regarding the retrospective fabrication of stories. In 1978, researchers Michael Gazzaniga and Joseph LeDoux flashed a picture of a chicken claw to the left hemisphere of a split-brain patient and the picture of a snowy winter scene to his right hemisphere. The patient was then asked to point to a card that represented what he had just seen. His right hand pointed to a card with a chicken and his left hand pointed to a card with a snow shovel. The experimenters asked him why he was pointed to the shovel. Recall that his left hemisphere, the one with a capacity for language, had information only about a chicken, nothing else. But the left hemisphere, without missing a beat, fabricated a story.

(13:45):

"Oh that's simple. The chicken claw goes with the chicken and you need a shovel to clean out the chicken shed." When one part of the brain makes a choice, other parts can quickly invent a story to explain why. If you show the command walk to the right hemisphere, which is the one without language, the patient will get up and start walking. If you stop him and ask why he's leaving, his left hemisphere, cooking up an answer, will say something like, "I was going

to get a drink of water." The chicken shovel experiment led Gazzaniga and LeDoux to conclude that the left hemisphere acts as an interpreter, watching the actions and behaviors of the body and assigning a coherent narrative to these events. And the left hemisphere works its way even in normal intact brains. Hidden programs drive actions, and the left hemisphere makes justifications. This idea of retrospective storytelling suggests that we come to know our own attitudes and emotions, at least partially, by inferring them from observations of our own behavior.

(14:44):

As Gazzaniga put it, "These findings all suggest that the interpretive mechanism of the left hemisphere is always hard at work seeking the meaning of events. It is constantly looking for order and reason even when there is none, which leads it to continually make mistakes." This fabrication is not limited to split brain patients. Your brain as well interprets your body's actions and builds a story around them. Psychologists found that if you hold a pencil between your teeth while you read something, you'll think the material is funnier. That's because the interpretation is influenced by the smile on your face. If you sit up straight instead of slouching, you'll feel happier. The brain assumes that if the mouth and spine are doing that, it must be because of cheerfulness."

(15:29):

That's the extract, and that's about these incredible experiments they did in what they call split-brain patients, which are patients who had really bad epilepsy. And so to avoid them having life threatening procedures, they cut the wiring between their two hemispheres. And that allowed Gazzaniga to do these incredible experiments, now famous experiments, that showed that the brain is just making up all these stories. It's watching what we're doing, and making up stories to explain it that we believe.

MBS (15:57):

And what's so significant about that for you, Will?

Will (16:02):

I think, as I say, it's that idea that the storytelling brain is this unreliable narrator. That we are constantly telling stories about what we're doing, what we're feeling, why we're doing what we're doing, that aren't necessarily true. That voice in your head that tells these stories has no direct access to the true causes of your behavior. It's always making it up. And it's making up in a certain direction too. Assuming that we're psychologically healthy, that voice in your head is a PR, it's a promoter, it's boosting you, it's telling a heroic story about who you are. It's saying, "No, I'm right and all of you are wrong." So that is revelatory for when we're thinking, when we're introspecting, when we're trying to figure out our mistakes that we're making in life. But it's also obviously a revelation when we think about other people too, and why they act in the ways that they do.

MBS (16:49):

So this insight, that we're constantly making up our own story, we're constantly authoring our own self and our own story. And assuming psychological health, we tend to put ourselves... It's shining a good light on us. It's making us sound good, look good, be the hero. I guess a two part question. What are the dangers of this, and how do we use this knowledge in a helpful way for us?

Will (17:15):

So firstly, the dangers, of course, are myriad. I mean there are so many dangers. Really, if we don't understand these fundamental story... I mean in my book The Heretics, which is published as The Unpersuadables in America, I talked about the hero making brain. The brain is a hero maker. That's what it's doing, it's telling a heroic story about who we are. Again, assuming that we're psychologically healthy, we're not suffering from [inaudible 00:17:37] depression. And the danger of that, of course, is hubris. Is that we continually think that we are right. We continually think that other people are wrong. We

overestimate our abilities, so we don't question ourselves, doubt ourselves, all of that stuff.

(17:55):

And even in terms of things like tribalism, we're a xenophobic species, unfortunately. And part of that hero making capacities and just telling positive stories about me is telling stories of positive about us, my group, about people that I identify with. And that manifested in its most egregious forms is obviously racism, homophobia, nationalism, all of those ugly things that are front and center in lots of minds culturally at the moment. So that's why it's important. It's really important. It's really important. Your second part of your question was what can we do? What was it, how can we help?

MBS (18:31):

How do we use this for good?

Will (18:33):

Yeah, yeah.

MBS (18:34):

I want to be a good person. I quite like thinking well of myself and thinking I'm vaguely heroic, and I can see the dangers of it as well. And in your book about status, you talk about actually your book Selfie, you talk about the dangers of overinflated esteem, and how that's definitely not all it's cracked up to be. So what do I do now with this knowledge, Will, so that I don't become an asshole?

Will (18:59):

Okay, so I think the fundamental thing that we all have to accept, even though it goes against everything that we feel to be true, is that it is perfectly possible that we are completely wrong about things that we are absolutely convinced that we're right about.

MBS (19:12):

You mean other people. Not you and me, but other people for sure.

Will (19:14):

Well that's how deep it goes, this stuff. Because I think in The Unpersuadables I call it the king bias, the bias to rule, our bias is then we have a bias which makes us believe that we are less biased than other people. So we're quite good at nodding our heads going, "Yeah, people are so biased, people are so arrogant," but they tested on students and even psychology students, and even after they've learned all this stuff, they test them again. They still think that they're immune to this stuff. So you've got to, so you've got to ignore how you feel. Because when you feel, "Oh no, I'm not biased, I see the truth, I've got all the evidence," that's just your brain making you feel stuff.

(19:51):

You've just got to accept that you really might be wrong about stuff. That people smarter than you who know more about these subjects than you think you're wrong about certain things. So you've got to accept that black might be white, and white might be black, in terms of the things that you're believing. And then I think practically, I think one of the questions we are not very good at asking is why might I be wrong? The brain works, they call it the make sense stopping rule. What we do is when we feel that we're going out into the world looking for evidence to test our ideas, what we're actually doing is going out into the world looking for evidence that we're right.

MBS (20:29):

Confirmation bias.

Will (20:30):

Yeah, confirmation bias, exactly. And then something that's called the make sense stopping rule, if we find one piece of evidence that we're right, our brain

goes, "Well that makes sense," and we stop thinking. And so what we're not good at doing... and intelligence is no inoculation, the smartest people are no better at this than the least smart people... is asking why might I be wrong? What is the story that I can tell which shows how I've made this mistake and why I'm wrong? So I think that's just a really good practical thing that we can do to undermine that inner PR that we've all got in our heads.

MBS (21:07):

What part of storytelling, and this idea that we're often putting ourselves in a positive light, is actually helpful for us? And I asked this in part well because, and you'll have seen this because you and I have traded emails, at the bottom of my email, I got this little sign off signature that says, "You're awesome and you're doing great." And that tends to work better in North America than it does in England. A whole bunch of British people are like, "What's wrong with you?"

(21:33):

My mom's like, "What's wrong with you? It's embarrassing." And I'm like, the thing is though, weekly, I get emails back saying, "Hey thank you for that. That was a lovely little boost. I appreciate being seen like that." And so I keep it there thinking it feels a bit rah-rah at times, and I just get positive feedback around, this is helpful. So there's a lot of people who don't feel they're being heroic a lot of the time. They feel that they're one down rather than one up, or whatever. So how does the gift of storytelling, how can it best serve us?

Will (22:10):

As is so often with these things in psychology, it's functional. We have a storytelling brain for a good reason. And the good reason is that it distracts us from all the misery and despair that is surrounding us in reality. Most people are optimistic about their futures, they feel that they're going to succeed eventually. I mean, most people think like this. I believe that, you believe that. So it's massively functional, the hero making brain, it gets us out of bed in the

morning. You could argue, it's a philosophical argument, but I would argue that a certain amount of comforting delusion is good. When psychologists test happy people versus mildly depressed people, they find that the mildly depressed people, their predictions about themselves and the future are more accurate than the happy people. So happiness is this delusional state.

MBS (23:01):

Exactly.

Will (23:01):

But what's wrong with that? It's good. It's good. So that's the positives of the hero making brain. But I think we should allow ourselves the luxury, allow ourselves the decadence almost, of feeling heroic, but also temper it with that grown up wisdom that, hang on a minute, quite often, I might be wrong here.

MBS (23:22):

Yeah, I mean this is interesting. I can guess at least why you've moved... Your books go through this series around Selfie, which is around what is self-esteem, to storytelling, to understanding that we're storytelling animals, to then talking about status, which is like, it's not just storytelling, we're constantly playing this game as well, in terms of how we show up and how we rate ourselves relative to the tribe around us, the people around us. It's like each book has grown out of the previous one. I'm curious to know, Will, you're now as wise as you can get on storytelling and status manipulation. How do you think about and how do you manage your status?

Will (24:07):

Well that's a good question. I mean, in one sense I'm doing it poorly, although I am trying to mitigate that at the moment, in a sense that at the end of my book, one of the things I recommend is that you play multiple games. I think the research is very clear in psychology that the more groups, the more sources of

status that you have, the more groups you belong to and the more sources of status you have, the more stable your personality, and the less likely you are to enter periods of despair. So I focused my life very much on one, and that's being a writer, being a storyteller. So I'm trying to diversify my status games at the moment. I'm going through the process of volunteering for a charity back here in the UK, which is something that I would never have thought of doing before I'd done this research. And it's partly selfish, I'll be honest. It's because I feel like I need sources of status, I need ways to feel like I'm a valuable individual, that don't involve my career, which just feels selfish.

MBS (25:02):

A review on Amazon going, "You suck man. I haven't even read your book, but you suck." And you're like, "Oh..."

Will (25:08):

Everything's over. Yeah. So yeah, I think the other thing is I'm not a parent and obviously I know that being a parent is a huge source of status for people, because status isn't about being rich and famous. It's about just feeling like you're a valuable person, you have value. And it's always interesting to me that it's not that people want to think of themselves as moms and dads. They like to think themselves as good moms and good dads, and that's very human. That's the status game. That word good is really important. We want to feel like we are above average dads and above average moms. But I don't have that as being an on parent. So I am actively at the moment trying to diversify the status games that I'm playing in life.

MBS (25:53):

This may not work as a question Will, but I'm curious to know, if you toy with status, if that's the right verb, in momentary interactions. Like you and me, you and I are talking through Zoom. It's the first time we've actually talked in person.

We've got some shared stuff that we've done, some shared clients in the lake. I'm curious to know how, if at all, you thought about status in this interaction.

Will (26:19):

I mean I can't say I've thought about it in this particular interaction because it's just-

MBS (26:24):

[inaudible 00:26:24] idea of me being superior to you, I like that.

Will (26:27):

But generally speaking, I would say that one of the things I am mindful of these days is just wherever you go, with every interaction that you have, because our subconsciouses are status obsessed, and we have this, what a scientist called the status detection system in our subconscious constantly measuring. So you are always in the game. With every interaction, you're in the game. So I'm much better now at... I'm much more mindful about how I'm making other people feel. Even in brief interactions in the supermarket, on the street, I smile, I make eye contact, I say thank you. I'm much more mindful about all my interactions now. I know that wherever we go enough, we leave a trail of feeling with every interaction that we have, and it's completely in our power what feeling we leave. And it's easy to transform that trail of feeling that you're leaving behind you.

MBS (27:20):

I love that. I walk up and down my street, not all the time, but some of the time when I'm remembering this. I'm trying to catch people's eyes, and I'm just nodding my head, and then if I catch their eyes I just flick my eyebrows up. It's just that little recognition, and it's amazing how that generates a smile and a response from people. You can almost see the little rush of chemicals in their brain going, a little hit of being seen and being recognized, and being appreciated in some very small way.

Will (27:51):

Yeah, I mean I've noticed too, when I'm driving, I live in the countryside with these old roads that were tracks designed for horses and carts. So we're constantly, as we drive, having to pull in and let other cars pass. And I've noticed that when the person waves at you, you feel really good, and when they don't it's like, where's my wave? And I've also noticed that, I don't know if you do this where you come from, but around where I live, one way of saying thanks is when the car pulls in front of you, they just flash their hazards on, they give you a little flick.

MBS (28:24):

Oh that's nice.

Will (28:24):

And I love that. And I love it, and I always do it now. I always give him a little flash. And before I wouldn't have taken it seriously. But it is, it's just that little moment of... And I can recognize it now, it's status. It's somebody saying you are a good person in my eyes, because you've done that thing. And I think before, the little wave, the little flash of the hazards, would've felt a bit like it didn't really matter to me, but now I know it really does. So similar to you raising your eyebrows, I cycle around as well. I'm always on my bike and I pull in for cars if they're struggling to get past me, and they give you a little flash of the hazards and it's like, ah, and they're happy and I'm happy. And it's those little moments that I wouldn't have taken seriously before doing this research, that I now take really seriously because they change the temperature of your day.

MBS (29:12):

Yeah, it's a nice way to put it. We've been talking about storytelling and how our brains tell stories, and about status and about just a sense of self. And it makes it feel like we're talking very much about individuals and individualism. At the start of Selfie you have a quote from Ayn Rand, going, "We sucks man. It's all

about the I." And I feel like it was there to make a point. Even with all this talk about me and I, and who I am, what's the connection to the we of it all?

Will (29:48):

Well, it's that we're a tribal species. That's what Ayn Rand didn't get. We are a tribal species, so there is no such thing as the pure I. I mean in Selfie, I talk about this concept which is known as the mirror self. And the mirror self is, I am not who I think I am, but I am who I think other people think I am. So to figure out who we are, we look at how other people are responding to us, especially other people in our groups and tribes. And that's why it can be so crushing when we look at other people around us and we feel less than. So you cannot separate the I from the we, and that's what Ayn Rand got so profoundly wrong.

MBS (29:48):

Yeah.

Will (30:30):

We are fundamentally a social species. I mean in the west we're individualists, but we are still tribal. It's just a slightly different, we're slightly more I focused than they are in places like East Asia.

MBS (30:43):

Yes.

Will (30:43):

And that has major ramifications in certain ways, but we are all, all humans, are tribal. We all exist in the context of the group, and you can't eradicate that from the human mind.

MBS (30:56):

Will, I've loved this conversation, thank you. A final question I love to ask, what needs to be said that hasn't yet been said in this conversation between you and me?

Will (31:06):

Well that's a very good question. What needs to be said that hasn't yet been said? So we've talked about the dangers that the storytelling brain, the flaws of it, the dangers it can lead to. And I suppose something I've been thinking a lot about recently is that yes, it's a hero maker, but it's also remarkably liable to turn on us. Even if we're not clinically depressed, even if we're not mentally ill, or have serious psychological issues, that hero maker can also be a demon maker. It can turn on us. And evolutionarily speaking, possibly that's because, as I said at the beginning of our conversation, the functional use of the storytelling brain is that it's to motivate us, it's to get us moving on.

(32:04):

So when we're making mistakes, it becomes a drill sergeant. And it either wants to spank us and kick us into a higher level of performance, or it's a protective thing, where... in The Status Game it writes about this, it's this mode called self subordination... where the status game, the game of life becomes too harsh and too dangerous, and the brain wants to take us to the back of the cave to remove us from that competition. So I think the thing that hasn't yet been said is to, yes, beware of the hubris of that hero making brain, but also beware of its capacity to turn on you. Because when it's telling you you're useless, and pathetic, and a failure, that's also not to be believed.

MBS (32:54):

Do you remember Will saying play multiple games? I love that. This feels like an extraordinarily rich piece of guidance, and not just for the point he's making, which is find yourself in different roles, and different conversations, and

different settings so your sense of self remains more fluid and more relative, rather than rigid and unyielding. If you do that in that way, you become more aware of your status, and better able to use it for good, to dial it up or to turn it down as required. But play multiple games. I just think that as a core to a good life, a core to a more alive life, that is perfect. If you liked my conversation with Will, I've got two other interviews I could recommend for you. One is How to Value Yourself, by Stacy Bannock Smith. Wonderful conversation.

(33:46):

And then truly one of my favorite interviews from this whole series so far, Matthew Barzun went on stage, the American Ambassador to the UK. Super eloquent and he's written a book about power and that interview is called What To Do With Power. I thought this was great because for me it was talking about what do you do if you have power, if you have status, if you have privilege? How do you give it away? For more on Will, the place to go really is his website. That's where you'll find most of his stuff. WillStorr.com, W-I-L-L, Storr is spelled S-T-O-R-R.

(34:21):

So WillStorr.com, and thank you for listening. Love that you're a listener, love that you listen to the interviews, love that you've given the podcast some love as a rating or a review. If you have done that, love it. If you have a particular interview or six that you've gone, this person needs to listen to this interview because... Recommendations and your word of mouth is one of the richest ways we get to grow as a listening group. Thank you, you're awesome, and you're doing great.