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

Who do you think of when you think of a designer? I mean, my brain goes into all sorts of nooks and crannies. My friend, Dorie Clark, was just talking about how she lusts after an Eames chair, designed in the fifties by Charles and Ray Eames. I've listened to Debbie Millman chatting with her friend Chip Kidd. Chip Kidd is a legend among book cover designers. In fact, on my shelves I've got his book, *A Kidd's Book of Graphic Design*, which is written for children. But really I think written for adults as well. And I think back to the somewhat over the top, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen from the 1990s UK TV show, *Changing Rooms*. Every single room that he redesigned seemed to finish with a lot more purple, and velvet, and chandeliers than it started with. And I think of you, because actually a designer is someone who solved a problem. We can all probably get better at how we design, more focused on what we design. But have no doubts, you've already crossed the threshold. You are already a designer.



(01:15):

Welcome to Two Pages with MBS. This is 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. Ayse Birsal is someone I met through becoming part of the 100 Coaches collective that was a Marshall Goldsmith initiative. And to be honest, I'd never heard of her before, and that only shows what I'd been missing out. Because, Ayse is a force in design, and in joy, and in life. I mean, it's not for nothing that she's been named by Fast Company as one of their 100 most creative people. Now, a center of authority has always been in industrial design. She was actually known as the queen of toilets for a while. So, she's been making products that make life better, like a good toilet seat or a good stationary set. But her current work has shifted beyond that. It's now about, what does it take to design a good life? Her own life began in Turkey.

Ayse (02:16):

I grew up in Turkey. I was born in Turkey and had a full ride scholarship to come to New York and do my master's in industrial design. And then I got stuck here. So now, I'm a New Yorker.

MBS (02:31):

Now, to travel from New York to Istanbul in Turkey, well that's an 8,000 kilometer, 5,000 mile trip. So, they're literally a world apart and utterly different in the stories in terms of how they came to be cities and countries. But according to Ayse, they're not so different after all,

Ayse (02:53):

Both of them incredibly rich and very poor at the same time, beautiful, and chaotic, and ugly, and where it's a melting pot.



MBS ([03:05](#)):

I can identify with what we are hearing because I left my home country of Australia, detoured through the UK and the US, and landed in Canada. So, I sometimes feel that I belong everywhere and nowhere at the same time. But in the same way this is true with Ayse, I think, my origins inevitably start showing in my work, our origins stain whatever it is that we create.

Ayse ([03:30](#)):

As a designer, I think, with being Turkish gives to me is exactly that, that Turkey is a dichotomy resolution of contrast. So, it's the old and the new, the East and the West, secular and religious, the good and the bad, Europe and Asia. That's really central to how I think as a designer, because I know that, if you can bring opposing things together and have them coexist, you can create incredible value. And it comes out in my designs all the time.

MBS ([04:06](#)):

It started for Ayse with Play-Doh and tea.

Ayse ([04:10](#)):

When I think of the first thing I did in Play-Doh, I think it was a teapot and teacups. And you're making me think this for the first time, but that was my introduction to design as well.

MBS ([04:24](#)):

So good.

Ayse ([04:25](#)):

Look what you've done. It's because I was maybe 15 and we had a friend of the family come to tea. In Turkey you drink a lot to tea. And I wanted to become an architect. And he asked me about industrial design. He said, "Why not industrial design?" And I had never heard those two words together before. And he said,



"Look. Look at this teacup, and the edge is curved. It's so that it fits our lips better, and it has a handle so we can hold hot liquid in our hands without burning ourselves. And it has a saucer so that, if you spill your tea, you want to ruin your mom's beautiful tablecloth." And that was just the perfect definition of what industrial design is. And it was such a human thing, this human scale of a teacup in your hand that I fell in love with that. And that's what I've been doing ever since. The first thing that I designed that is of note is actually an office accessory collection for Noel that's still on the market.

MBS ([05:38](#)):

That's fantastic. Wow.

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

Yeah.

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

Ayse, there can't be too many designers to go the first thing I designed is still out there in the world.

Ayse ([05:48](#)):

Out there in the world. And a brand like Noel, I mean that was actually amazing, because it was my teacher and the chair of the design depart at Pratt. He invited me to design it together with him. And then, when it came out, he and the people at Noel decided to give me credit, which is incredibly rare. So, it came out as Bruce Hannah, Ayse Birsal. And I thought to myself, this is so easy. Famous last words. And then, I went back to being a starving designer after that.

MBS ([06:25](#)):

That's funny. Ayse, when you talk about teacups and teapots, you're making me think of that line from TS Elliott, I think it's The Wasteland, "We measure out our lives with teaspoons." Maybe it's coffee spoons. I think it's teaspoons. And I'm



wondering what the bridge was for you to go from teapots and office equipment into designing life. Because your last two books have been about what does it take to design a good life? How do you [inaudible 00:06:57] your way in from industrial design to life design?

Ayse ([07:02](#)):

It's one of those things that's not easy to explain, because sometimes things happen. For me, what happened was I was in my thirties and I started saying that my mission in life is to design the life I love. It was one of those things that I just said it, and I don't know why I said it. But I did believe that our life is like a design project and it's full of problems and design is really all about problem solving. So, that part of it made sense. And also when you design something, you try to move it towards something that is positive, that solves, that helps you get to something that you love, or brings you joy, or keeps you safe. That part I got right.

([07:48](#)):

But then, the rest of it was really, in 2008, the economy crashed and we were a very, very successful design studio working with some of the best brands in the world. And I thought, again, nothing is going to happen to us. We're so good. And of course, all our clients took the work in-house. Because, it made sense for them to.... We were on the outside and they were cutting their budgets.

([08:19](#)):

And so, I had a year where I had no clients and Bibi and I had got married. We had two little kids, a lot of responsibility. And I was so lost and felt so much responsibility. And it was one of my oldest friends, Leah Kaplan, who said, "Ayse, you have all this time in your hands, why don't you use this time to think about how you think? Because, you think differently." And Michael, that was the connection that somebody so value in how I was thinking. And then, that I ended up applying that to my life and basically saved myself through design. And I used the time to think about what my process is. That intuitive process, it's



a very interesting internal journey into your head. And I'm sure you're doing this as you write books, Mike.

MBS ([09:18](#)):

Sure, sure.

Ayse ([09:19](#)):

Because, I know you've created a methodology and a system for writing as well, and it's similar. And for me, it was like how do I go from what I know today to what I can imagine in the future? And it was a very interesting journey and that got me to this idea of deconstruction, reconstruction. And then, once I had that, as a proof point, I was like, "Well, Ayse, you say that our life is our biggest project, let's see if this process works."

MBS ([09:53](#)):

I mean, you're reminding me of how you talked about Istanbul as this place where opposites join, and rejoin, and reform. Deconstruction, reconstruction, what's the essence of that pairing?

Ayse ([10:06](#)):

The essence of that really is deconstruction is what I do, and now I teach people to do, is to take something and break it apart, because life or any big project is quite complex. And by breaking it apart, you get to smaller pieces that feel more feasible. But also inside of that, when you break something apart, you also cutting the connections we assume are between thing. And you suddenly realize, hold on one second, this doesn't really have to go with that other thing. And in fact, I want to get rid of this thing and I want to include this new thing. And so, it creates that sense of freedom, that things are made of parts, and those parts are... You can reorganize them.



(10:56):

And so, the middle part between deconstruction and reconstruction is all about gathering inspiration and to be able to think about the same things differently. And that's really at the heart of everything I do. So I have some tools to get people to think differently about what they know. And somebody called one of my tools a sneak attack.

MBS (11:22):

A sneak attack.

Ayse (11:24):

In design, you don't really look at things directly. You use metaphors and you do sneak attacks to get people to think. And then suddenly, there's a reveal. So, you do those things. And then, after that, the reconstruction is coming back and saying intentionally, "Well, now that I've gathered inspiration, what do I want to be part of my life, to be part of my work," knowing you can't have everything, and that's important.

MBS (11:57):

Well, here's what I'm curious about, Ayse, and I want to get on to hear about the book you've chosen for us in a minute, but before I do, it's one thing to deconstruct a teacup, take off the handle, we need to put on something else that looks like a handle but isn't yet a handle, but could be a handle. And I can understand how a teacup or a chair can evolve and shift. But people are much more attached to the stuff they have in their lives. How do you help other people find the courage to deconstruct their life so they can start reconstructing their life?

Ayse (12:36):

I love the word you use, it does require courage and it has to come within you. And I think what gives you courage is you have to be at the moment in your life



where you deeply believe that you need to make a change and you are a little bit lost. So, if you don't have that, then it's hard to find the courage. And some of these happen naturally, and some of these, like COVID or when the economy crashed, are catalysts, you don't want them, but they happen anyway.

MBS ([13:14](#)):

Right. Yeah.

Ayse ([13:17](#)):

And so, that puts you in a problem-solving mentality where you realize you have a problem that you need to solve. And that's where I show up, and I'm like, "Hey, how about design tools?"

MBS ([13:29](#)):

Yes.

Ayse ([13:29](#)):

Because the thing about design tools that I'm realizing more and more and talking about it more, when I tell people design, it's like they don't know what design is. But what design does is it creates optimism. And that's really all my tools are to help you turn your pessimism into an optimistic viewpoint. And that's what gives people courage. And then also, Michael, I tell people it's easy. I lie to them.

MBS ([14:02](#)):

I knew there was some secret that I hadn't quite grasped. And it's like you just blatantly lie to people, that's how you-

Ayse ([14:07](#)):

Exactly. Like, "This is going to be easy." And then from we're midway, I tell them, "Well..."





MBS ([14:15](#)):

Easy, easy, what does that even mean? What book have you chosen to read for us, Ayse?

Ayse ([14:23](#)):

I chose Twyla Tharp's Creative Habit.

MBS ([14:29](#)):

I have this book and I love this book, so I'm so delighted that you're bringing it out to share. When did you discover this book?

Ayse ([14:39](#)):

I discovered this book, I think, maybe 15 years ago. And it really influenced me. And I have creative habits, because of this book, that have changed my life. And what's really interesting, Twyla Tharp is, of course, a dancer, choreographer, an amazing woman. And when I was a student going to college in Turkey, I saw her perform in Ankara.

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

Wow, amazing.

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

And then so her name always meant something for me. And then, I get this book, and this book is actually written together with Mark Reiter, who is a bestselling author. And then, I met Mark maybe three years ago and he's become one of my dear friends.

MBS ([15:25](#)):

Oh, how wonderful.



Ayse ([15:25](#)):

And then, I was like, "Hold on one second, I've been reading you."

MBS ([15:28](#)):

Are you the Mark Reiter?

Ayse ([15:33](#)):

Yeah. "You've changed my life," so, yeah.

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

That's so great. I have some things that I picked up from reading that book and I still do, like I have banker boxes where I keep projects, and books, and stuff that I've worked on, like she does or talks about in the book as well. So, I'm excited to know what pages you chose for us, for it's a rich, wonderful book. How did you figure out what two pages to pick?

Ayse ([15:56](#)):

You're absolutely right. It was a hard thing. I started at the beginning, chapter one.

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

Nice.

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

Because I figure I can get people started, and then they can continue. And also, Michael, your two pages and getting us to read reminds me of when I would read to my kids, and they don't need me for that anymore. And then, I would read to them, and then I would fall asleep. So, this time I won't fall asleep.

MBS ([16:26](#)):

Perfect. I'll wake you up, if I notice you dozing off.



Ayse ([16:30](#)):

You might fall asleep.

MBS ([16:34](#)):

Brilliant. Over to you then, Ayse, reading Twyla Tharp's book, *The Creative Habit*.

Ayse ([16:43](#)):

"I walk into a large white room. It's a dance studio in midtown Manhattan. To some people, this empty room symbolizes something profound, mysterious, and terrifying. The task of starting with nothing and working your way toward creating something whole and beautiful and satisfying. It's no different for a writer rolling a fresh sheet of paper into his typewriter, or a painter confronting a virginal canvas, a sculptor staring at a raw chunk of stone, a composer at the piano with his fingers hovering just above the keys.

([17:23](#)):

Some people find this moment, the moment before creativity begins, so painful that they simply cannot deal with it. They get up and walk away from the computer, the canvas, the keyboard. They take a nap, or go shopping, or fix lunch, or do chores around the house. They procrastinate. In its most extreme form, this terror totally paralyzes people.

([17:51](#)):

The blank space can be humbling, but I faced it my whole professional life. It's my job. It's also my calling. Bottom line, feeling this empty space constitutes my identity. I'm a dancer and choreographer. Over the last 35 years, I've created 130 dances and ballets. I've run my own company for three decades. I've created and directed a hit show on Broadway. I've worked long enough and produced with sufficient consistency that by now I find not only challenge trepidation but peace as well as promise in the empty white room. It has become my home." May I continue?



MBS ([18:40](#)):

It's so good, isn't it? There's so much there.

Ayse ([18:42](#)):

Yeah. She says, one, creativity is not just for artists, it's for business people looking for new way to close a sale, it's for engineers trying to solve a problem, it's for parents who want their children to see the world in more than one way.

MBS ([18:58](#)):

Nice.

Ayse ([18:58](#)):

And I think this is really important, because often people think, "Oh, creativity, that's not for me." So, we can come back to that. And then she says that she comes down on the side of hard work. That's why this book is called The Creative Habit. Creativity is a habit, and the best creativity is a result of good work habits.

MBS ([19:23](#)):

Nice.

Ayse ([19:23](#)):

That's it in a nutshell. And in the last bit, and don't tell Mark that I skipped a lot of good writing here, but what I love is it ends the way it starts, and it says, "Creating dance is a thing I know best. It's how I recognize myself. Even in the worst of times, such habits sustain, protect, and in the most unlikely way lift us up. I cannot think of a more compelling reason to foster the creative habit. It permits me to walk into a white room and walk out dancing." That gives me goosebumps.



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

Me too. Me too. Thank you, Ayse. What is so important about these words to you?

Ayse ([20:16](#)):

I think it's the first word that jumps when you ask that question is jumps at me is humble, humbling, that creativity in creating something from nothing is difficult for everyone, even Twyla Tharp. And the way she manages that in an empty white room is terrifying, like she explains, a white page is terrifying. And to hear that I think is so authentic and gives me courage, because I feel like, okay, I'm not alone. I'm terrified every morning. And then, the antidote to that is the creative habit.

MBS ([21:02](#)):

Yes.

Ayse ([21:03](#)):

You get up. And actually as you go into the book, you'll remember she gets up really early, which is something I learned from her, jumps into her cab, goes to her studio, that's the white room. And then, 5:00 in the morning she starts exercising, and then her troop eventually walks in. But that image of her jumping into a cab in New York, rain or shine, doesn't matter, sleepy, too bad, you still do it, because it's a habit. And that's really key.

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

You talk about the white room and the white page being terrifying. What does that feel like to you?

Ayse ([21:53](#)):

Such a good question. Do I even know? I mean, sometimes, it feels like the most liberating thing. There are times, I think the reason that we keep on doing



it is there are magical times and you're in the pursuit of that. Stephen King is another author that I debated reading today, his book on Writing.

MBS ([22:15](#)):

Writing, yeah.

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

Yeah. I love that book. And he talks about, I think he puts it like you have to put your on the chair.

MBS ([22:27](#)):

Steven Pressfield as well in the Art of War, or the War of Art, is similar. It's like, every artist faces resistance. That is the job of the artist is just to keep overcoming resistance on a daily basis.

Ayse ([22:39](#)):

Yeah. So, that's how it feels. I mean, I am more and more admitting to myself that every morning I wake up a pessimist. And even though most people know me as a very positive person-

MBS ([22:56](#)):

That's right.

Ayse ([22:58](#)):

... the link to that positivity and optimism is really having a creative habit. And the creative habit will reward you every now and then, not every day.

MBS ([23:10](#)):

I mean, Twyla Tharp talks about being in cabs, and exercising every morning with a trainer, and having a certain pattern. What have you shaped as your creative habits?



Ayse ([23:22](#)):

My creative habit is similar, because she helped shape mine. One was I learned to wake up early, which didn't come natural to me. And in fact, it was very difficult. But I mean, you Google anything and you can learn. So, I googled how to wake up early.

MBS ([23:41](#)):

Nice.

Ayse ([23:42](#)):

And the reason I wanted to wake up early is because I became aware that, if I didn't wake up early my day, just escaped, ran away, literally slipped away from me. And I had young kids, they needed me, and I had work. There were all kinds of things. Once the world woke up, that was the end.

MBS ([24:11](#)):

You're done, yeah.

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

And so, I realized I have to do something. I have to cheat the system and do something before everybody wakes up. And then, that gave it a deadline, a precise moment.

([24:23](#)):

The kids woke up around 6:30, 7:00. I knew that I had to have at least an hour. And then, the way I do it is I get up, I'm like, "I really want to stay in bed." But I'll get up, make tea, give myself a cookie as a little reward. And then, sit down, maybe light a candle. And I usually sit in the kitchen because that doesn't feel like work. And then, I have either my sketchbook and pen or iPad and pen, and then I'll draw something. And for me, drawing is really how I think. So, it's like I don't write, I draw, or I map out things, or I deconstruct things.



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

Well, I wake up early. I've always been a good morning person. So, I didn't have to learn that, I just had that. But I'd said deliberate act. And I'll typically come upstairs to this little room. I've got this table here, which is where I do email and I shoot podcast. But over there is my smaller table where I stare at a window.

([25:33](#)):

I'll typically open my journal, and I answer three questions in the morning. What do I notice? And that helps me both... Sometimes I notice stuff outside me, sometimes I notice stuff physically how I'm doing. Sometimes I notice how emotionally I'm doing. But it makes me be present for a moment. Then, I note down something I'm grateful for. Because, there's a lot of research now that a gratitude practice is just one of the ways to be a bit happier in your life. And then, I'll write down the one thing I need to do to that day. Because, I have a to-do list that overflows. And one of the ways I procrastinate is inventing tasks. So, naming the one thing to do helps me with that.

([26:24](#)):

And then, at the end of the day, I wear little alarm that goes off, and it reminds me to write down in my journal. And I don't always do it, but most days I try to. I used to write down what had I made progress on. But I found that it made the doing too important, so it's always about the doing. So now, I answer what's the best part of the day. And it just helps me remember the thing I want to remember about the day. That's, broadly speaking, my creative act. And then, I will try and do some exercise most mornings. This is relatively new, but I have booked out 8:00 AM till 10:00 AM for writing and creating. So, I don't book meetings before 10:00, and I try and write or create. We're recording this on the 4th of January, and so far I've crushed it this year flawlessly.

Ayse ([27:27](#)):

Well done.





MBS ([27:28](#)):

Thank you. Thank you very much.

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

[inaudible 00:27:31].

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

Hey, let me ask you another question, because you've used a pair of words, and we've talked about pairs of words since the start of this interview, that are intriguing. You've talked about both optimism and pessimism. We've talked about part of the power of design is unlocking optimism or moving towards optimism. And you've also noted that, when you wake up, you wake up as a pessimist. Now, you said part of the way you shift is through your creative habit. I'm wondering just how you notice the moment when you move from pessimism to optimism. What does that look like? What does that feel like?

Ayse ([28:13](#)):

Wow. What it feels like is either really... The pessimism is seeing the problems, the optimism is seeing the problems as opportunities. And that's the shift. And I have all these tools to help me do that. But I usually wake up and just think of all the problems. Everything can be a problem, and even a shopping list can be a problem, like I didn't buy yogurts,

MBS ([28:48](#)):

Right?

Ayse ([28:49](#)):

And so, turning that into an opportunity is really then once you... Again, that comes from design, that you can't design something without problems. And so, the creative habit helps me remember that. Hold on one second. Instead of



going like, "Oh my God, I have problems." I'm like, "oh my God! I have problems!" And-

MBS ([29:14](#)):

You're so good.

Ayse ([29:15](#)):

The best problems, of course, are the problems of others, then it makes it easier. And that's what I call client work.

MBS ([29:25](#)):

That's lovely. Ayse, your new book is called Design the Long Life You Love: A Step-by-Step Guide to Love, purpose, Wellbeing, and Friendship. I got my copy here as well, signed by you when we hung out in New York a month ago or so.

Ayse ([29:40](#)):

Look who's in it.

MBS ([29:41](#)):

I know. There I am. That's so nice. For those of you who are not seeing the video, I made a very small contribution to this book. But Ayse also drew, in her very inimitable style, pictures of all of her contributors. So, you get to see a line drawing of what I look like. And I look a lot better in Ayse's drawing than I do in real life. So, we should go with that more often.

Ayse ([30:06](#)):

Don't believe that.



MBS ([30:07](#)):

Hey, I wanted to ask you about, I mean, love, purpose, wellbeing, and friendship, well, each one of those deserves about an hour-long conversation at least. But I am curious to know what you have learned about friendship.

Ayse ([30:23](#)):

Oh, I love that. Before we dive into friendship, just to connect it with the conversation about pessimism and optimism, this book is a great example of how to turn pessimism into optimism. Because, one of the things that I learned in our research is 87% of Americans fear aging. And this book is all the lessons we learned from older people who actually don't fear aging and who are thrilled to be alive.

MBS ([30:54](#)):

So good.

Ayse ([30:57](#)):

And talk about gratitude, right?

MBS ([30:57](#)):

Yes.

Ayse ([30:59](#)):

It's like, "Hey, I'm alive." And so, it's really a practice in taking something that so many people are pessimistic about and showing it in a very positive light and saying, "Hey, we now have 20 to 30 more years to live. Isn't that great? So, what are you going to do with that time?" And one of the things that you need to do with that time is to make fresh friends.



(31:27):

So, I am so glad that you're pinpointing friendship. Because, what we discovered, research is looking for patterns. We co-designed long life with people who were 65 to 90. And then, through their codesigns and the way they thought about their life, we looked for patterns. One of the patterns was we need new friends later in life. And what's interesting about friendship is you can make friends. It's different from love. Love you find, friends you make.

(32:07):

And so, me being the designer, I'm like, "Hey, if you can make friends, you can manufacture them, just like in a factory." So then, I start looking at what are the pieces of this factory? Because, if I can figure that out, I can teach people how to make fresh friends. And actually that metaphor really works, because you can have friendship factories, and they need to have shared interests, shared values, shared time, and shared space, whether it's real space or online space, doesn't matter. But right now, you and I are demonstrating that.

MBS (32:45):

Yeah, exactly.

Ayse (32:48):

Exactly. And then, those things accelerate trust and trust leads to friendships. And then, it's up to you to deepen them. How deep you're going to go has a lot of different components. But to me, that gives that formula of friendship, same space, time, and interest, you can look for those things.

MBS (33:15):

I mean, I've just been writing a little bit about friendship for another reason. And the statistics are grim. It's the statistics I've seen, amongst others, are 10% of women and 15% of men, I think this is in North America, don't have a single close friend. And about 25% of people haven't made a new friend in the last



five years. So, we suck at this. And what I've read is that our sense of loneliness and isolation is growing rather than not. If somebody's listening to this and going, "I could do with a rent factory, even if it's just a small factory, even the one-person factory," what do you think the first step might be?

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

I don't know if this is your question, but I thought, what's a friendship factory maybe that they can start at?

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

Perfect.

Ayse ([34:13](#)):

I heard it like that, so I'll answer it that way, and then you can ask me more. But I was going to say, I mean, I stumbled upon my own friendship factory at the beginning of COVID, because I created this virtual tea that happens every Wednesday at 5:00 PM New York time. And that became a friendship factory. But it was not originally planned as such.

([34:40](#)):

It was COVID hit, and I was like, "Shit, what do we do now?" And then, I reached out to my friends and people who've come to my workshops and asked them if they wanted to get together and then what they wanted to do. And they said, "Let's design our life through COVID. And so, that became a friendship factory, because we shared those elements. We wanted to design our lives together. We had similar interests. And we showed up at five on this Zoom shared space. Of course, it's about turning pessimism into optimism, even though I didn't even know to articulate that at the time, but it became that. And so, that is an example of a friendship factory. And a big piece of it is showing up. Yeah. Was that your question?"



MBS ([35:36](#)):

That's a perfect answer to any question. And what it's reminding me of is, I can't remember who said this, but somebody once told me, "People don't like to be the first to say hello, but they love being greeted." So, if you can be the person who says the first hello, that is a great gift to the world, but to specifically to the person to who you're saying hello to.

Ayse ([36:03](#)):

Oh, I love that.

MBS ([36:04](#)):

Ayse, this has been, as I knew a word, such a lovely conversation. And I know that we can keep talking. But I'm actually going to ask you a final question, which is simply this, what needs to be said that hasn't yet been said in our conversation today?

Ayse ([36:20](#)):

That I love you.

MBS ([36:22](#)):

Oh, thank you. That is the best answer. [inaudible 00:36:30] Ayse.

([36:35](#)):

If you're a designer, and you know from the intro that I think you are, where then do you do your best design? I remember Ayse saying in the conversation that she usually sits in the kitchen because that doesn't feel like work. No, I'm going to bang on about something I really believe. Where we do our work, shapes our work. Where we do our work, shapes us. I mean, Twyla Tharp has her workout routine, and then the blank room, the blank page in which she creates. Ayse sits in the kitchen with a cup of tea. I sit at my desk with an espresso cup and looking out the window. But we've designed our spaces to shape us and



shape the work we create. So, for you, claim the space for you that allows you to see what matters most and to solve the problems that are yours to solve.

[\(37:35\)](#):

If you enjoy my conversation with Ayse, a couple of other interviews I can recommend for you, How to be Alive with Madeline Dory. Such a good conversation. She is a creative nomad at the moment, and her newsletter is fantastic. And then Brad Stulberg, that conversation is called How to Navigate Failure. And of course, if you become a designer and we are all designers, then you are constantly figuring out the pessimism of taking on the problem and the optimism of solving the problem. Success and failure is, of course, bound into that.

[\(38:11\)](#):

If you'd like more of Ayse, you can find her at her website. I'm going to spell her name for you. It is A-Y-S-E. That's Ayse Birsal, B-R-S-E-L. So, [aysebisel.com](http://aysebisel.com). And you can join her for a regular virtual tea by signing up for the newsletter at [aysebisel.com/newsletter](http://aysebisel.com/newsletter).

[\(38:33\)](#):

Thank you for all your support for this podcast, for the interviews you've passed on to other people, for the love you've given me in the reviews, the stars, anything you can do to help spread the word of this podcast, very appreciated by me. That's the best way the word spreads. So, thank you. You're awesome and you're doing great.