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MBS (00:00):

Hey, it's Michael here, and my new book is on the near, near horizon. It's called *How to Work with (Almost) Anyone*. And if you interact with other human beings in your life, this might be a helpful book for you. It goes live on June 27 and I've got some terrific pre order bonuses. You'll find those at bestpossiblerelationship.com. I do hope you'll check those out. The audiobook is ready to go as well. I've actually recorded it myself. I did it sitting in this office where I'm recording this voiceover now. And so that it's not just a monologue from me, I've invited some of my friends to share a short story of what they've learned from their best or their worst working relationships.

(00:48):

So this episode is actually going live on book launch day, June 27. So I'm picking one of the deep dive chapters to share with you today. It's called How to



Amplify What's Good. Now, obviously, I'm hoping the good in this book gets amplified today, and maybe you'll help me out with that, ordering one or two or five or 150 copies of the book. Who knows? I've also got my friend Dan Pontefract, who finishes the episode. He's actually working on a new book at the moment called, *Work-Life Bloom*. And that blooming metaphor seemed to be a good fit with that amplifying the good.

(01:27):

Chapter 21. *A Deeper Dive on the Amplify Question*. The quest for the “most” of any color has literally and metaphorically intensified in recent years. It started with Vantablack, a black so black that it absorbs 99.96 percent of light. You've never used it, and nor will you, because sculptor Anish Kapoor has managed to claim exclusive rights to using it in art. If that seems selfish, Stuart Semple agrees. He's developed Black 3.0 in response to Vantablack, and anyone in the world *except* Kapoor can use it.

(02:13):

In recent years, Semple developed the pinkest pink, and in late 2021, the whitest white. Inspired by such diverse sources as the ghost beetle and plant luminescence, White 2.0 is made from a mixture of high quality pigments, resins, optical brighteners and mattifiers, which combined reflect 99.98 percent of light. Semple says that White 2.0 is 50 percent brighter than the best selling white paint.

(02:46):

When you show up at and as your best, you get to shine more brightly than before. The first of these two exercises draws on different archetypes to help you articulate your best, while the second one calls in the help of a friend. Exercise one is called *Archetypes*. The Hero's Journey has such resonance not just because of the nature of the journey: crossing the threshold, journeying through



danger and challenge, facing and mastering the hard thing, and journeying back. It's also because a range of familiar characters are always part of the adventure.

(03:27):

The hero carries the weight of the quest on her shoulders. It's down to her to keep moving along the path and make the decisive move. The mentor is a teacher and a guide, someone with hard-earned wisdom. They're willing to share their scars and stories. The ally has the hero's back, often chopping wood and carrying water so the hero can do what she needs to do. The ally is a cheerleader and a resource. The shapeshifter adapts to what's required, and can fit in or stand out as needed. They're adaptable and elusive.

(04:02):

For the first part of this exercise, ask yourself which role are you most comfortable playing, the role you most often default to. Is there one you aspire to? What role might the other person most usefully play? Interacting with these four roles are four energies. As I wrote in my book, *How to Begin*, this wisdom comes from the First Nation communities in North America, along with the ritual of "calling in the energies" at the start of a gathering. The four energies are those of the warrior (boundaries, a line in the sand, engaging with conflict, fierce protection); the healer or lover (comfort, care, recovery, healing, gentle protection); the teacher or magician (knowledge, learning, wisdom, details, exploration, experience); and finally, the ruler or visionary (ambition, ruthlessness, big picture, strategy, clarity). Which energy do you most naturally embody or most easily summon? Which ones feel more elusive and so you rely on others to bring them?

(05:18)

And if you want, there's a moment to actually stop and reflect on that and make any notes that you want. The second exercise for the Amplify Question is called



The Boasting Friend. “You're awesome... and you're doing great.” This is my email sign-off and my mum hates it. She *loathes* it. Not only is it too “Californian” for her by being over-the-top affirmation-y. But it's not grammatically correct. “You're doing great,” she'll say. “Do you mean, ‘You're doing well?’ You're a Rhodes Scholar, for goodness sake!” She is technically correct about the grammar. But what I know and she doesn't is that every week I get an email or three saying words to the effect of “Thanks for the encouraging note. I needed to see that.”

(06:07):

Most of us get squirmy articulating the best of who we are, and for two main reasons. First, most of us are a little fuzzy about what choice words will express the very best of who we are. A second, more significant barrier is that even if we have some inkling of what makes us great, we are unwilling to name it out loud. We don't want to be that self-promoting, attention-stealing, credit-claiming blowhard who assumes that the top of the mountain is naturally theirs.

(06:41)

Here's a cunning way to get past your own modesty and to find the words that express your technical, emotional and relational strengths. Imagine I'm speaking with one of your best friends. And I ask them, “What is it about you, (the best friend), really appreciate about (you, you the person who's listening to me read here)?”

(07:05):

I go on, “Can you put aside the jokey or snarky or sarcastic comments for a moment,” which, after all, in many cultures, is an expression of love, “and give it to me straight? What do they do? What about who they are? Do you most deeply appreciate?” Tell me five things or more. What would your best friend say? This exercise helps you sidestep the awkwardness of yakking on about your



own great qualities. That's uncomfortable for most of us. Putting yourself in the third person and imagining someone else talking about you feels more objective and impersonal. When you see yourself through another's eyes, you often see things you may not have noticed before. So here's a moment if you want it to stop and reflect on that exercise, and if you'd like to make some notes about it.

Dan (08:04):

Well, hello. My name is Dan Pontefract. I'm the author of a few books, call myself a leadership strategist, and spent 20 years in the real corporate world. My worst working relationship was with a vice president, name not mentioned, who made it so difficult for me because they were perpetually, and I mean systemically, I mean all the time, late for every single meeting, interaction, everything, you name it. Specifically, it made me feel terrible because I was always waiting. I was always wondering, "Is it me?"

(08:57):

"Or is it them?" And I'm talking for about ten years.

(09:06):

What I learned was this: being punctual is not poisonous; being present is actually perfect.

(09:20):

When you're there, when you're on time, when you make the other person matter by saying, I will be there at 10 o'clock, 1 o'clock, 4:30, whatever the time may be. That means that you're recognizing that the other person is a human being, that they matter, that they have other things on their calendar.

(09:45):



And so, I have made it my utmost duty to be on time, and present, and there for the other team member. And that's so important in this day and age of our zaniness and back-to-backs and all kinds of distractions we have at our fingertips.

(10:12):

What will you do to be present and punctual for the people you work with?

MBS (10:22):

I'm so delighted you've had a taste of *How to Work with (Almost) Anyone*. For more information and bonus resources, go to bestpossiblerelationship.com. If you've got a chance to pick up the book and read it, a review on Amazon or an online source would be fantastic. Thank you for your support of the podcast and of the books. You're awesome and you're doing great.