

Video - Simon Mainwaring - Ready

📅 Mon, 9/13 1:24AM ⌚ 49:57

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, leaders, world, jacob, business, ceo, life, company, lead, important, employee, leadership, work, talking, book, consumers, hear, future, simon, balance

SPEAKERS

Jacob Morgan



Jacob Morgan 00:00

Before we get into this episode, a quick message from our sponsor per septics, in our post pandemic world, designing and delivering an exceptional employee experience has become a business imperative, as we all know, for septic can help you get a clear picture of your employee experience with a continuous listening and people analytics platform aligned to your specific business goals. discover why more than 500 enterprise customers and 30% of the Fortune 100 Trust per septic to capture employee feedback, supported by insights and prescriptive actions for every level of the organization, Learn more at per septic.com forward slash future of work, and perceptive is spelled p e, r ceptyx.com. And again, forward slash future of work.



00:56

What I've really one of the lessons I've taken away about work or something I've really worked on for myself is to, to work more lightly. You know, I used to be so anxious and you're striving to get ahead and you think you you're not, you can't be happy or successful until you've done X, Y, and Z. And I think it's a much smarter strategy just to realize that you're gonna put that effort in, but not suspend your happiness until you get there to just travel more lightly take things a little less seriously.



Jacob Morgan 01:33

Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of the future of work. I am your host, Jacob Morgan. And today My guest is Simon Mannering. He is the author of lead with we and he's also the founder and CEO of we first Simon, thank you for joining me, Jacob, great to be here. We were actually talking about this before he pushed record. But when I wrote I think it was in 2008 or 2009. I wrote a book with Josh Peters called twit faced, and you actually endorsed it. I think our publisher reached out to you and somehow we got you involved. But that was well over a decade now. So technically, I've known you for a very long time.



02:13

Isn't that crazy? I mean, it does go in the blink of an eye. But hey, we're still out this weekend. So it's good.



Jacob Morgan 02:19

Yeah. And I also love that you are Australian. So from Sydney, I'm from Melbourne, but you have the really cool accent, and I don't, so I will forever be be jealous.



02:31

Well, I do have to say that you probably have the worst Australian accent I might have ever heard. Yeah.



Jacob Morgan 02:37

Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Great, great way to start the show. So let's talk a little bit about what you have been doing. For people who are maybe not familiar with you or your work, give a little bit of background information about who you are and what you've been up to.



02:52

Well, as you said, I'm Australian, I'm a dad, I'm a father of two daughters and my wife, and I've been out here in the states for Gosh, over 20 years now we live in LA. And you know, 10 years ago, after the global economic meltdown, I sort of looked around. And I really

thought what happened was unfair. It was nothing more than that. I was an ad guy. I'd worked in Australia, London, the US. And I just thought it was unfair. And I heard a speech that Bill Gates gave at the World Economic Forum, he's created capitalism speech. And he said, Hey, we need the private sector to play a bigger role in social change. And I took that very much to heart because I thought business really can make such a difference if it wants to. And so I wrote a book called we first how brands and consumers use social media to build a better world. And that was really about how we use these new tools. Facebook was new Arab Spring, it just happened. And you know, the book came out and it launched my company, we first and really, for the last 10 years, we've been helping build purpose driven brands, allowing them and enabling them to accelerate and scale their impact. And after 10 years of doing that work, you get a line of sight about what's working and what's not. And at the same time, a lot of issues that we're trying to solve for got worse. And so I've spent the last three or four years writing a new book, which you kindly mentioned, called lead with we and it's all about the future of collaborative leadership, how do we actually accelerate our response to all these challenges that we see in the press every day? So that's been the last 15 years Really?



Jacob Morgan 04:18

Well, the podcast is called the future of work. So of course, I have to ask you, from your perspective, from all the work that you're doing, what is the future of work? You know,



04:27

I think the work will become recontextualized because I think up to you know, you know, recent times and certainly, you know, up till COVID there was this work life separation going on, especially in certain markets like the US less so in other countries, but certainly in the US, but I think what's happened now partly was forced on us due to COVID. It's dissolved. You know, our work is infused our life. Our life is infused our work. We're on a zoom call, we see a cat in the background, a baby or child pees over our shoulder, you look at the tchotchkes on the shelf and The hidden gift of all of that is it's humanized us all, we've all been allowed to be more personal, more vulnerable, more private in public. And all of that is leading to a reconsideration of what work is about, I think we're going to include more of the whole human being, not just our professional skills. And I think that we're going to kind of blend more our work and our lives so that they're more seamless. And I think that's a healthy thing for everyone.



Jacob Morgan 05:25

So is it fair to say that you are not a fan of the concept or the idea of work life balance?



05:32

You know, I read a thing the other day, I don't know who's saying it was, it was like, there is no work life balance, there's only balance within you. And I think, you know, I think, with this hybrid work, where if some people like to work late at night, some people work in the morning, some people work in a coffee shop, some people work in an office, I think, you know, the balance is something that we all need to strive for on a sort of Interstate level. And once you do that, I think, you know, you can show up meaningfully, when you're just hanging out and being social, and also you can really contribute on the work front. So I think the focus of the balance has to be within you, rather than sort of this false separation between work and life.



Jacob Morgan 06:12

Actually, I really like that idea of like work life balance, not being so much a balance between work and life, but a balance of your work, emotional state, and your personal emotional state. That to me makes a lot more sense than, like the actual act of working or living.



06:27

Yep. And I think, you know, I've been working in various countries around the world for 30 plus years. And what I've really one of the lessons I've taken away about work or something I've really worked on for myself, is to, to work more lightly. You know, I used to be so anxious, and you're striving to get ahead and you think you you're not, you can't be happy or successful until you've done X, Y, and Z. And I think it's a much smarter strategy just to realize that you're going to put that effort in, but not suspend your happiness until you get there to just travel more lightly take things a little less seriously, and have a little bit more fun on the way because I don't know what it's like for you, Jacob. But I can't even remember things that I was worried about three or four years ago. No idea. So you know.



Jacob Morgan 07:13

Yeah, no, I, yeah, three, four years ago, I have no idea. In fact, to be four years ago, I was living in the Bay Area. And now I live, you know, in in the valley in Calabasas, so totally, totally different. Okay, so we talked about how you think about the future, but what about

as far as like, trends that you're paying attention to? So, you know, the world is transforming quite a lot. What are some of the big things that are on your radar?



07:41

You know, I think there's a few things that come to mind. One is this heightened and growing awareness of all the challenges we face, you can't open a newspaper, if you still do that, or look on your phone every day, without seeing whether it's climate or floods or fires or what's happening in the oceans or, you know, all of these different issues, species being lost. So I think there's a heightened awareness of the challenges we face that are increasingly informing all our lives.



Jacob Morgan 08:07

It's actually crazy really quick before we jump on, my wife and I were We were walking by Nordstrom the day and we wanted to go look at some clothes. And like, right at the front display at Nordstrom, you see, like t shirts, like the world with a bandaid across it, you know, like the wounded world. You see, like, it's crazy. It's everywhere. It's literally everywhere you turn, that we're constantly reminded of things like climate change, and global warming, and just all these bad things that are everywhere. And I don't know how you feel about it. But on the one hand, it's good that there's more awareness around these things. But on the other hand, it also causes a lot of anxiety. Because you just feel like there's so much negativity everywhere, what like, I mean, on a T shirt, in Nordstrom, it's like, I don't know, it's really a hard a hard balance there.



08:57

I agree. Jaeger, I think sometimes the best way to judge the temperature of a culture is to look at like how it's boiled down onto a T shirt, like that. And I think we're all going through really tough times anxiety, stress, pressure, family, professional, whatever. And I think one of the challenges of COVID is I don't think any of us had carved out the time or the pressure hasn't stopped for us to actually process what's happening now. And so we're carrying it forward into our work lives. We're carrying it forward. And kind of you hear a lot of talk of exhaustion and grief and anxiety. And so I think that this is sort of unprecedented in a way. And I think one of the most powerful ways I've observed that people can restore themselves and nurture themselves is get out in the natural world, go swim in the ocean, go walk in the forest, go and connect to something that isn't on a screen. And in addition to that, I've been doing a lot of digital detoxing, where I just like, I don't look at the news anymore. You know, like glean it from what I hear from others and

so on. But I find the sensationalism that's inherent to it or, you know, the clicks. By that you're seeing headlines and so on. I think it takes a toll on you. And I find I'd be much happier since I've tuned a lot of that out.



Jacob Morgan 10:07

Alright, so I want to get back to the digital detox thing. And you can share a little bit more about that in a minute. But I cut you off when you were talking about your trends. Yeah,



10:13

one. We'll get back to that. Yeah. One trend is the the heightened awareness of the challenges we face. Another is something really positive, which is this coalition of stakeholders that is showing up for change. And what do I mean, for a long time, we had some conscious consumers, we might have had the purposeful CEO. But now we've got suppliers, CEOs, employees, customers, consumers, and most importantly, investors, all calling for us to do business differently. Why is that important? For a long time, we used to talk about wanting to change the way we did business and make the world a better place. But we didn't really have the requisite coalition, we didn't have everyone at the table. And until everyone's at the table, you don't really have a viable alternative to what's going on. And so a big trend is now to see the investor class showing up along with all the others. And you can start to see the market forces change, as we're rewarding companies that are doing good. And so I think, you know, there's heightened awareness of the issues we face, we've got this coalition of stakeholders that didn't exist before. And now the third trend is these new market forces where, you know, the more a CEO or a company or its culture or its products, or its impact does good, the more people are buying its products, the more investors are putting money behind that company, the more they're getting listed on the stock exchange. And the nature of business itself is changing. And I'm actually very optimistic about that.



Jacob Morgan 11:38

It also puts a lot of pressure, though, do you find that it puts a lot of pressure on leaders because they're having to do things that maybe they're not used to not comfortable with things they haven't had to do in the past?



11:48

It does put a lot of pressure on leaders, and we deal with CEOs and C suites and founders every single day in our work, we first and all I would say is this, if you don't like risk or discomfort, you're going to hate irrelevance. Because if you are not changing what you're doing, if you are not listening to your employees, if you are not reengineering your supply chain, if you're not innovating in new ways, you're going to be on the wrong side of history. And as these market forces come through, you won't be pushed forward, you could run the risk of sliding off the back. Or if you don't slide off the back, you'll be one of the many people trying to rush through the door at the same time when you know they come to it too late. So I think you know, if you want to be a leader, you've got to stay up front, you have to lead.



Jacob Morgan 12:32

Yeah. How do you think the leadership itself is changing? So I mean, if you look at leadership over the last, I don't know, 10 1530 years? I do you think that what we're starting to see now and what leaders are going to need to do in the future is is that different? Or is it just more of the same?



12:48

leadership is changing massively overnight right now of necessity, but also by choice, and I'm biased here, because you know, my book is called lead with ways. So it characterizes the nature of leadership. But three things I'd say leadership is changing. Firstly, in terms of the whole person, I think, you know, you got thinkers out there, like Renee Brown with vulnerability is strength, and so on. And I think we're at a leadership level, whether you're a founder, an executive, a CEO, you're allowed to be more human now. And COVID has accelerated that, because none of us are doing okay, we're all having a hard time, we're all doing the best we can. And that's gone on long enough for everyone to be honest with each other. So I think the whole human being is now included in what it means to be a leader. Secondly, I think we have a much more inclusive culture today. Like it's not like this hierarchical top down prescriptive, I'm leading you follow, I tell you what to do. But rather, you know, the leader and his leadership team or his or her leadership team, and the company are all co creating their results in the marketplace, the impact they want to have, and so on. So I think it's much more inclusive. And of course, layered on top of that is diversity and inclusion, or Jedi, you know, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, which is long overdue, and has, you know, been given extra momentum through the Black Lives Matter movement. So whole person, inclusive culture. And then I think the third thing I'd say about leadership is, leadership is much more collaborative. Now, it used to be one billionaire, or one company, or I don't know, whoever one of everything was going to do it

all. And I think now it's, hey, these problems are bigger than us. Or we don't know how to think through this ourselves, or the world is so crazy and changing and scary. We're huddling together in fear, but I think it's much more collaborative in nature. So I think it's changing some really, really important ways.



Jacob Morgan 14:40

It actually transitions well to what I wanted to ask you next. And that's the difference between me first and we first and I think you talked about that in your first book. But maybe you could talk about because it's it's a very subtle change. Right, you know, one letter, yet it has such a huge impact. So what is me first all about and what is we first all about?



15:00

Sure, no thanks for asking. And it's it's one letter, but it makes all the difference in the world. I mean, I sat there in 2008 going What is wrong with this picture? Why are certain minority of people making so much money, whether it's in the investment banking world, or whatever, and at the time, everyone's hopes and health care and housing, and everything fell apart in Greece, Iceland, all around the world, and I just as an Australian, I was like, what's wrong with this picture? There's something unfair about it. And really, it's not rocket science, it was just as me first mentality, where my my wealth, my company, my stocks, you know, at the cost of everybody else. And so it's a common expression. And I sort of asked myself, Well, if that's really the root of the problem, how do we need to invert that? How do we solve for that, if that is the problem, which is really compromising the vast majority of people's lives? Well, the tonic for me was we first which is really an equally simple idea. But at the time, people were a bit like, wait, what, you know, I kind of get it, I don't mean first, but once we first, we first is all about making sure that the collective is doing okay, so all the individuals can thrive, not just a few of them. And that means the living systems out there, the natural world, that nature thing that we keep beating up, but but then we talk about how much we love it. It also means the social systems, which is the infrastructure and society and the lives and everything that makes our lives possible. And so here's the big shift into over simplify, it was like, we were taking care of the pots alone before. Yet the way we did it, the hole was breaking down, the pots are Okay, a few of them, but the hole was breaking down, we first is really about making sure that the integrity of the hole is in place. So the parts can thrive much like you see in nature. So yeah, without that, what are we going to do? I mean, Jacob, brands can survive in societies that fail, right? CEOs can't succeed, if they can't attract the talent they want, they can't get consumers to buy their products, because they don't like the role your

company is playing in the world. And so, you know, I think the future of work is really being defined about how you're showing up as a leader, but really how we're leading together to restore and protect the whole so that we can get back to a situation where more people are doing well, you know,



Jacob Morgan 17:19

how do you make this transition because I know a lot of people struggle with this, I've certainly struggled with this in the past where, you know, sometimes you have an opportunity to benefit yourself, but maybe it's at the detriment of the group. And I think we've all gone through this exercise where we've been put in this position. And sometimes we pick ourselves, sometimes we pick the group, but you know, as a leader is you start to get more responsibility, more money, more power and more respect, you climb up that corporate ladder, and you get it, you get a taste of that, you start to start to be like, I kind of like this, you know, your ego gets a little bit bigger. And it becomes very hard to make that transition from me to we. I don't know if you've seen this in the past from some of the executives you work with, but how do you? How do you make sure that this doesn't happen to you?



18:06

Oh, my God, of course, I've seen it with almost every executive over 25 years to varying degrees all around the world. I mean, you're right, it gets seductive in a way, after a while you lose sight of the privilege or opportunity you're being given. And then suddenly, you're like, of course, it was always meant to be this way I deserve this. How could it not be this way, and implicitly or explicitly, you get very kind of assumptive, about how good things should be for you at the cost of others, and you lose sight of the cost of others. I think for the last five decades, that has been something that has got worse and worse and worse. But why would it change now? Because you're saying how hard that changes? Because you know, people could say, yeah, yeah, we've been trying to fix this for decades. Why is it gonna be any different this time? I think the reason is, for the first time, we're facing several crises that are larger than ourselves larger than humanity itself. Climate emergency, loss of biodiversity, pollution in the oceans, all of these issues, don't care what car you drive, where you want to go on holiday, or how fancy you think you are. And it's really starting to affect their supply chains, like, can they grow the cotton to make the T shirt they want to sell? It's affecting their ability to attract talent? Because the employees say, wait a second, are you part of the problem or part of the solution? It's affecting their ability to sell their stuff, because a growing number of consumers, not just younger demos, are looking at it and saying, well, that I want this to reflect my values, like, does this

product, this company reflect my values. And so I think within every human being there is healthy self interest, even if you're a CEO, but there's unhealthy selfishness, where your success and wealth and everything comes at the cost of the majority. And I think we're now being forced to kind of get clear about those two, because all of these issues that are larger than ourselves are really compromising our lives, our society and also, you know, just the whole future of humanity, you know,



Jacob Morgan 20:01

Couldn't agree more. So building on top of it, can you talk about why it's important for leaders now to take a stance on certain issues? I was actually talking with the CEO of Baker Hughes yesterday, you know, \$20 billion energy company. Lorenzo is the CEO there, I think, similarly, if I'm not mistaken, is his last name. And we were talking about why now leaders really need to take a stance. Whereas over the last 30 40 50 years, leaders kind of got away with just kind of being in the gray area, not not just CEOs, but even mid level leaders. So I don't want to upset anybody, you know, I don't want to take a stance here, because customers might be, you know, employees. And now a lot of leaders are having to come out and say like, this is what I believe in, this is the stance I'm taking, and why are you seeing more of that happening? And why is that so crucial? Now,



20:48

it's absolutely crucial your ride for years, senior executives, or lower executives, would or managers would hide behind the boardroom, the job title, the PR press release. And that was because the boundaries of business ended at the edges of business, like we talked about our products and services in industry and category, but we don't talk about culture. Well, now a growing number of brands speaking about women's empowerment, gun control, same sex marriage, you know, all these different issues. And so, you know, brands had the opportunity to shape culture, and many brands do that consciously. But for others, it's been thrust on them. Because if you have certain core values and a decisions made by another sector, like government or something, and it goes against your values, you have to put your hand up. And the other reason that executives stepping up or founders and so on, is because inaction is an action. If you don't stand up on an issue, you're saying something. And here's what typically happens in our world and the branding work we do. If you don't say something, people either assume that you don't care about the same things as they do, or that you don't care at all. Or you lose market share or mindshare to another company that is more intentional and articulate about it. So it comes at a cost of their business. So, inaction is a point of view, it's an action. The second thing is, there's no such thing as neutral anymore. You can't sit there and go, let me just

stand with both, you know, one leg on either side of the fence, the people who follow your brand, who by your staff who work for you will either call you out. Or if you do lean into a topic, they'll say, oh, we're going to deepen our loyalty to you. So you've got a choice, you kind of lose everyone on either side of the fence, or you deepen the loyalty of those you're with. And then finally, I'd say, if you just look at business more broadly, look at what's happened in the last five to 10 years around purpose. Certainly, since I wrote my first book, and you wrote your book we're talking about business has gone from, you know, Unilever and Patagonia talking about purpose to everyone talking about purpose, why the market forces are there. And the crises that we're trying to solve for have got that much more acute. So the other reason that leaders are showing up is that they want to be on the right side of history. You know, you're either part of the problem or part of the solution, as I said earlier, and it's not just consumers that will call you out or the media, its employees and investors.



Jacob Morgan 23:20

This also brings up an interesting point. And it's a very controversial topic SSID, of canceled culture. Because as much as we've seen, and I'm very curious to hear your thoughts on this, because as much as we seen people taking a stance and saying what they believe in, we've also seen a tremendous backlash around people canceling. You know, the one example that I always share is there was this, this executive at Google, and he was a VP, I don't know if you've heard this story. But he wrote this article about how he used to be racist that I've, that's how he grew up. He used to be anti semitic, because that was the environment that he grew up in as a young child. And for many, many years, he was thought that it was okay to be anti semitic. And he wrote this huge article around how he realized that that was wrong, and how his past does not dictate his future, and that it's all about love, and you know, all this stuff. And there was such a, first of all, he got fired from Google, for, I believe, for writing this. And second of all, if you looked at like all the comments, there was a very big mix of some people who were like, I hate you, how could you write this? And other people who are like, it takes a lot of courage, bravo for doing this. So we talked a lot about taking a stance and stuff like that. But I also feel a lot of people are very scared. And sometimes this happens to me too. Sometimes even I'm a little fearful of like, saying something because of the backlash that I might get. And I know a lot of leaders struggle with this. I mean, how do you balance being open and honest and transparent and taking a stance versus the fear of like getting canceled?



24:57

Yeah, it's such a great question. And there's a few different points. They're, firstly, that

example of the guy from Google or anyone who comes out with a point of view you, me, whatever, you can't diminish how important that step in your life is, irrespective of the consequences, you're clearly doing it for a reason. And so that's just one thing that should be acknowledged. Secondly, we live in this crazy world now, where the social tools, Facebook, Twitter, all these other platforms that actually increase the polarization between people. Why? Because algorithms are lazy. I mean, it's crazy, algorithmically, this, these echo chambers, where the data we share informs the data that gets shared with us. And we get deeper and deeper and deeper into wormholes. So we get polarized, why is that important? We can't even agree on what reality looks like anymore, let alone solve for it. Yeah, based on your experience on all these platforms, you have one version of reality, I have a completely different version of reality, even if our values may be slightly aligned, we're still being polarized in different ways. I mean, people who are across the aisle or across the country, or, you know, whatever it might be. And so, as soon as you put your hand up, there's just so many people who are ready to just smack it down. That said, when it comes to being a leader inside a company or a founder, as I was mentioning earlier on, you do need to take a stand, you need to show up, speak up, stand up, in which case, how do you navigate that the way you navigate it, is by staying positive. What do I mean, you've got to stand up for what you believe in without demonizing others, you don't have to go oh, you know, look at this company over here, or look at that founder over there, or you're wrong. But I'd rather say this is what I believe. And I'm going to lean into that. And if you stay positive, and if it aligns with how your company shows up, or how you're behaving as a leader, then that's just who you are. And the people around, you will shake out how they shake out. Much like Howard Schultz when he was CEO of Starbucks back in 2015. At their annual shareholder meeting, he said, If you don't believe in somebody is right to marry whoever they love, feel free to sell your shares. That's it, like, let the cards fall where they lay. But there's nowhere to hide. Neutrality is complicity in action is action. So you've got to stand up, but stay positive.



Jacob Morgan 27:07

Hey, everyone, it's Jacob. Before we get back to the show, just a quick reminder, the future of work requires that leaders put people first employee surveys, and people analytics from PR sceptics can help your organization capture critical feedback about the employee experience. And then focus action where it matters most to drive the business forward, learn more about how you and your organization can do that by visiting perseptics.com, forward slash future of work. And again, that is perceptyx.com. forward slash future of work. And now back to the show. So I suppose there's also a balance between like, if you're talking about something like that, where you know, it's kind of doing the right thing versus, you know, take politics, for example, right, where I know a lot of leaders who were wanting to vote Republican or Democrat, and they didn't want anybody else and

speakers, for that matter to I know, a lot of speakers out there. They didn't want to share who they voted for or what political affiliation they have, or where they stand on certain issues, because they thought that they wouldn't get hired by speaker bureaus or by conferences. So I guess it also depends on the issue, because there's kind of like a right and wrong, you know, marry whoever you want to marry whoever you love. Versus I'm a Republican, I'm a Democrat. You I think you should wear a mask, I don't think you should wear a mask. So do you have any advice on how to balance like, what you share? You know what I mean? Like, I think the topic matters. And I personally have no idea how to navigate this. And I, I mean, if people watching or listening to this have ideas, I would love to hear from them. But it seems like more and more, this is becoming a harder thing to figure out. And I do not know what the solution is. I don't know if you've any thoughts on that.



29:00

Yeah, I will have one strange context, having worked in Australia, and then Europe for a long time. And then in the US, it seems hard to hear now to have an active dialogue, a healthy dialogue around political issues. But if you can go to a cafe anywhere in Europe, you can argue all night and have polar opinion, polarized opinions. And then you're all hugs and kisses and you go home, but that's the very nature of the dialogue. So I do worry about that as well. That said, I think the US is leading in a lot of ways Europe, and I'm oversimplifying here, maybe leading in some ways in terms of the sustainability front. But in terms of purposeful business, I think there's a lot of leadership, especially through innovative companies in the US. So they are standing up for something. I mean, just look at all the companies that have stood up around issues, Dick's Sporting Goods with gun control, or Patagonia around access to public lands or Airbnb with universal belonging. So I do believe, at least in the business world leaders are, you know, grabbing that mantle and assuming that responsibility. I think it's hard too, I think there's a blurry line between personal and professional, what you can speak to. Yeah. And I also, I also think inside companies now, it's got so sort of important to be respectful of everybody else that people are almost gun shy to share any opinion about anything. I've noticed that as well. A little Have you seen? Yeah,



Jacob Morgan 30:19

that's the problem. Yeah. Yeah. Cuz literally anything. For example, if I went on LinkedIn, and I wrote an article, and I said, I think you should wear a mask, I'm gonna get a lot of people out there who are like, Oh, you're stupid, you know, when you don't need. If I go on LinkedIn and write an article, and I say, you shouldn't wear masks, I'm gonna get a lot of

people out there who say You're a murderer, you're, it's like, whatever you put out there, you are going to have people come after you because they don't agree. And maybe part of it is everybody just needs to get more comfortable living in a public life. But I suppose the challenge comes into play when you get canceled, so to speak, you know, there have been a lot of celebrities out there, I'm sure you've heard of where they put something online. And all of a sudden, they get dropped from, from films from concert venues. People sever ties with them. And it's like, I you know, I'm sorry, like, it's not what I meant, or it got taken out of context. It's like too late, you're done? Well, you can end your career in your business. And I don't know how we got to that. But it's just been crazy to see, well, I



31:22

think probably the root of the problem is that the as that expression goes, the internet doesn't forget, you know, and as the dialogue around how important it is to be respectful of everyone and through the lens, so many different lenses right now has been elevated, people look back at the 60s 70s 80s 90s. And then, you know, especially when the web really became popular, people have things online that really, you know, there's no way to justify them. But back in those times, it's something they feel comfortable saying, and now they're getting held up, you know, they're being held to account. So, you know, I think the web doesn't forget, that's one big component of it. But maybe this is just a really important shakeout, maybe there's like, there was too too much access, where people were marginalized before. And now we swung the other way, which is great, because it's not okay to say these things about other people to think certain ways, you know, you just need to be respectful and inclusive of everybody, and, and not, you know, make jokes at other people's expense and all that sort of stuff. And now we're finding that new equilibrium. So, you know, if that's the case, then that's a good thing, because I think it was out of control for a very long time.



Jacob Morgan 32:30

Okay, so for leaders out there, or maybe, maybe you're not a leader, maybe you're just an employee out there. And you're thinking of opening up more or sharing more about, I don't know, it could be anything, it could be your stat your, you know, political beliefs, it could be you know, what you what you stand for what you care about? Do you have any advice and how to do so in a tactful, respectful way? So that? I don't know, I don't wanna say so you don't get in trouble. But but so that it, it comes across the right way, so to speak.



33:00

Yeah, I mean, firstly, it's a collaborative effort. So when you frame your, the purpose of your company, or the values of your company, you should let that be informed by those who work at your company. So that, you know, you're getting some alignment, it doesn't come out of the blue, it doesn't feel like it's prescriptive, and so on. But with that is context, then yes, I think in this, as we said, you know, leaders are more human, now they're more vulnerable, they're more transparent, you know, a leader should be able to speak to his organization and say, okay, you know, this is on a personal level, this is what I believe in. And this is this informs how we go about things as a company, and have a robust dialogue around it. And what I do see in some companies is they get speakers in a speaker series from one side of an argument to another to have a discussion or have a different point of view, to provoke discussion and so on. That said, to your point, Jacob, you know, it's hard. Some companies, I think, Coinbase did this, I said that they didn't want to play into any issues. And certain people actually stepped away, stepped away from the company, while other people won't join a company if they aren't clear about what they stand for. So I think the power we all have, is that every one of us wear certain hats. I'm a dad, I'm a consumer, I'm a citizen, I'm a shareholder. In each of those capacities, we can make conscious choices, because I choose what products I want to buy. I choose what companies I invest in, I choose, you know, where I want to work. And so every one of us has these levers, where we can be very intentional about how we show up in the world. And it's interesting, I think, it's a new day, because, you know, as I mentioned, for the last sort of half century, especially, we've seen business sort of run unchecked in terms of its impact on the environment and how it sort of diminished other people and all of these consequences that are now so clear. And now this is a great reckoning going on right now, which is you can't do that anymore. And you can't behave that way anymore, and you can't speak to your people anymore. And and I think that's long overdue.



Jacob Morgan 35:01

Do you think that as a as a leader or as an employee, for that matter? Can you be too transparent or too authentic?



35:09

Yeah, I think so I think that borderline between being human, in your leadership and also or being too personal, the only way to know when you've crossed it is when you're told, anyone will tell you like, dude, like, you do not go there. Or someone will say, I was not comfortable with that comment. And I think, you know, there's been a huge elevation of the importance of HR and culture building over the last decade, as purpose became more important. And I think, you know, the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of

George Floyd. And all of these issues have really thrust that front and center. So I think leaders today are much more conscious of it. And there's so many cautionary tales out there, Jacob, I mean, there's so many, you know, arguably respected business, people who've lost their careers lost their status, sometimes I've even, you know, had class action lawsuits or gone to jail over behavior under their leadership. And so, you know, I think, you know, if you're a leader today, you better err on the side of caution. 100%. And because your behavior is modeling the behavior of the company.



Jacob Morgan 36:16

I think one of the other things that you talked about in your book is also the importance of stories, if I'm not mistaken. Can you talk about why why stories are so important, especially when it comes to leadership?



36:29

I think and I'm talking purely to this moment in time, where basically, we're in a lot of trouble on lot of fronts, and we got to get out of it. And I'm here, this whole lead with the mindset. And the reason stories are important is, since human beings, you know, emerged over hundreds and 1000s of years, we've all been, you know, people sitting around a campfire telling stories, I tell you a story. We're telling the story. Right now, we're sharing some thinking that people may resonate with people they may pass on to others who knows. And that hasn't gone away until all our brains are uploaded to something and they're living in the cloud and this flesh were is no longer necessary, and we just rotting in the garden. You know, we're still going to be optimistic image, right on the actually, ultimately, that does happen, where the end of the day, we're wonderful fertilizer for whatever comes next. But, you know, I think we've really got to look at ourselves and say, we've got to leverage that power of storytelling to reframe or redirect the narrative of business. We all remember Gordon Gekko and greed is good. And that is sort of a signature for a whole raft of thinking and behavior that was literally playing out in the business world. Well, now we need to tell a different story. And the reason it's so important now, as opposed to before is this, we have the stakes, which is we literally have an existential threat to humanity, will we survive? If you look at all the data that I kind of outline in my book, it's kind of like gnarly, it's like, wow. Secondly, we have the stakeholders. As I mentioned, we have this coalition of stakeholders all coming together for the first time. But then, thirdly, we need a story. And the reason I wrote this book lead with wheat is sitting there again, like I did 10 years ago saying, what is going to drive this change? Because we haven't we haven't got there. And we're running out of time? How do we get further faster? And I think one of the missing pieces is to give us all a lens through

which we can make every decision whether we're a co founder, executive, supplier payroll, whatever it is. And my articulation of that is, you know, how do we lead with we? Which means how do we consciously choose to lead? And then how do we actually go about that in a way that's collaborative and inclusive, so that we're all invested in the result? And then how do we commit towards an end state or what success looks like? where everyone is doing? Okay, where the whole system is thriving, where the natural world can provide for us, where society isn't falling apart. And so this is a very important story, I believe, a reframing of the narrative of business. Why? Because we're, you know, we're all human beings sitting around campfires, telling stories. And if we tell the right story, we can course correct What's going on?



Jacob Morgan 39:09

What if you are not a typical leader? So for example, you're not officially a leader in a position of power, you're not an executive? Can you still lead? Can you practice these things, even though you're not a, you know, officially a leader?



39:23

Yeah, it's funny, actually, I think part of the problem that got us into this mess, is that we think the leader is only the person at the top. But here's my problem with stakeholder capitalism. And for those who haven't explored the concept, there's a big shift between shareholder capitalism, which is, you know, you're only in business to get money to your shareholders, that fiduciary duty to shareholders, dividends, and so on profits, versus stakeholder capitalism, which is really that business needs to work for everyone, all stakeholders in society, including the planet. But my problem with this concept is it doesn't go far enough because I think, I don't think it's just about sharing in the rewards, it's also sharing in the responsibilities. So why is that important? You, when you buy a product, have a choice as to what product you're going to buy, what company you're in support with your dollars, you, as an employee have a choice as to where you work, you as a supplier have a choice as to what product you make you as a CEO, yes, you have a choice. In that capacity. We're all leaders. And this whole concept of labelled we in the book is that each and every one of us whether whether a mother working at home with a family of four to look after, or whether you're a female CEO, you know, looking after 100,000 employees, all of us can make choices that can make things better. And I want to add one more point to this, which is so important. The reason we're in such a mess, is this what you did Jacob yesterday, which may not be the most responsible thing in the world, I don't know what it is, wasn't so big in and of itself. We all do it, I do different things every day, I don't know we do we live or did we do something wrong. But together, the

aggregate of the effort, the actions of millions and billions of people around the world has led us to where we are, everything's connected. And we can't avoid that. In the same way, if we each assume responsibility for making things better. And it's whether it's the consumer, the investor, the employee, the CEO, the supplier, whatever it is, we can use that same connectivity to our benefit. And your actions will have a positive impact that will compound with others, and so on, and so on, and so on. So I'm very passionate about us leveraging this undeniable connectivity between all of our actions to our benefit, rather than our detriment. And when we do that, we can achieve some pretty amazing things quickly.



Jacob Morgan 41:50

I love it. Well, I wanted to wrap up by getting back to something that you talked about earlier, which I think is something we can all benefit from, and you're talking about a digital detox. Can you talk about what that is maybe what you specifically are doing as part of that digital detox and any impacts, you've seen any ways that you're feeling?



42:09

Yeah, I mean, I found the last year and a half really hard, really hard, not because you're writing a book on top of running a company and all that and looking after your family, but like, not only everyone in your life was struggling, anxiety, it could be depression, it could be just fear about the future. I mean, literally, it was life and death, stepping out the front door, it doesn't get more crazy than that. And so that was enough of a toll for everyone to take in every single day. At the same time, their social life was taken away, their holidays were taken away their graduations, their birthdays, you know, just enormously difficult. And so I found that when I looked at the news, Jacob, I was like, This is too much. I mean, you know, I understand the role of the news to give us information, including all the not, you know, sort of bad things that are happening out there. But I think we need to take responsibility for the input, so that we become a healthier output. And so I stopped looking at the news as so much, I stopped looking at social media so much because it's been so polarizing and so divisive. I spent more time outside nature, outside in nature, I committed to getting healthier in terms of exercise. And I think what's been so powerful about this last year and a half is it didn't teach us something new, as much as it reminded us as to what we forgot. Which is, do I want to give you a hug when I see a man. And I want to go out in nature. And I want to kind of touch that tree and say you're awesome. And I want to look around to the natural world and say this is amazing. And I want to get in the water and I want to sit down with friends, have a drink, have a laugh. So I think the digital Detox Detox is all really about protecting yourself against the assault of all the

negative things out there, reminding yourself what's really important and good for your health and well being and then committing to a course of action that will allow you not just to feel okay today, but sustain it over the long term because we're 18 months into this now, and who knows how long this is gonna go on for. So it's been what it's been working



Jacob Morgan 44:15

in Have you felt better as a result? And so you completely just cut out the news and you don't look at your screens, your your Apple, watch your phones, it's just off.



44:24

You know what you do you know, when you kind of you look at something, but you don't want to look at something, you kind of go Oh God, you know, you're like, Nah, don't look at the solar eclipse, you'll go blind or whatever it is. I kind of look at the headlines each day and scan them your love. Yep, that's true. But not in an irresponsible way. We've all got to be engaged with what's going on in the world, especially if you're writing books and all that sort of thing. But I found that year prior there was so much going on with political turmoil and with COVID and, you know, Black Lives Matter and all of that there was that I found I don't know what your life was like Jacob but I was kind of on this cycle of watching the news all the time, all the time. Although Yeah, you know, he was always on, always on. And I ended up finding that I wasn't happier. And it also made me less capable of doing the job as I needed to as a father, as a leader at work as a husband and everything else. So I think it's sort of it's not stepping away from those important issues. It's just managing the balance better. So you can look after those in your life more effectively. Because I think we're all finding it really tough, you know.



Jacob Morgan 45:28

Couldn't agree more. Couldn't agree more. Well, Simon, what was it?



45:34

Oh, it's been hard. But you're not one comment on that. Jacob says, it's really good that it's all okay for us to say it's been hard. Like, yeah, I think we're all pretending before and we're all putting on a face and everyone was showing up in a certain way. But I think everyone has one glass of white wine or one comment away from tears or whatever. And I think that's good. I think we're all allowed to be human with each other. I think it's a good

thing.



Jacob Morgan 45:58

Yeah, it's okay to be hard. You know, even sometimes, like with my wife, I'm very optimistic about things. And sometimes she says, you know, get down in the gutter with me. Because, you know, it's okay to say that things are bad. And it's unfortunate, and things are miserable. And I'm always like, Well, you know, it's, it's not so bad, like, things could be better. And sometimes she's just like, shut up, you know, get down there a little bit. It's okay to admit it. And so I've been doing a better job over the last 18 months, just saying, Yeah, you know, you're right. This sucks. Like, there's, it's terrible. There's no other way to say it. I'm not gonna try to sugarcoat it and pretend it's something that it isn't. No,



46:31

I hear you. I hear on that one year, my wife of 27 years, you know, she calls me out quickly and readily as she should and I mean, even the employees at work and everything, you know, everyone is course correcting each other. And I think one of the positive things Jake was saying is everyone's leaning into each other in a new way when you're more vulnerable with each other and you let people know what's going on your team at work, your close friends, that little core COVID group that you've been nurturing over the last 18 months. We're all there for each other and I think that's been really wonderful as well.



Jacob Morgan 46:59

Yep, couldn't agree more. Well, Simon let people know where can they learn more about you, your book, anything that you want to mention, please feel free to do so. So people can check. Thank



47:08

you. Thank you. I'd love people to check out the book it's called lead with we and you can find it on Amazon lead with lead calm, or at lead with lead calm. So Amazon lead with lead calm. You know, if you want to know more about me, Simon Mannering spelled Mainwaring, Simon, Mainwaring comm, there's more information there. But you know, Jacob, I just really, really appreciate the opportunity to sort of explore these topics, because I think there is a silver lining, you know, I think coming out of this, I think work will better serve all of us. And all of us can better serve our work. And I think it's one of the one

of the reasons that things have gone pear shaped in terms of the impact of business, I think we've kind of shut off parts of ourselves. And I think as we return to bring our full selves to work, where we're all going to be better off. And, and I want to say one thing, if you are deeply, deeply passionate, if you're a founder, or CEO, or an executive of any company, and you really want to accelerate and scale the impact that you can have, because you're worried about our future, for yourself, for your kids, for your friends, for your family. You know, I spent the last four years looking at the best companies out there, how they're thinking about it, and created this sort of roadmap based on best practices that you can follow. So if you care about that stuff, I really encourage you to check out lead with weed calm because it's there for you. And it's really developed on the strength of so many people's effort. So hopefully be valuable to your life, but also the impact you want to have.



Jacob Morgan 48:36

Very cool. Well, Simon, thanks again for joining me today. Really, really appreciate it.



48:39

All right. Thanks, Jacob. And really good to see each other and here's to chatting again. You know, and then other 10 years, but if not sooner, for sure.



Jacob Morgan 48:48

hopefully sooner and hopefully next time we'll grab a coffee or, or drink in person.



48:53

Yeah, actually. And now that we're both in LA, let's do it.



Jacob Morgan 48:56

Yeah, for sure. Well, thanks, everyone, again, for tuning in. My guest again, has been Simon Mannering. Make sure to check out his brand new book, it is called a lead with we and I will see all of you next time. Thanks for tuning into this show. I really do hope you enjoyed it. And don't forget to head over to define leadership.com to grab a copy of my brand new PDF that's going to walk you through a framework on how to create your own personal definition of leadership. And why that matters. Now more than ever, you will also see the

definitions of leadership from some of the CEOs I interviewed including from the CEOs of organizations like KPMG, Oracle, and Verizon. Again, you can get that PDF at defineleadership.com and of course, I would love it if you subscribe to this YouTube channel for more videos just like this. And for interviews with some of the world's top business leaders, thank you for watching.