**MindHack Robert Greene**

**Cody:**  [00:00:00] Wow. Ladies and gentlemen, I had the pleasure of interviewing international bestseller, Robert Greene. He's written several books, including the 48 laws of power, the art of seduction, 33 strategies of war, the 50th law, and most recently the laws of human nature. In this episode, we take a deep dive into his most recent book, the laws of human nature, and talk about manipulation.

The difference between self-love in narcissism. What is true altruism, human behavior and him and much more. We also end up talking about his near death experience that Robert had and how he was processing that. This interview was recorded in late 2019 and just like this intro, it took a while to release partially just because of my own anxiety about my own performance as an interviewee.

Nonetheless, we're never perfect, but we can always learn from our experiences. And this interview is still just as relevant [00:01:00] today in a covid 19 world as it was before. So without further ado, please welcome Robert Green.

**Robert:** thank you for having me Cody. My pleasure.

**Cody:** I like to get right into it by starting and asking you about the perspective in which you've always written from in particular the 48 Laws of Power. It seems like you wrote that book from a nihilistic perspective of the human race. And that that your default view is that other people are out to get you and you have to look out for Numero Uno.

Where did you develop this somewhat controversial Viewpoint for your books?

**Robert:**  well, you know, I wasn't my viewpoint when I was three years old. I'll put it that way but as an adult working in the work world after several years of. Seeing people in very different jobs.

I had it was kind of a worldview that developed. I mean I read Machiavelli's Prince when I was 16 or 17, but I can't say I really understood it. [00:02:00] It's the kind of idea about power and how about how people can be manipulated. It generally comes to someone after they've had some experience in life after they've had some painful experiences.

And particularly in the work world. So, you know, it was an evolution, but I would say that my years working in Hollywood as a not very successful screenwriter and it is assistant to a director definitely shaped to a good extent my feelings about people in power. And how they operate and I don't believe that everybody is operating by manipulation when I make the point in the book everybody wants power and you can see it in every kind of interaction in life.

So it's a deep need because the the sense that we have no control over our colleagues over our spouse or partner over our boss [00:03:00] over our children is deeply disturbing to us. So let's be honest. And it's something that we want very much but the manipulation side is something that some people in particular are very good at and for those of us who aren't so good at it and I would include myself initially in that it can be the source of a lot of pain of a lot of very bad experiences that we don't understand.

So a lot of the 48 Laws of Power is about opening your mind that you're not so naive. But the motivations of people of the people around you and that says it's different from the usual self-help book. It doesn't usually paint. Such a dark scenario about human nature

**Cody:** when I read the 48 Laws of Power, it really struck a chord with me because I had this reoccurring issue where I kept getting manipulated by business partners and your book really made it clear to me that some of the things I was simply doing wrong. [00:04:00] In fact, you know, I wrote an article that's actually become pretty popular on medium about one of those experiences in nearly a year after I'm still getting emails from other entrepreneurs sharing their story about how they were also manipulated.

**Robert:** Yeah. It's a pretty common experience pretty Universal. I think almost everybody has had these kinds of run-ins with people where their blindsided. Buy a business partner or a colleague etcetera. So I want to even the playing field. I want to give the average person out there knowledge about the kind of games that people play kind of things that people don't write about it.

They don't really write articles in the newspaper about but that you'll experience all the time in the work world. So I very much empathize with what you went through. And now do you believe that most people don't have the capacity to judge other people's motivations for what they do? [00:05:00] Well, most of us are operating blindly.

Yeah, it is a problem. It's not that we don't have the ability to understand people and to be able to recognize the toxic types out there before we get involved in our lives as I made a point in many of my book. We have all of the necessary skills for being able to detect them. But our problem is that we are so self-absorbed and I include all of us in that I include myself that were not paying attention to the signs were generally wrapped up in our own thoughts and our own dramas and our own problem.

And so particularly my last book the laws of human nature. I want to lay it out very very clearly to you. Listeners out there how you can decode people's behavior how you can see behind the masks that a lot of people wear. So when someone is manipulating it when someone is a toxic narcissist, Or any of the other kinds of [00:06:00] toxic types that I talked about they don't announce it to the world.

They don't wear signs and say I'm toxic stay away. They're very clever. They disguise it. They appearCharming they appear normal they appear friendly and so you mistake we generally we humans have a problem that we mistake the appearances for the reality and because life is hard and difficult and we're all so busy it takes effort.

To think about people and to look and really try and understand what is motivating and what is going on behind the friendly smile. And so I want to give you a kind of a code book for deciphering it for being able to see the patterns of people pass. The indicate someone has a toxic personality. I want you to be able to read their nonverbal communication is so important.

And I want you to be able to judge people's character before you get involved with them. So this is probably [00:07:00] the most important life skill that you can develop because throughout your life you're going to have to partner with people. None of us can survive in this world alone. This can be an intimate level but it's most definitely in your work and.

Inviting into your office or is it business partner the wrong kind of person can cause you incredible grief that can resonate for years and years and cause you emotional trauma. So the ability to gauge a person's character not their charm. How much they like you but their character was deeply engraved in them.

There's someone who has a strong character. They can handle pressure and adversity is that they can take criticism that they can take responsibility for their mistakes. They can work with other people and not be so selfish that everything has to be on there too. That is the most critical life skills to see through the mask and judge their character and that is really kind of [00:08:00] what inspired me to write the laws of human nature.

**Cody:** So a lot of points that I'd like to touch on but one of the biggest is how do you distinguish between having self-love and narcissism because we all have an ego and you know, everything we do is for ourselves because that's human nature. And so at the same time we're dealing with increased levels of anxiety depression and just a lot of self-loathing because we're always comparing ourselves to others and so.

I would almost say that we need to have more self love because if we have more self love than we're not going to delude ourselves by getting addicted to drugs or materialistic items that are simply distractions from dealing with our own emotional trauma.

So then how do you distinguish between emotional trauma and narcissism?

**Robert:** Well the very good point and I make it clear in chapter number two in the book when I distinguish between self love and narcissism and I want to make the point that all of us. Are self-absorbed all of us [00:09:00] are narcissists to a certain degree the person that tries to tell you. Oh, no, I'm not a narcissist.

Oh, no, I'm not self-absorbed is exactly at disguising the opposite quality the trying to single themselves out as if they're special or different but by our Nature, by the way that we were raised as children and our incredible intense need for attention and recognition and validation from other people all of.

Develop a self that we have to love for those moments when we're not getting attention from people. So self-love as you point out is actually very important if people are damaged in early childhood and don't develop a self they can love for various reasons and explain. Why in the book that happen.

Then the only way that they can get that validation in attention to that humans need is by acting out by get becoming dramatic is by manipulating people to always have the attention Spotlight on [00:10:00] them is a kind of emptiness about them, but they're always trying to fill it with attention and these kind of people can be very very difficult to deal with but to the degree that you love yourself that you have a self that you appreciate that in times where you're.

Where you have failure in your work you're able to recover and bounce back and say actually I am a good person. I am worthy. You know, I make mistakes. I'm human. I could have done things differently, but I'm not going to hate myself is very very important for recovering from any kind of personal trauma, but at the same time, Our self absorption which we all suffer from particularly in our technological age is a definite problem and obstacles becoming a powerful social agent in the world because what it means is to the degree that we are so self-absorbed.

We're not paying attention to people and when we're not paying attention to people. Make all kinds of [00:11:00] mistakes. We have all kinds of misunderstanding. And so what I want you to do is I want you to take that energy that went into your self absorption into your loving yourself into your being obsessed with your own thoughts and the people who share your own values and I want you to turn that outward instead of inward.

I want you to direct some of that love with other people to developing your empathy so that. Instead of being so obsessed with yourself and your own ideas and thought you try and get inside perspective of other people and I can many Clues as to how you can develop this empathy which I compared to a muscle that we all have and needs exercise and it requires that you actually.

feel deeply interested in other people because if you're in a conversation, you can notice this tomorrow when you're at work or whatever your tendency 99% of the time is the kind of half. [00:12:00] Listen your sort of hearing your own voice inside going over. Oh, well, I have this meeting later on. Oh this person they like me we're constantly thinking of ourselves.

And the reason is is we're more interested in our own world in our own ideas and thoughts and in lives of other people and I want you to turn that around and I want you to become fascinated by people. I want you to see them like their characters in the movie that they have their own really weird dreams their own strange thoughts.

And your job is trying to understand and to get inside their mindset to put yourself in their perspective to understand their own pain what it was like for them to be a child, but it's like for them to go through the world you can never obviously completely and get into other people's shoes that's impossible.

But to the degree that you can attempt through your imagination your empathic powers to literally penetrate the minds of other people. And get [00:13:00] outside of yourself, you will begin to develop much stronger bonds with people bonds that are much more powerful deep connections. You'll be able to see through the toxic narcissist types that are out there and generally you'll be a much more perceptive and sensitive social actor in the world.

So you can survive in life without a degree of self-esteem. Definitely. Once you have that self-esteem need to take it to another level and turn into genuine empathy and love of other people and I give a lot of ideas in the book about how to do that.

**Cody:** So in some ways though, we shouldn't be more altruistic.

We should simply be more empathetic for others, right? Because you also argue that we idealize altruism and that at the end of the day, we're all for ourselves.

**Robert:** Well, you know, I made the point throughout the book that like on [00:14:00] social media people are always sort of making a big display. Of the generous causes they support of all the great things that they're in favor of, you know, the social justice Warrior type phenomena.

And if you're truly altruistic, if you truly are out there and your selfless and your caring about other people. You're not motivated by the need for publicity or for attention. So a lot of the stuff we see out there with people showing off about how much money they donate and how much they care about this cause of the other is a form of narcissism.

They want attention. They want people to love them for all the great things that they're doing and I believe that that is some degree unhealthy. So it's not that altruism is a bad thing. It's that. Are you in it to genuinely help other people or are you all about yourself and the attention that you can get and there's a very big difference between the two.

[00:15:00] **Cody:** So what about something I getting a homeless person money and knowing that you're going to feel better after giving them the money. And technically it could be classified a good deed but how do you look at that? because you also talked about how we're not as emotionally connected with our inner selves as much as we think so when we get angry at somebody we think it's just that situation.

We don't know that it ties back to some emotional trauma, but how do you know like if I get that money to a homeless person? Is it out of altruism?

**Robert:** Okay, are you doing it? So the other people will see you doing it. Are you doing it? Because you know, you want that homeless person to see you as a good person or are you thinking about their life and their situation and in sometimes you have to understand that if they're a drug addict for instance You're simply giving them more money to help with their addiction, but maybe that's what they need.

Maybe that's life is so harsh, but that's okay. But you know the [00:16:00] generally we're all connected. We're all human even homeless people they are just as human as you are. I and nobody is Superior or more worthy of attention or respect and anyone else so I constantly in Los Angeles see homeless people and I try and and empathize with their circumstances and how difficult it will be and how lonely that life is.

You know, maybe it's not so much giving money, but it's more like giving them attention and talking to them and treating them like a human being and entering their world and maybe giving them something else besides money, you know, if there's somebody that you see every day and your car is slipping them a couple dollar bills.

Stop one day and donate some clothes give him some clothes. With some object that help make it a lot easier that they can be used predicted purposes, but generally think inside their circumstances and what they [00:17:00] need and what they want and are you doing it just so that other people will see you or are you genuinely thinking about what these people need?

That's the difference.

**Cody:**  So what do you say about the comparison between outsourcing opinions and this era versus say, empathizing with another person in terms of energy requirements.

Now when it comes to empathizing with another person as you say yourself a takes energy and even when it comes to our Trump era is a lot of people Outsource their opinions to use sources to websites to articles and they don't question the sources right because we have to stop somewhere and so in some ways, I think you can make a comparison between exerting the effort to try and empathize with somebody as well as the whole situation we have with fake news curious if you have any thoughts.

**Robert:** Well, there's limits to empathy and I make that clear in the book. So, you know, there are people out there who are [00:18:00] deceptive who are slippery who are tricky and if you just simply sit back and try and see their point of view and just sort of love them for whatever you're going to probably be their victim.

It's some point so you need to be realistic. So the empathy muscle that I'm talking about when you're dealing with someone. To is is not have your best interest in heart. But I mean in those situations is to the degree that you can understand. You can understand where they're coming from and why they're so manipulative that you are better positioned to be able to defend yourself.

So your ability to get inside the minds of other people is not only for the purposes of working better with your colleague. For your business partners or your intimate friends of never but it's also to be able to detect people's character and to be able to judge those who are destructive. So I don't want you going around to trying to love everybody in your environment and to be naive like that.

My books about [00:19:00] opening your eyes, but you're not going to open your eyes unless you're able to Get outside yourself and see into the mindset of other people and one of the. Worst characters and all of history probably one of the worst criminals ever that lived was Joseph Stalin and I talked about him in the book and laws of human nature and most people thought he was kind of charming and he was very intimidating and a charismatic and he would look right through you and he would make me weak in the knees and you would succumb to his cell in that moment.

He had credible power over you but I know that there were some people. Who can see through him who could see through the mask of all his power and Charisma. And in fact, he was very frightened little boy. Who is terrified of losing control and to that degree people like that were able to control themselves and not get so intimidated to be more strategic in their encounters with them.

It didn't necessarily save [00:20:00] them because he did commit a lot of power and he was very evil. But the ability to think inside even toxic people will give you all kinds of strategic options about how to deal with them.

**Cody:** It reminded me of a lot of adults grow up, but then they have the same ego state that they had when they were in school.

So if you're part of the jocks or you're part of the geek you kind of associate with those people and you typically stay within your group and that further carries on these biases and other racism and other problems that we have in society curious. If you have any thoughts on any of that on how we can change

**Robert:**  the form of narcissism.

You know, my book is kind of a reality check through a slap in the face. I want you to realize that a lot of your behavior is not as good and nice and Angelic as you imagined it to be so the fact that you are constantly navigating towards people who have your own ideas who [00:21:00] may look like you etcetera to Simply.

A disguised form of narcissism you like people who reflect your own values who made you feel good about yourself. It's like looking in a mirror. There are mirroring you they resemble you they share the same ideas and it's very very dangerous because in this world you have to deal with people who are very different from you different cultures and workplace may not have to deal with women and women with men.

We have to deal with people who come from different socio-economic and cultural background. And so if we become so narcissistic, and so close only to our little tribe and group. We're unable to really operate in this extremely Multicultural diverse worlds that we live in and we sort of handicap.

Our own ability to be a good social actor in this world. So people who are really [00:22:00] good in the social environment and derive a lot of power in it are able to mix and mingle in different environments, you know, they can go and talk to people who come from a different background and communicate with them on their level.

So the degree that you sort of navigate towards your own little tribe on social media and only listen to the narrow band of ideas that come through very dangerous. I also talked in chapter one of the book about your rationality and how we are beings that are really more governed by emotion. In rational thinking and you're probably not aware of this and to the degree that you're emotionally entangled the viewpoints of the people in your tribe or your little niche group on internet.

You're just feeding those emotional responses and true rationality is to be able to widen your perspective to see other Points of View kind of open your mind other ways of looking at the world and so [00:23:00] dependency that you're talking about is very very dangerous.

**Cody:** And the problem with irrationality when whenever we think we're making a decision particularly shopping online that's driven by behavior.

And that has allowed marketing to manipulate Us in these subtle ways that we can't even fathom

**Robert:** yet become is called at the effect of heuristic and what that means is the means by which people make their decisions in buying things. It's basically emotional. It's not rational. It's not like oh, I've compared 10 products and this is the one it seems the best etcetera.

It's more like this is what other people are buying. This looks cool. This is what will make other people think that I'm a cool person. This is something you know, that fits my personality is based on emotional.reaction and marketing people are very very aware of it. They've been aware of [00:24:00] this for 50 60 80 years now and they've been manipulating US based on that they know through their ads and their publicity.

It's not the actual words and make people purchase the product but it's the images the visuals the emotional aspect that they create in you that will convince you to buy the product people know, In stores that if they touch you on the arm, very friendly and non sexual way you are much more likely to buy the product that they're trying to sell you on and on and on there all these tricks about how easily we were manipulated when it comes to basic economic decisions.

And so if you were to look at yourself and see why did I buy this particular product? You know a lot of times people buy things nowadays on Amazon for instance. And you go through the ratings and you notice all of the ratings are really like [00:25:00] wonderful fantastic. And so you get kind of caught up in that you go out there by this four and a half star etcetera.

You're not really thinking you're only kind of joining the herd so so much of your behavior during the course of any day is unconscious. You're not really aware of what is motivating your behavior and how much of it depends on what other people are doing. How your conforming to the ideas and the opinions and the taste of other people and not really thinking for yourself.

**Cody:** I have a mental heuristic myself. Whenever I go to Amazon is I've noticed over time that I will have a problem in. My default mode is let me go to Amazon and find something that will solve this problem and I've ended up buying things that I may be used once.

**Robert:** Yeah,

**Cody:**  and so my mental hero stick now is if I have a problem I asked myself.

How often do I have this problem? And if it's something I can do that, you know, maybe I don't need an automatic can opener know maybe I only open one can of week so I can [00:26:00] just. Is a manual version right and that's helped me and preventing those decisions which effectively are emotionally based because it's partly just to satisfy our present need in that state

**Robert:** very good idea like that.

**Cody:** So I want to ask about how we can become more aware of our Behavior. I know that there's techniques like meditation and I myself I practice journaling where I do a little Journal each day and then at the end of the week I go back and I try and recall my most emotional events and I try and relive them.

Actually think about them from different angles, but a lot of people don't do that. They don't have these types of routines when it comes to meditation and journaling and in your book you propose a lot of various ideas and things that people should be doing but. What's the one that comes to mind about how we can become more aware essentially have metacognition and some ways.

**Robert:** Well, I talked about this in Mastery everything that the human brain depends on come through repetition. That's how you develop a skill. So if I mention that empathy is skill, it's something [00:27:00] you have to practice in your daily encounters. And in that chapter, I explain all kinds of exercises. So the same thing.

Goes with what you're talking about here. So when it comes to yourself and becoming more self-aware, it's like Little Steps everyday. Now, you know journaling is by far the best thing you can do but not everyone wants to do that as the time for that. But in the course of the day, if you can just catch yourself one and you're feeling an emotion.

You feeling excited about some Prospect or you're feeling depressed about what's going on in the world or in your own life or you're feeling anxious about something coming up to step back and to just don't give into the emotion to step back and ask yourself. What is the source of this anxiety this excitement of this depression?

Where is it really come from? Am I [00:28:00] angry because this person said that this particular words to me or am I over exaggerating the personal element? Could there be something in my childhood or something earlier in the day that somebody did or said the real source of the emotion? Why am I anxious about this particular event or phone call later in the day?

Do I really need to feel that? Is it coming from anything exactly real or am I completely exaggerating? So analyze the source of your emotion don't just get into them just don't assume because I'm angry. You have a right to be angry your anger could be misdirected. Or it could be out of not calibrated to what's really going on.

Your anxiety could be way overblown. Your excitement could have a different Source about it could be that you're actually being manipulated you're excited because other people are excited etcetera. So don't just don't give in to your emotion and assume [00:29:00] that they're Justified assume what their real step back and say maybe they're not so real maybe they come from something else.

Maybe they come from somewhere deeper if you do that once. Tomorrow. And then you do it a second time the next day you'll find yourself doing it more often baby steps and soon it will become a kind of a habit. You know, I mean meditation is a good way to do that because when I meditate I'm constantly churning up emotions and things from the day and I sit back and I go why you feeling this way, but maybe you don't have the time for meditation.

It's just what I want you to do is to develop some. The ability to look at yourself from a little bit of distance and say look at yourself as if you were another person and analyzed why you're feeling certain things analyze why you did certain things. So for instance, if you have a failure in life, you have a [00:30:00] project that didn't work out.

Well or that nobody's funding or is that. Can you connect with an audience? What is your tendency is to blame other people to blame this person who didn't help you to blame people who don't understand Brilliance of your idea, etcetera Etc. And when you have success something works out really well.

What is your first reaction? Well, I'm great. I have the Golden Touch. I'm just such a brilliant person in both cases, you're giving into an emotional reactions and you're not really analyzing what happened step back and look to tomorrow do this or today do this and look at your failures and successes in the past.

And go through this process. Well, maybe I failed because I did something maybe I'm not a hundred percent responsible for the failure may be there are circumstances and bad people out there, but I'm sure 40 to 50 percent of the problems came [00:31:00] from me. Why what did I do? Did I say something? This is something in my attitude that turn people off with I really not paying attention to my customers and my clients what they want.

What if I do they contributed to it? And look back in your successes and step back and analyze them go. I think that I was just brilliant, but maybe it wasn't just me. Maybe I was lucky maybe I hit the right the timing was good. Or maybe I had a lot of help from people who actually deserve a lot of credit and have some humility and don't get carried away with what I call grandiosity.

So the ability to step back. And analyze your emotion analyze your excitement your relation your depression anxiety and your actions in life is something you can do tomorrow and it's better to do it in the journal, but you can do it just in your head before you go to bed. You can think about what you did during the day and go over it, but slowly it will become [00:32:00] a natural response.

And as you developed it you will begin to sense incredible power you will have I. Generating this bit of self distance in the ability to observe yourself.

**Cody:**  There's so many questions that come along the line, but I obviously can't ask all of them. one of them actually relates to various personality types and Myers-Briggs in different personality, and I know that you touched slightly on body language, but then also personality types and I believe Myers-Briggs and I know that some personality types are more prone to internal thinking for example versus a very sensory outgoing person.

Maybe they don't spend a lot of time in. And there's that famous quote that you know, all of man's problems stem from being unable to be in a room alone from himself.

**Robert:** Oh, yeah.

**Cody:** So do you recognize that? Some people are potentially more prone to trying to analyze and think through things.

**Robert:** Well, yeah, definitely [00:33:00] there's a genetic component to this and what you're describing is introverts versus extroverts to put it bluntly and.

You know Carl Jung person who kind of came up with these words in this category you sort of describes the different types of extroverts the different types of introvert, but people tend to go towards one or the other. I personally am more of an introverted type which is sort of what Riders generally our oven at all.

Although I do have some extrovert Tendencies and as an introvert, you're more prone. To analyze things up to thinking about yourself and extroverts more prone to find the constant stimulation of out there in the world and they find self-analysis very boring and quite honestly, there are more extroverts in the world than introverts.

I don't know the numbers on it, but I would say, you know 70% of the world at least. [00:34:00] For extroverts so they find this process more difficult. Their attention is always geared to getting stimulation from the world and there's no judgment there. We need both types and both types have their strengths and both types have their weaknesses.

So for somebody who is an extrovert this process that I'm talking about will be more difficult. But it's not impossible and it's like what you want to be in life is you want to have a well-rounded personality you have certain genetic predispositions. Some people are more aggressive than others.

Some people are more prone to Envy than others. Some people are more introverted or extroverted, but you don't want to be completely a Slave. To your own genetic component to your own character. You want to degree of Freedom? You want the ability to kind of expand yourself and expand your skill set and expand the kinds of reactions.

You have two events. So it would [00:35:00] be very healthy for an extrovert to be able to develop some disability to step back and observe and it would be very good for an introvert develop the ability to get out in the world more and experience might not be so fearful and anxious about things and so. These are things that I talked about a lot in the book and I want you to be aware of the fact that you were born with certain qualities that go into your character.

Some of it is genetic. I talked about this in chapter 4 now about character. the introvert extrovert etcetera. Some of it is from your early years as a child how your parents raised you and it sort of creates. An attitude towards like the way you look at the world and I want you to be able to expand your repertoire to not be such a captive to these character traits that are so engraving and have a degree of freedom to be able to do things that are little differently but you can only do that to the degree that [00:36:00] you're aware of who you are you go through life not thinking that you're an extrovert or not realizing that you have aggressive impulses and all the things I'm talking about are useless.

You need to do some introspection need to look at yourself. And the ability to be honest with yourself is not easy.

**Cody:** So on that note of understanding yourself, there's been points in my life where I feel like I try and overanalyze something to the point that I just keep hitting a brick wall and I just keep going in a cycle trying to solve this problem.

And now I've been able to create my own heuristic of sorts of recognizing if I'm spending two three days trying to think about this problem. I can't make any Headway that I'm going to stop thinking about it and just let my subconscious potentially try and work on it, but there's other times that I've been able to solve.

the problem by learning new information by learning the architecture of say personality types and that has given me of view point of looking at other people and then I can label those people. So from this perspective of balancing out your [00:37:00] internal thought how do you know when you need more information because you're hitting a brick wall mentally speaking versus having to learn a new framework so that you can then label something properly.

**Robert:** Are you talking about dealing with people or are you talking about actual like your work itself?

**Cody:** Mostly your work yourself, but it could be actually both.

**Robert:** Well, that's a huge huge issue. I talked about that Mastery and it's something you we could spend hours on but essentially, you know, if you're trying to solve a problem become so immersed in it.

And you don't so deeply you bore so deeply into the problem and consider so many possibilities that you lose perspective that you become kind of locked. You've got information overload and you're not able to get out and look at things from a fresh perspective. And so one thing that I talked about in Mastery, the chapter about creativity is you need to be able to gather as much [00:38:00] information as you can about a problem.

Or situation and really immerse yourself because then your mind is absorbing things on an unconscious level and ideas will come to you later. But then you reach this point where you're so lost. And you're so oversaturated with information that you can't find the solution to it. You step back. You take a day off you stop thinking about it and the next day believe it or not.

Something will come to you as you're in the shower or as you're getting on your car. Whatever the idea is the solutions will come to you, but they don't come to you unless you absorb yourself deeply in a problem. And go through the effort that you were just talking about. So sometimes in science for instance young people will often come up with the greatest inventions because they have a Fresh Approach.

They're able to see things from different angles and people who were in the 30s and 40s. Very [00:39:00] big moment Sciences are to login to a certain experience a certain way of looking at the world a certain perspective and not able to get out of it and look at things from a different angle. So this is another skill that you need to develop whenever you find yourself having to solve a problem.

You want to be able to step back and try and see things from a different angle and look at it in a fresh way. And so there's a whole art. This is solving problems and being creative and they go very deeply into mastery. Which is I think more of what we're talking about here didn't human type level.

**Cody:** Well. Well, I, I'd actually like to pull back and ask you a question that I've had for a long time because when your book 48 laws of power came out, it was banned in prisons and as a whole, it's had a lot of controversy around it. And when you published the 21 laws of human nature.

So I'd actually like to pull back [00:40:00] and ask you a question that I've had for a long time, because when you came out with the book 48 laws of power, it was banned in several prisons and there was a lot of controversy around it. And when you published the laws of human nature, in some ways I felt like it was a reprieve of trying to offer back an alternative perspective that includes self-love.

And empathy. And I'm curious what spawned you to write the laws of human nature is in some ways it, it conflicts with the 48 laws of power.

Well, I want to pull back and actually ask you a question that I've had for a long time with the books is that when you came out with the 48 Laws of Power as you know, it was banned in prisons, and there's a whole lot of controversy around it. And when you publish the 21 laws of human nature in some ways, I felt like it was a it was a reprieve of trying to offer back an alternative perspective that includes self love that includes empathy.

I'm [00:41:00] curious what spawned you to write the laws of human nature, which is in some ways. coincides with the 48 Laws of Power. But yet it's also more positive.

**Robert:** Yes, they do go together a lot about power is being able to not trust appearances and realize that. A lot of the power game involves deception and misdirection and people not really revealing their intentions like on number three of uh, conceal your intentions.

And so the degree that you understand human behavior and what motivates people you'll be better at the game of power. But yeah, I mean each book came out in a different period in our culture and in my own life and I come from a certain point where. I see a lack in the world. I see a problem that people are facing in the 48 Laws of Power.

It was more about how people can be so naive [00:42:00] and don't understand and they're the ones that suffer a lot in life. And then the laws of human nature came more from the point of view of we've now been immersed in technology and smartphones for 15-20 years. However, you want occasion and there's a problem if developing.

And the problem is people are much more isolated. They're much less attuned to social world. You know, if being social is a skill that depends on repetition. It depends on being out there and meeting people and interacting with them that skill is being degraded now because we spend so much of our time in a virtual world or you go to a restaurant and you'll see a couple and both of them.

60% of the time they're both looking at their phone and not even communicating not even looking at themselves. And so we are all sharing in this problem. If developing we're more and [00:43:00] more in looking internalizing things and self-absorbed. And so I saw this as a terrible problem because I do a lot of Consulting with very powerful CEOs.

I served on the board of directors of a publicly traded company. I was really surprised how these very powerful people and how really bad and Annette they were in judging other people how degraded their political skills were how they couldn't see that this person that they had hired was actually incredibly incompetent.

Etcetera and so I looked at the world around me in the news and the people riding me in my Consulting work and I saw this need for understanding human behavior on a much deeper level. Not judging it not categorizing people quickly. I just simply being able to judge people in the objective relatively non-emotional way.

It was like a skill that was missing. And so that's what really [00:44:00] motivated the book more than trying to waking people up. Terrorize to manipulative games that others are playing

**Cody:** So based on all the research that you've done into human behavior. Would you say you're more optimistic or pessimistic for the future of humanity?

**Robert:** Well by nature and the pessimist I have to admit it. I think it's good that you know, we're able to admit our own biases and not pretend otherwise, but there are things that caused me to be hopeful so when you read a lot of history, You become aware of the phenomenon where people continually think that the world is ending.

That the next generation is coming up is useless as going to destroy the world and sure enough things just keep going along and they are completely overreact. So history gives you a perspective since a distance that you don't over react to events that are occurring around you and things have shown that there's always a [00:45:00] reaction.

I wrote a chapter in the book of the generation of phenomenon and how important it is to human and if you look at patterns throughout history, You constantly see crises that a generation reaches and that the Next Generation salt some very brilliant way of creating a new kind of Paradigm. So what part of you believes that a younger generation perhaps the one that's coming up right now is going to create a paradigm shift in how we look at the world.

It's going to shake things up and it's good kind of help us get out of this box that were in so in that sense. With the larger historical perspective. I have a degree of hope that this is just simply a cycle. We're going through on the other hand. There are things that are truly new and different such as global warming which I happen to believe is very real and very dangerous.

And unless we get our act together in the next five or ten years. [00:46:00] It may not be any hope left. You know, we're an animal that is very aggressive and very dangerous and our grading of the environment has roots that go back thousands of years. The first the indigenous group The Mallory's on New Zealand literally destroyed all the fauna and Flora on her eyelid.

And created a real crisis. We've been over with trees. I've got the word that tearing down trees and destroying that aspect or over Using Water Resources. Go back thousands of years and I explained in the book why that is why were fearful for the future and why we're so aggressive. And so these impulses and also are short-sighted which was a lot of chatter number six the fact that we can't think long-term.

These are very very dangerous tendencies in us. And so if we don't come to terms with the fact that we all have to make sacrifices, we all have to [00:47:00] think longer term about the planet and we're all in this together and we might be the animal the kind of destroys ourselves in the end. So that gives me pause and then the.

Technological things that I'm seeing where people are becoming more irrational more prone to Envy more prone to being self-absorbed and more tribalistic. They make me profoundly worried. So as you can see, I'm in a person who's got a kind of a split there depending on the day depending on what I read in the newspaper.

I'm hopeful. All right, pessimistic

**Cody:** very good. We're saying that and I know we're running out of time. And so one of my last questions is in the laws of human nature your law number 18 meditate on our common mortality and I know back in 2018 you had a stroke that easily could have been fatal. How have you seen that from being so close to potential death?

How is that shaped your view of mortality and following [00:48:00] through on What markets really is Seneca Epictetus. All teach is that we need to. Terms with our mortality and how is did that experience? Perhaps shape that view.

**Robert:** Well, I had a stroke which is very particular kind of near-death experience.

And if my girlfriend who's in the car hadn't been there and called 9-1-1 right away. I probably would have died or I would have had severe brain damage. And so, you know, I definitely had I was unconscious for a while and I've had a very painful recovery because. Left side of my body is extremely weak and I'm still I'm still not gotten my strength back so oddly enough.

I wrote the chapter on mortality. I finished that in like May 2018. And two months later, I had this near-death experiences almost kind of ironic. It's something I was sort of trying to describe intellectual way suddenly became very real to me. And so, [00:49:00] you know, I'm very very aware that I'm on borrowed time.

I mean, I've got my health back together again, so I'm not like I don't think I'm going to have another stroke but it could happen any moment. Now, I'm aware of that as I'm exercising or if I'm driving my car. This could be it could happen tomorrow if I'm continually aware not just an intellectual sense.

But in a visceral sense and I talked about it in the chapter. I advocate making your awareness of death not this abstract thing, you know that you're alive and it's not abstract as you can feel it in your blood circulating. I can feel it in you how your brain is over. You can feel it. Once you have all of your organs are functioning.

So your sense of being alive is not abstract, but your sense of death is abstract and your sense of death. It's just as much a part of you as your organs is just as much a reality that you're being alive. It is inside of you and it's [00:50:00] all your cells are dying. It happens in moments. Just before you fall asleep when you go unconscious or it happens and little brushes with death like I had and so you need to make it visceral me to make it not this intellectual abstract exercise.

Oh, yeah on my died. No, he's very real. It's in your gut. You have to feel it. You have to meditate on you have to be aware of it because it's extremely powerful. If you can do that the fact that you're denying your mortality and we all do that the fact that you're not thinking about it. You'll go months without even being aware of it.

Oh, I'm the live forever. You don't consciously think that that you act like you believe that creates all kinds of problems because means that the ultimately we can argue forever in this world today about what is true. And what is not what is State real news and fake news reality and illusion, but there's no arguing when [00:51:00] it comes to death.

It's real it's there. It's waiting for you, right? And so to the degree that you're not coming to terms with the degree that you're turning your back on it you are living in fantasy. You're not a realist and it causes all kinds of problems in life. It makes you anxious without you being aware of why you're anxious.

It means that you will die. You'll be confronted with your mortality and you won't be prepared for it because you haven't spent any time thinking about and I want to say it being aware of your mortality is extremely liberating. It makes you appreciate like I've had to do now since my stroke of every of just you know, how incredibly insane it is to just be alive and just to be able to experience the world.

And they can all be taken from you tomorrow. So every moment is heightened has more intensity to it, you know, so that's sort of been the [00:52:00] effect on me. But on the other hand, I must say having a stroke is one of the worst things to recover from because you have to be so patient, you know, you spend a month.

Trying to exercise your fingers. So you can lift one of the fingers in your left hand and you hardly get any progress and I'm an impatient person and I get so frustrated sometimes like I practice is over and over again with my walking with my hand and I see no progress. So I have a lot of work ahead of me.

I'm not perfect. I have to deal with my own impatience. I have to learn to accept this. You just experienced in to accept that I'm limited in my physical abilities and it might be that way for another year or two. So it's taught me a lot. It's taught me about my limit Tommy about my own flaws and it's made me very very aware in a very real sense that it can all be taken away from me [00:53:00] tomorrow.

You know, it was a very very profound is the most profound shocking difficult. Experience I've ever had in my life. But unfortunately all of us are going to be facing something like that at some point and are you prepared, you know, the philosophers like Socrates said is philosophy of life is philosophy is being able to prepare yourself for death.

And that's also with Seneca said and montaigne and I'll have two philosophers. So the ability to prepare yourself at the end. It's going to make you. Much more able to handle life itself. It's part of the Art of Living. So I want you to not to make this like a oh Robert saw him at its own thing that happened to him.

Oh poor guides that are no look in the mirror. You could have a new tomorrow. It will happen something like this will happen at some point and you want to think about and you want to come to terms with it and I give you [00:54:00] exercises in this chapter and I explain. Incredible power that you can have I'm making this by confronting your mortality and turning it into something positive instead of negative.

**Cody:** And at the very end of your book you quote, we will experience illness and physical pain. We will go through separations with people we will face failures from our own mistakes and the nasty malevolence of our fellow humans in short. We need to Love Our Fate.

**Robert:** Yeah, that's a more fussy. And as I said, it's not been easy for me because my faith meant basically all the things that I really loved in life.

Swimming hiking traveling we're taking away from me. What a bad fate but in some ways there's systems and blessings to it. So that very intellectual abstract idea of loving your fate, you know something I've had to come to terms with in a very real level [00:55:00] and I can honestly say that what I wrote about is true it has incredible power to because I've had to live in now based on the experiences of the last few months of my life.

**Cody:** And I want to thank you on behalf of millions of people because you've positively influence their lives now that you've written all these books and you've affected Millions, Is that the mission that you had did you want to leave a legacy?

Did you want to influence Millions by disseminating this information that wasn't readily available to help Humanity despite your pessimism.

**Robert:**  Well deeply pessimistic. I'm on a one-on-one level. I believe people are incredible incredible of great things of transforming their lives, but I'm realistic.

So a lot of self-help books kind of dilute people into thinking that with a few tricks with my little slim 150 page book, you will suddenly become a better more powerful person. I find this bullshit life is [00:56:00] difficult. If you want to change yourself, it requires a lot of work. It requires a lot of honesty requires the ability to look at yourself in the mirror and realize that you kind of going through the motions.

So I'm a realist in life and. You know, I can honestly say though that obviously money is important to me and I've made a lot of a good income from my book so I won't sit here and lie that I don't do it for money, but it's not the primary motivation. I can honestly say because I could have made a lot more money by just simply going on the lecture circuit or just simply writing a sequel to the 48 Laws of Power instead.

I spend four or five years. Trying to write a book that I think is really going to help people and leave a legacy and means that I live on after I die and that I've been able to change people is what really truly motivates me and which is why I spent. [00:57:00] So much time and intensity working on a book and it's probably what led to my stroke that I'm a little bit too intense, but it is truly what does motivate me?

And when I hear from people like you or other readers that the book is help them in some way. It's extremely gratifying. I don't have the power. The president has I want to be grandiose, but I have had the power that affected lots of people around the world. All different countries and it helped them to some extent.

So it really does motivate me and is extremely gratifying. I can't tell you how gratifying that

**Cody:** and that's really all I have. Thank you Robert. It's been inspiring and empathetic and so many emotions that I still have the process. So, thank you.

**Robert:** Thank you, Cody and really enjoyed it. Thank you.

**Cody:** Hey guys, this is Cody again. I hope you enjoyed that episode of [00:58:00] Mind hack and if you're interested in getting more mind hack worthy stuff straight to your inbox. Then you might consider signing up for my Weekly Newsletter it often contains links to new episodes blog posts and other interesting finds.

I found on the interweb in the past week it pretty much focuses around productivity and efficiency. So if that's your thing. Be sure to visit my website at Cody MacLean.com. That's mcla i n.com to sign up. Also if there were any interesting websites company's books blog post quotes or anything else that was mentioned in this episode.

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That's all for now guys. Thanks again for listening and I'll catch you guys again soon. [00:59:00]