

 **Metigy** podcast



The reason to start a business is world domination

Brian Lim, Dandelions

Daren:

"When I meet people that are very kind. That work very hard, for things that won't benefit them immediately. I always take a step back and find out why. Often you will find they aren't building the biggest company to make money - they are building a company to answer a specific company to "

That's philosophical entrepreneur Brian Lim on why growth isn't usually exponential and scalable.

While we love to keep things fresh on the Metigy podcast, some themes, ideas and core pillars need to be revisited more than once to really stick. (sticky sfx)

And that sticky theme is...[drum roll please] resilience.

Resilience is synonymous with flexibility, durability, toughness, and the ability to spring back.

Find out how a factor growth and resilience play in entrepreneurial life on this episode of Forward Thinking.

Daren:

Brian was born and raised in Singapore and moved to Sydney Australia in 2003. He's a telecommunications entrepreneur who persevered through naysayers and pessimists about his idea that crosses between the space industry and telecommunications.

Brian's Wise telecomms journey began when he wanted to figure out how to terraform planets or climate change for desirable effects. So, he looked into the needs of providing macro and micro-scale information gathering at a scale of a planet. It was a real challenge for him to understand how this was a possible business, and a lot of people do not understand what it takes to get there, and even fewer understood how the idea was a valid business.

Brian decided that the right path was a way to build communication/sensor towers that could be deployed from an aircraft or spacecraft to provide communications in remote areas and disaster regions were the starting point.

He's networked and supported over 1,000 startups across six continents and has managed to raise more than USD \$5million dollars for the companies that he has founded.

Now as the founder and CEO of Dandelions (Formerly known as Wise Consulting), Brian integrates emergency services, space logistics and on-demand Internet of Things (IOT) to build solutions for public safety..

A few things you'll learn in this episode. The Importance of having a mentor and how to get a one that's suitable for you, the shared economy of talent, kindness and experience, persevering through business failures and gaining self-confidence, the start to Dandelions

(FKA Wise Consulting) and its ideation to process, and much more! Let's get into the deep learning sessions with our head of content Brendan Hill and Brian.

Brendan:

Brian, welcome to the show.

Brian:

Thank you for having me.

Brendan:

Super excited to talk to you again. Haven't seen you for a while. It's always good to talk to you because you're always working on something super interesting.

Brian:

Yes, that's right. And that's probably also why I don't have a girlfriend at this point in time, but win some lose some.

Brendan:

And one thing I wanted to point out to the audience is your email address, taking over the world.

Brian:

Yes.

Brendan:

What's the story behind that because I don't get to interview someone that's trying to take over the world everyday.

Brian:

Actually, if you email me on that email, I have a quote line of this, everybody is trying to take over the world, and I'm just being honest about it. We all grew up with fantasies of the things we want to do. And some of us, of course just wanted to take over the world, be the evil villain in the movie, take over the planet. That's why we start businesses as entrepreneurs. Ooh, did I say that out loud? But so instead of just keeping it aside and being politically correct, and it's like I said, "Screw it. Let's just be honest about it. We all want to do it." And the best part about it is so, when say Brendan, when you get an email, your email address will be `brendan@takingover.world`. So, imagine your name@takingover.world.

Brendan:

It's enticing. I'm interested. But you do have a very impressive profile. It's kind of like reading Tony Stark's profile. You've got experience in a lot of areas. I mean, we're talking about space, startups, you work with Catalyzer as well who helps migrant entrepreneurs. You've met Richard Branson. You've been a mentor for the World Food Program. You've worked with over 1000 startups across 100 markets from six continents, a lot to unpack here over the next 40 minutes, but I want to dive straight in. So, I mean, what are some of the lessons that you've learned from consulting with over 1000 startups?

Brian:

One of the interesting things that actually a very successful entrepreneur told me was that the world works on self-interest. We want to do things for ourselves. And I see truth in that. And when I talk to a lot of entrepreneurs, there's a lot of self-interest there. But if you dig a little deeper, it's not really self-interest, like why did you do choose to have kids? You wanted kids but you live your life for your children. As a parent you do everything for them. You do everything for your family. There's a lot of entrepreneurs who are successful because they're building something of value for others. If you're an entrepreneur building houses, if you build homes that people want, they will buy it from you, they'll be grateful to be able to spend that money with you.

Brian:

And what I realize is that the world doesn't work on self-interest. The world runs off self transcendence. Self transcendence is, was added to the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs 20, 30 years after it was made. And it was actually a comment saying that when a person reaches the best that they can become, they desire to give back, to build for others. And when I dig deeply, I realize that a lot of people's success, a lot of communities that have blossom that we take for granted have come from individuals who have such high levels of self transcendence that they sometimes forget to take care of themselves. And so, when I meet people who are very kind or not necessarily of obviously kind, but working very hard for things that won't benefit them necessarily immediately, I always take a step back and going to find out why. And often you'll find is, they are not building the quickest company to make money, but they're trying to build a company that answers a very difficult question that the community that they want to serve needs as an answer to.

Brendan:

Interesting. And for these early stage businesses that are listening now, how can they acquire a mentor, someone that is at a high level like yourself, that's a few years ahead of them that they can learn from as I mean, it's been a common theme from the previous guests, how much mentors have helped them on their journey?

Brian:

I'll make a comment that mentors are great. Like I, in my own research, I can tell you that there's no individual that I've ever found who that we consider successful in any capacity that did not have a mentor or someone they looked up to to help them get there. And I have been hard pressed to find anyone who can say anything against it. Every high performing athlete, business person, priest in a church, everyone had a mentor. So yes. Get a mentor, definitely. As for how to get a good mentor. There are a lot of good people out there who know their work, but they don't know how to teach. So, one of the things I realized is that when I started, I didn't have a mentor in what I was doing, but I found an answer in people's insults and criticisms.

Brian:

So, they would say, Brian, you can't do space, why are you doing this? Just go focus on your little things, go get a job. And we can take it as a negative comment, certainly, and many times we do. But when I sat down and asked a question, why did they say that? And it revealed far more. They were people who had no self confidence and were telling you to play a small game because they don't want to admit that their small game is wrong. You

have people who tell you it can't be done, throw all the sciences and physics in the world, but they still won't believe that you can do it.

Brian:

But if you understand where they come from, and if you begin to answer those questions, not what the criticisms is, but the reasons on how and the logic on how the criticism appeared in the first place, the funny thing is the mentor shows up. Because what the mentors will see is that you can cut through the bullshit. You can see the world for how it is, right? And you can see yourself for how it is because it's a lot of personal reflection. The teacher will come to the student who is willing.

Brendan:

Interesting. What's the best way to find a suitable mentor?

Brian:

Be authentic. So, if you want to make a million dollars and that's all you care about, share it, you attract people who believe in the same things as you and who have found success in the same ways that you're looking for. If you want to build a cure to AIDS, talk about it. People know people, and they will introduce you to people of similar values to you. And it's your choice when you meet these people, is this the path you want to take? Is this the kind of success you want to have? If the answer's is yes. Honestly, go for it. And if the answer's no, look elsewhere.

Brendan:

That's a good strategy for sure. And on your background now as well. I mean, you have advised over 1000 startups, but personally you've worked on over 10 startups that failed. Can you tell us the story about how you built that determination to get up and try again? Because I imagine being hammered down 10 times, 10 failures kind of actually reminds me of a super villain. Because super villains, they get defeated by the hero each week, but then they have their loyal followers that may pick them back up again, and they try again. I mean, do you resonate with any particular superhero? Can you tell us about where you got this determination from?

Brian:

I would say, I'm the Batman Joker combo. And onto your point and all the super villains, right? Batman is a billionaire with all the cool gadgets, all the training, all the resources at disposal, and the willing ignorance of an entire city. And you have the Joker who is smart, but on a smell of an oily rag gets a bunch of people who's more brawn than brains to go up against the Batman, rob banks, do all these nasty things, and somehow he's Batman's equal and he keeps coming back. So, you got to give credit to the Joker for just being able to be there and constantly be back in the field all the time.

Brendan:

Keeps getting back up, failure after failure.

Brian:

Exactly.

Brendan:

And I would be doing a disservice to our listeners if I did not ask you, Brian, to do a brief sample of your Joker impression.

Brian:

Oh, Batsy, Batsy, Batsy, where you been all my life? You know that Holly doesn't like you that way. She's all my little sweetie pie.

Brendan:

Never disappoints. And now speaking of your next startup that you're working on now, so I haven't heard much about this, super excited to do I into it. Wise Networking. Is this still in the space industry? Can you tell us more about Wise Networking?

Brian:

Yeah. So, Wise Networking is in many respects the space industry, but the way we look at a company is we look at the way the customers find value in us. And that's how we label ourselves. So, I am using space technology and space services, but I don't call myself a space company from that perspective. If I were to call myself what kind of company I am, I consider myself a company in emergency response. And Wise Networking is actually, we have filed the patents and we have developed the capability to drop miniature phone towers from space, back to Earth, to restore communications in any conditions on the ground after a disaster.

Brendan:

Wow. How does that work?

Brian:

You get my ex-girlfriend with really hot head, you give her the cell phone tower, she starts talking, fills a balloon, it goes all the way up, and then eventually it pops and she falls down where it needs to be. Now of course, as you can tell, that's a very, very authentic and real way of doing business. No. So, what happened is we sat down and looked at the problem. A couple years ago, I've realized, we all understand that disasters are getting more and more severe and more complex. Logic and reasonings for it, we can argue, but we know that that's what's going on. And I had a realization that we as a society have innovated our way out of being prepared for disasters. So, in an emergency you're supposed to have an AM radio on you, so that you can hear instructions on what to do next.

Brian:

Who carries in a radio anymore on them? We only carry smartphones. So, that is an interesting problem. And smartphones, great in all their respects, people don't realize the amount of infrastructure behind it to make it work. The amount of power, so think about the amount of power all the fiber optic cables, all the cell towers, all the data centers that have to be established to build the infrastructure that gives us such high performance smartphones everywhere we go. But that also is an infrastructure that's vulnerable when disaster strikes. So, when a tower goes down, it has batteries, but if doesn't have a network connection, it's useless. If it's on top of a building and the building is condemned, you can't

get that tower up and running. So, in a disaster I realized, and this has literally proven true because of what's going on with the Australian Bush fire seasoned.

Brian:

That we actually lose communications, and we are trying very hard to restore it. Telstra is airdropping satellite phones into communities to get communication back to them, it is that difficult. So, we recognized that that was a problem. And so, we had to ask ourselves, how do we get information to people, and how do we allow people to communicate when nothing else works? And that proved to be a very challenging task. And we said we could do a lot of different things, but we realized that everybody's carrying a smartphone. So, the only option left to make it work, was to build a service, they could basically turn on your smartphone again and give you the ability to use your phone as you are already comfortable and trained to do in an emergency to find information and to communicate with loved ones.

Brian:

And so to do that, we literally had to figure out how to get a cell phone tower completely self-contained with solar panels and batteries and everything else needed for it to work into a disaster area, when none of the roads, none of the flights could let you. Then nothing on the ground works. And we just start worked on it and we strung the cell phone tower down. Immensely, the tech is out there, thank God. So, we've managed to get it really small and light. And we actually realized we had to drop it from the sky, because if the roads and train on the ground, roads and trains are gone. You can ship it by ship but if it's an inland disaster, it's not going to cut it. So, the only solution is by air. A lot of people says when we are building drones to fly in the air and stay in the air, but during an emergency, and you cannot have objects flying in the air, especially when you have emergency service aircraft in the area, because they might run into it.

Brian:

So, while you can say Australia or another country is building the tech to get there, you [inaudible 00:14:10], how do you do this for 200 countries? So, we had to get it in the air and get it on the ground as quickly as possible. So, we had to develop a technology to replace the parachute to do this. And very simply is, a parachute is actually a very difficult thing to use, requires a lot of training. And so, you've asked anybody who jumps out of a plane with a parachute, they'll talk to you about how much training they had to go through, and that is a reside of how complex it is. And another piece is that a parachute has to be repacked every 60 to 90 days. Not good for storage. So, we literally just built an alternative to the parachute, stuck a cell phone tower on it, and we can throw it off a plane. So, now we have the ability to drop it off autonomously from any aircraft or drone that, of our choosing.

Brendan:

And how does it withstand the conditions of the emergency?

Brian:

When you have the disaster running, it's not going to survive. But before and after the disaster areas, like after a flood, you want to drop it in, it makes sense. Like in the fires, when we spoke to firefighters in the RFS about the idea, they said, they like the idea, they want it in the areas that are already burnt, not in the fire. Because they are fighting on both sides of the

fire, both in front and in the back. And they need communications for the folks who are in the area that's already burnt because there's no infrastructure.

Brendan:

Right. Interesting. So, I mean, you never like to choose the easy startup idea, Brian. That's for sure. Very complex. But how do you convey your idea to your potential audience and customers?

Brian:

I suck at it. When I propose my ideas initially, like on the piece of paper when everyone starts, I get the pat on the head. " Nice idea, Brian, nice idea, Brian." I get that because I do talk about audacious ideas. And if you don't have a track record of audacious ideas that they are aware of, they're not going to believe you. So, in this particular case, I just sat down and said, " Okay, I can't explain it. I will build it." So, I think it's Benjamin Franklin, the US President who has this saying, well done is better than well said. So I said, " All right." I built actual flying prototypes, I built communication equipment, and I demonstrated to people what I was doing. And when I could demonstrate it, and I spent the time and effort to get graphics artist to, I had a comic artist actually draw me diagrams to help me explain it. And when I had that combination put together, literally I have eyeballs falling out of people's eyes at how much I'm actually achieving. They were so impressed.

Brendan:

So, definitely a show don't tell approach, what's the next step? I mean, you have the concept, you've actually built it, how do you then go out and market this to your target market?

Brian:

The first thing I will say is, if you are a new person at this business, please get a customer to give you money before you build anything. Don't do what I just did. This is suicidal if you're not a first timer. As for marketing, this is a very much actually a B2B product. This is not something you sell to individuals although I would love to figure out how. So, this is a conversation for me where I've gone to a lot of conferences, and I'm not asking for customers, I'm asking for feedback because I'm still building. I chose an audacious problem to solve, and I have a workable solution. I'll tell you what actually happened. So, for example, I went to an emergency services conference, the largest in the Asia Pacific region in August.

Brian:

And I didn't know whether my product made sense. I just went there to talk to people. And I met a group of volunteers who use satellite data and mapping data to help firefighters plan what they're doing. And I was talking to them about idea. And he said, " This is amazing. There are no grants for you because we didn't think this was possible. So, you fell through the cracks. So, we don't even know who to even call to even tell people that this is who you need to talk to for something. We know it's valuable, but we actually are struggling to find someone to talk to."

Brian:

That's literally how my conversation. And after some back and forth, we determined who we needed to talk to. And I'm, as giving the demo to emergency services in April of 2020. And

so, as of this recording I don't know what the result is yet. But I am excited for that opportunity. And they are very keen to see what I have done, and what I have shown people I have demonstrated to them already. And the people I've spoken to, I have nothing but praise.

Brendan:

Wow. And you've built a really exceptional team around yourself as well. Can you, you tell us a bit more about how you recruited these people to come and work on such an audacious and big project, and then maybe dive into some more detail about, I guess, the tools that you guys use that people listening at home can use in their businesses as well?

Brian:

Okay, sure. I want to start by saying that I didn't have a lot of money to start this business. I had to figure how to do this on the smell of an oily rag.

Brendan:

Just like the Joker.

Brian:

Just like the Joker. The difference however is, I didn't want to get people who were more brawn than brains. I needed people with brains. So, I think that's what the zombies got right in all the zombies movies, brains.

Brendan:

Smartest of the smart.

Brian:

Exactly. They want the intelligence back so they're trying to eat brains to get it. So, I actually realized the only thing I had going for me was that it was an audacious idea with a real piece of impact. So, that's what I played with. I went out to find people and talked to them and says, " This is what I'm building. Do you want to come on board?" And everybody said no. Everybody said no. And it was really difficult. But fortunately for me is that I actually also happened to be a really good mentor. So, I just made a choice, and I realized I will swap mentorship in exchange that you help me build what I want to build. And that worked. I actually got a whole bunch of uni students who haven't graduated yet. And I mentored them the heck out.

Brian:

Everything I could give, I gave them. So, when I first started, I picked up two uni students. One of them, his name is Alex. He was a second year aerospace engineering student when I found him. He was trying to apply for internship to get experience. Nobody want to give him a job. And I understand what that's like, because nobody's giving me a chance with my own business. So I said, " Look, I'm trying to build this. I can't give you a lot of money, but I give you one hell of a training program and opportunity that you will never get anywhere else." And he didn't know me from [inaudible 00:21:28] so, but he chose to believe me and gave it a go. And the other person is Gavin. So, I have a good strong relationship with him.

Brian:

And very much is the same vein of, would you believe me, and I change, I mentor you? Between these two individuals who join me at the very beginning, in three months, we had enough of the R&D done to file the patent. And both their names are on the patent filing. Incredible credit to them for their hard work and how they helped me achieve it. So, when they, as far as I'm concerned, with every ounce of time, energy, and effort I put in to train them and make them the best that they can be, and in return they gave me the best that it could be. And Gavin has chosen to go on off and start his own new business, which I'm very proud of. As Richard Branson says, train them well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they can stay.

Brian:

Maybe I need to treat him a little better next time. Alex has chosen to stay. And I got a really pickle piece of feedback. I spoke to someone who's very high up in one of the large companies in Australia, who's in charge of their tier one accounts, the entire team, sales, marketing, engineering, things like that. And I told him about Alex, and I said, "Would you give an internship?" He says, "Dude, at a person like that, I'll give him a full-time job." Because his name on the patent is basically for a spacecraft. We figured out how to make our towers survive in space and return to Earth and work on land. So, you got here a couple of engineering students who have yet to graduate or halfway through their degree, second year students out in a four year degree, right?

Brian:

Halfway through their degree, literally, actually get a patent for a spacecraft. Got to give them something, credit. They've learnt a lot. They've done a lot with me since. They love every moment of it, and they've grown a lot. And that's what is working for me. I have now built my team literally on that kind of skill. And I realize this is very important. I spend my time training my team to not need me today so they can to the point they could run their own company. But they choose to stay. And because of that, I'm free to actually build a company. Because they're working as if it's theirs.

Brendan:

That's really cool.

Brian:

And so, that's what works for me.

Brendan:

Yeah. And you touched on Richard Branson before. You actually met, sir. Richard, not too long ago. Can you tell me this-?

Brian:

Couple years ago. Yeah. Very quiet. Very friendly, very smart. He knows how to party. He enjoys his parties. That's how he recharges. It's very obvious when you go to his island, it's literally a... It's one hell of a place to have a party. That's-

Brendan:

No lock out laws?

Brian:

It's the reverse. If anything, the door to your bedroom is locked. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. There's no locks on the place. So, he's really switched on. He knows how the world works. So, I can tell you that he's kind, he's willing to support people, he's willing to put the effort to make things happen, but he's also a very shrewd businessman. So, if you ever attempt to try and take someone like that at that skill level for a ride, you're really brave or really stupid. And I can't tell the difference at that point. But I can tell you that while I spent like, we had about 40 hours with him in the week that I was there with him. I got more value out of about everybody else who attended.

Brendan:

Why is that?

Brian:

The kind of people he attracts are all people who are pushing to go somewhere. They're building interesting things. I met a person who had built an app so that if your kid was kidnapped, he would know in 15 seconds and alert the entire neighborhood and the police, that kind of thinking. You got to give a lot of respects to that. I've met people who've made a ton of money making a difference for others. You know what I can tell you is probably the more interesting story about all of this is actually how I got there. I think your listeners will get a kick out of this one if you don't mind me-

Brendan:

Yeah. Definitely.

Brian:

... Talking a little bit about it. So, three years prior to me meeting Richard Branson, I was still an entrepreneur struggling to figure out how to make it work. And I was still trying to figure out how to build space technology companies. It was my early days. I got a phone call, it was a cold call. It turns out to be a lovely young lady who was cold calling me to sell entrepreneur training courses. And I was listening. It's like, okay, so I'm an entrepreneur, I hear what this is. I think I recognized who the guys running that organization was. So, I just wanted to listen. And I just said, " Look, I don't feel like this is a useful product for me and everything." And then she told me, she said, " Brian, you sound like a person who knows going on." She told me she's from Ireland. She was in the country for six months. She's working three jobs to make ends meet. And she's, " Do you know anything can help me?"

Brian:

And I had a... and this is fair. It's a cold call. If I put down the phone right there rudely and not say a word, not a soul would complain to me. Right?

Brendan:

Yeah.

Brian:

But I did not. I spent the next 45 minutes emailing her books, introducing her to people. I didn't know why. It was just, I was just touched by someone working so hard to make ends meet and move, just like myself, and I wanted to provide. And I just said, " All right. What can I give you?" So, I made a whole bunch of introductions and resources, and she's like, "I was trying to sell you a program. And now I have basically 600 books on, worth of links, and God knows how many introductions for real stuff. Thank you. Can we be friends?"

Brian:

And we became friends. She eventually married a lovely guy in Australia. And he took her to see Richard Branson. They went to the island, they had a great time. And Richard Branson and the two of them agreed to let her run an event on the island and she gets to invite the people. She called me up pretty much a few weeks after, told me what happened and said, " Brian, you did me a solid when I first came here, you're a good friend, and you're doing cool stuff in space. Would you like to go?" That's it. That's how I got the invite, out of sheer kindness to a random stranger on the phone.

Brendan:

Wow. So through mentoring in a way as well.

Brian:

I just gave what I could give. I had nothing else to give, so. And that touched her in a way that she never had in the last six once in Australia. And we are the best of friends since. I still text her, we still talk. She's gone back to Ireland, but it's an amazing place to be when you have such serendipity like that. Would you expect a random cold call three years later gets you a visit to Richard Branson's island?

Brendan:

Amazing.

Brian:

You can't beat that. You can't beat that. So, yeah, Richard Branson is great and everything. I can 100% say a lot of good things about him, but I will tell you that the biggest lesson I really learned out of all of this is, be kind and generous to everyone to the best of your ability. You don't know what they'll return to you as a favor. Or how they will give back. I never expected a person I never thought I would see even to actually get me there.

Brendan:

That's crazy.

Brian:

And yeah. And that's probably one of the biggest lessons I've learned as an entrepreneur, right? If you provide value to people, they will provide value to you. And if that value you need then is money, it will be money. If that value you need is contacts, it will be contacts.

Brendan:

So, you mentioned that you provided her with a lot of book recommendations. So, there's a good segue into my next question, because I know, Brian, you're a big reader. It used to be,

last time we talked, one book a week, bit of a speed reader. What books are you reading at the moment? What books can you recommend to the audience? And why is reading so important in business?

Brian:

I picked up this habit after learning from Warren Buffett's interviews, why he reads a lot.

Brendan:

Six hours a day, I believe.

Brian:

Yeah. He does 500 pages a day. I still sit down, I go like, "I'd have no idea how you pull it off." But, hell, I'm giving it a go. So at 500, 600 pages, that's a book a day, just to give you a relative scale of how fast he's actually going. And as you said, I'm trying a book a week. I'm still so far behind.

Brendan:

And so, you actually taught yourself how to speed read?

Brian:

Yeah, I did.

Brendan:

Is that difficult?

Brian:

No.

Brendan:

Right.

Brian:

I got a couple of books, I practiced, there's a few courses. It takes a while for you to understand it but after a while, it actually becomes quite second nature. It's like learning to ride a bicycle for the first time, you have no sense of balance, it's horrible, you'll fall, but the minute you get it, you get it. You don't worry about it anymore.

Brendan:

Wow. And talk us through the process of reading these actual books. So, do you take notes on a computer? Do you take notes on the margins like Bill Gates? I saw in his documentary,

similar to Warren Buffet, in about five hours a day reading, he's scribbling his notes as he reads in the book.

Brian:

Yeah. I have a notepad with me. I scribble into the notepad as I go. If I find something interesting or I have a highlighter, I stop, I highlight. I will mark in books as well. There's a book I'm reading right now that I'm highlighting every other page just because there's something interesting there. A good book is always well written, well worn and well loved, with notes written all over. And I just practice reading a lot. When you learn to speed read, you eventually get good at getting true content very quickly. And it's like a super power. That's what Warren Buffett describes, and I cannot disagree. It's such a super power. So, the way I describe it is that most people ask one question to get one answer. I ask one question to get 100 answers. And I can hear the 100 answers because of all the books that I have read.

Brian:

So, like I'm sitting here doing a podcast in the studio with you, right? So, I look at the mics, it tells me what's the standard of the place, is this a sponsorship or not? You have a camera in the corner, what does that mean? There's so much information, just your body language, your eye contact, the place we choose to be in to record this podcast tells actually. And I wouldn't know to look for these things if I had not read the book or had no understanding. And it's because of all those materials I've learned, the brain is really good at connecting the dots when they see it. And when you get that opening realization that you see one thing, but have 1000 connections in your mind, it's incredible. It's almost like seeing the matrix.

Brendan:

Just plugging in and getting all that knowledge.

Brian:

Yeah. Couple 1000 books later.

Brendan:

And speaking of a couple of 1000 books later, I did challenge you before we came on the podcast today to maybe select 10 recent books that we can recommend to the audience, and I can put links to these in the show notes, so you guys can easily click through and see if they're a good fit for you. So, handing it over to you, Brian, talk us through your top 10 for 2020.

Brian:

Okay. So, these are a lot of the books. Some of them you'll hear, some of them are so obscure you'll like, "Where did that come from?"

Brendan:

Oh, I like the obscure ones sometimes.

Brian:

Yeah. So, some of the most well known one is like Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink. Really good book on Navy Seal training and how to take responsibility. Very much like how I want to. I love the way he describes it in his book. All the Robert Green books, all the books Robert Green, The 33 Strategies of War, The Law of Human Nature, the Art of Seduction, Mastery. They are brilliantly written, brilliant material, absolutely worth a read. I'm a fan of Jordan Peterson's work as well. So, Maps of Meaning and The 12 Rules of Life. Into the category of the obscure, the last time I did a podcast with you, I told you a book called The Science of Social Influence. And The Science of Social Influence is a literature review and study of the field of sociology, of social influence and the science behind it.

Brian:

Very interesting read, a lot of content in there that takes a while to digest it, no exercises to practice them, but it's the raw science. Then if we talk about the more obscure ones, so this is the always contentious book, but I do say it's a sheer good book, it's called the Lucifer Effect. I think it was in '70s and the '80s, that it was the Stanford Prison experiment, where they put a bunch of college students in a makeshift prison and split them randomly between guard and prison, to study the psychology of prison life.

Brian:

And in less than one or two weeks, in less than two weeks or, they had to cancel the experiment because there was real abuse going on. And The Lucifer Effect is by the professor who ran the experiment. So, he talks a lot about not what happened just in that experiment, but how human beings can be evil. How do we justify those deeds? And he writes some of the most... You know their true stories and they are dark. Any darker and we're going to lose our G rating in this conversation. So, I will leave it as that. The next one, it's a really obscure book I found on Amazon, I was looking for stuff, is called The One Sentence Persuasion Course. It is literally one sentence that tells you everything you need to learn how to persuade someone.

Brendan:

What? And what's the sentence?

Brian:

So, you're asking me to cheat by telling you the contents of the book before you. So, the one sentence that the book talks about is that people will do anything for those who will encourage their dreams, justify their failures, allay their fears, confirm their suspicions and help them throw rocks at their enemies. And I find that very hard to disagree with.

Brendan:

No, makes sense.

Brian:

Yeah.

Brendan:

Very powerful.

Brian:

The last book is The Kybalion. I think that's how you pronounce it. The Kybalion by the Three Initiates. It's a very old book from the 1800s. It's on the Gutenberg press because it's open, it's now in the public domain. It's a description of a very old religious text. And the information goes back as far as I believe, the Egyptians, about how the Egyptians' religion works. And it gives insight, and they claim to have insight on how all religions work. Now, remember, this is a very old book, so take it with a grain of salt, but it has a surprisingly accurate way of looking at the world even by today's lens. So, I find the books talks a lot about how the way, they try to describe the way the universe works as best they can from the 1800s.

Brian:

So, once you extrapolate what that means, then it looks really interesting. So, one section in the Kybalion says, everything is a vibration, everything's an energy vibrating. And this is number, this is a book from the 1800s. And it was only in the late 20th century that we can see the idea of string theory and everything vibrating in as an energy. So, it's interesting to see how such old historical records were trying to describe the world and what they got right what they got wrong, and ask yourself, how did they figure it out?

Brendan:

That's very interesting. And any fiction for that list, Brian, are you a big fiction reader?

Brian:

I'm not a big fiction reader.

Brendan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I guess your life is fiction in a way. Space adventures [crosstalk 00:38:00].

Brian:

Are you saying that I'm unreal? I'm a story, I'm making this all, I'm a made up character. This is not The Truman Show, right?

Brendan:

That's right.

Brian:

I've actually stopped reading fiction. I enjoy the movie, yeah. But more along the lines is that science fiction is not fiction to me anymore. Just because of all the things I've seen. I've also have a really good understanding of geopolitics. And I got to say, it's incredible. Once you understand what's going on, how the world is working, I get bored at most fiction stories now. I think it's a comedy that saves me.

Brendan:

Wow. And speaking of weird things and startups that you've seen, you've advised over 1000 startups. What are some of the more out there business ideas that you've seen, that you can disclose on audio?

Brian:

I think that's the hard part. I won't call it weird, but weird from the general public... Like one of the things what I was doing it with the World Food Program is we're looking at, how do we add more nutrition to rice that was not rich in nutrients? So, there was a idea/startup that was being incubated on how to add more nutrients to rice. So, in general context, we think our food is nutritious and that's why we eat it. And of course, if we don't eat fast food, that kind of thing, we don't think that the base food is not nutritious. So, it's just caught me off guard as strange because I never had to worry about it, and now I was thinking about those problems. How do I make something that's not nutritious nutritious?

Brian:

And there was political reasons why we couldn't get rice from elsewhere. So, we had to try and make the rice in the local country more nutritious. So, that was a really interesting problem. It does open your brains, right?

Brendan:

Yeah.

Brian:

Really about it. The other strange one, and this is more good fun, is I actually had an offer to run a store for adult toys. My contact had access to adult website that was doing tens of millions of unique visitors a day, and he wanted to commercialize and generate additional revenue. And he asked whether he wanted me to run the adult toy store. And the funny thing about this is that for the male toys and the women toys respectfully, he had a demo video for all of it. So, then, you want people who want to see product reviews, and people using them, that kind of thing. They did the same thing. Are you assure you'd, that was a very interesting conversation. I didn't take up the offer in the end. I didn't want to be known as Brian, the pimp.

Brendan:

That is a very interesting job offer. One of the other things that you're known for, Brian, is your creative and out of the box thinking, which I guess you need to have with all the endeavors that you're pursuing. So, you talk about the Four Beautiful Minds. Can you elaborate on that more?

Brian:

The Four Beautiful Mind is something I found that predates Buddhism, and is part of the Buddhist teaching. It starts with loving kindness. And you got to love everyone. You got to be kind to everyone, every stranger, every person, every animal, that's what they teach. And in some sense, it's not about, well, it is in how you love them is a reflection of how you love yourself. And if you love yourself, you naturally want to be kind to others. So, that's one of the things I first learned. The second thing they talk about is compassion. And compassion really in this context means empathy for one's suffering. And I find that really true. It's

important to relate to people. And when we are struggling we want people to understand who we are, just like back to The One Sentence Persuasion Course, those who can allay our fears and so forth.

Brian:

That's empathy, that's compassion. And it's really powerful. The next thing it says is actually empathetic joy, which is to share in one's joy as much as if it's your own. If your friend gave birth to a new baby boy, you celebrate as if you just got a baby boy yourself. And that's a very yin and yang way of looking at it. If you can share in one's suffering and you can share in one's joy, then that's a lot of about what life is, to be able to share your sufferings, to share your success, not just with yourself but with your loved ones and those around you. The last piece that took me a long time to understand was a word called equanimity. So equanimity really means to have a calm and level mind in all things. So, if you throw me an insult, if you attack me, how do I have a calm and level mind?

Brian:

And I realized that grew in my own context into something far much more vast. If it's in the Buddhist teachings, please tell me because I haven't found it in my research. When we have to have a calm and level mind in all things, and all is a very big word. That means also treating everything equally, to understand what's going on. And that means we have to treat everyone equally, every project, every idea equally, no matter how silly, how scary, how smart or how dangerous, they all deserve equal treatment.

Brian:

And that also means everyone who brings it. And that to me also is equality, right? And the more equal we treat everyone, the better this world has become. We took a lot of effort to abolish slavery. And after we abolished slavery, we went to fight for gay rights. We fought to end racism, and we fought to defend the rights of the LBGT community and women's rights. The more we worked to give everybody a level playing field, to give everybody equal treatment and equality by the best measures possible, we've always been building a better world. And that was a very big thing that hit me. It's like equanimity is now to me, the equal treatment of everything and all things, people, person, idea, and goals, and dreams.

Brendan:

Powerful. So, Brian, I just wanted to thank you for dropping so much value to the audience today. You can find all of Brian's resources and the 10 books that he mentioned in the show notes at metigy.com/podcast. So, just a couple more questions. Before we wrap up, Brian, so wanted to get down to a personal level now with some of your struggles. Always exciting to ask you about these. So, I mean, what area do you wish you were more of an expert in, in business at the moment?

Brian:

I really wish I was better at understanding people. And especially as a tech entrepreneur, that's what I started out as. I thought technology is the answer to everything. And I spent so much time mastering tech. And when I became an entrepreneur, I quickly found out that you could have the best product, but the worst attitude, and not a soul will buy it. And it all boils down to people, and how they feel, and their responses, and their needs. And so, I spent a lot of time learning people. So, going from socially awkward to socially suitable. And I

honestly wish I know so little to the experts I talk to and I learn from, and I wish I was as good as them.

Brendan:

Yeah. Right. One thing that you mentioned to me last time we talked was.

Brian:

I feel like you're recycling the podcast, all the material all the time. I did this for Catalyzer. The whole bunch of question is similar to the one I did for yours.

Brendan:

Just the best one.

Brian:

I get it. I get it. I get it. You know what, thank you for having me on it's... I'm very grateful that you think that I am good enough to appear so many times.

Brendan:

Oh, is awesome content. And it's good that you can talk about whys as well, and sort of start to get some more publicity around that as well. I mean, it's going to save lives at the end of the day. Isn't it?

Brian:

That's the plan.

Brendan:

Yeah. So, one of the things that you mentioned last time we talked, what do you say to people who say to focus on one thing until success? Because I mean, in early stage businesses, there's a lot happening, a lot going on as you said, there's so many opportunities. So, what do you say to people that say focus on one thing until success?

Brian:

Focus is needed, but at the same time screw it. And allow me to put that in some context. As an entrepreneur, as a business owner, especially at the beginning, you have to do the tax, the accounting, the marketing, the sales, there's 10,000 things you got to do. If you focus on any one of them your company may or may not succeed if you don't put your time correctly. So, if I tell you to focus on one thing, in that context the advice is wrong. In the context of the problem you want to solve, that's valuable.

Brian:

Don't be attached to the solution, be attached to the problem you want to solve. If you go out there and with an idea that, I'm a hammer looking for nails, you will only find nails. But if all they need is a screwdriver, you'll never see it. But if you go out there and understand the problems they're facing, and focus solely on understanding their problem and how to solve it, the customer doesn't care, whether you have to milk cow or build a website or go to Mars, right? They just want the problem solved. So, if that's the one thing to focus on, focus on

their problems, and listen carefully to what they want to deal with, and they will give you the answers you need.

Brendan:

Amazing advice. And you did mention just then, going to Mars. So I think you're ready for the final question of the podcast that we ask all of our guests. Another fantastic segue, Brian, thank you very much. Are you ready for launch?

Brian:

Yes.

Brendan:

That's good. Because you're on the first flight to Mars with Elon Musk, and the first settlers aboard the SpaceX Starship rocket. So, what business do you start when you land on Mars, and how do you market it to the new Martians?

Brian:

Would you like a return ticket to Mars? Don't you miss the food, the family, the girl you left behind? It's a greater adventure on Mars, but at some point you just want to go home and have your dinner with your loved ones. So, come to trip to Earth, one way ticket to.

Brendan:

The return trip.

Brian:

Exactly.

Brendan:

I like it. Once again, Brian, thank you for coming on today and sharing so much knowledge and experience and stories, and you can find everything that Brian mentioned in the show notes at metigy.com/podcast. So, before we wrap up, Brian, where can people find you online and any advice for first time business owners?

Brian:

My company's website for Wise Networking is wisenet.work.

Brendan:

Nice.

Brian:

My Twitter handle is BoldBrian, not bald, bold. Although my haircut confuses people too. Then you ask for advice, correct? For new first-

Brendan:

First time business owners. Some parting advice.

Brian:

To quote Jordan Peterson, right? Anything worth doing is worth doing badly. And the reason being is that if it's important, you need to do it. And if you're bad at it, that's fine because it's in the failures you learn. It's only in the practice of doing it badly 10, 20, 30, 100 times, do you learn how to do it well. If you're only focusing on what you can do well, you actually limit your growth. And you will never actually learn the diverse set of skills needed to be more of a business owner entrepreneur than who you are now. But if you are able to look at the things you find difficult and turn them into your strength, that will give you power in your business that you have not seen before.

Brendan:

Wow. Amazing advice at the end of an amazing podcast. Brian, thank you again for coming on. It's been fun.

Brian:

The pleasure's mine.

Daren:

From Metigy, You've just listened to Forward Thinking. Again, I'm Daren and Metigy hopes we helped you find more insights and tips into your business. To find out more about Metigy and get a listener exclusive three month free trial, visit us at metigy.com/podcast. And while you're there, go and check out some more episodes. If you like what you heard, please share a link to another business owner or marketer who you think could get something from this. Also to help us out, it would be great if you left a five star review on your favorite podcast app. Last, never miss another episode by following or subscribing to us on your favorite podcast player. See you on the next episode.