

# *On Life and Meaning*

MARK PERES

## **Episode 12 – Charlie Elberson – Brand Identity**

### *Excavating and Clarifying What is True*

And now a personal word,

Charlie Elberson asks questions that lead to insight and living from the heart. His work evokes the stated purpose of this podcast: to inspire a more insightful and humane world. Well, how do we do that? How does this podcast fulfill such a lofty purpose? The same way a marketing campaign based on what is true fulfills its purpose: by resonating with hearts and minds.

What is true resonates because the truth can be brilliant and uplifting, but also dark and anxiety-producing. Truth is in the light and shadows of our nature.

This podcast explores the lives and work of our guests. When we hear our guests talk, we are reminded of what is most important to us and what it means to live.

I am a humanist. I study the humanities. The humanities ask the question: what does being human mean? It seeks the truth of being human. The humanities—history, philosophy, religion, language, literature, and the arts—record our answers to that question, answers that are always true in revealing something about ourselves.

My love for the humanities was planted early in life as I listened to my dad tell stories of nineteenth-century Jewish merchants who emigrated to the Amazon jungle. The love was tended by public school teachers in New York who read T.S. Eliot and Catholic nuns in Rio de Janeiro who played the music of The Beatles on acoustic guitar. The love flowered in college as I read Fitzgerald and Bonhoeffer.

The humanities ask why we are here and what to make of pride and despair. The humanities glorify and challenge our earthly vanities as the skull of poor Yorick did for Hamlet. The humanities howl at angel-headed hipsters who burn for ancient heavenly connections to the starry dynamos of the night. And they give hope to skywalking

heroes who fly into the depth of death stars. The humanities initiate us into the wisdom of the tribe and impart the skills we need to hunt and gather. In reading Homer, in considering Hume and Schopenhauer, in listening to Mozart and McCartney, we play in light and shadow, we navigate by gray skies, and we scale blooming taxonomies of learning. We are imparted shamanistic powers to think critically and persuade spirits loose in the world.

The humanities connect us to all those who came before us and to all those who will come after us. Just as Charlie Elbertson does in his work, we connect to the ages when we excavate and clarify what is true.

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