

On Life and Meaning

MARK PERES

Episode 12 – Charlie Elberson – Brand Identity

What is True

And now a personal word,

When Charlie Elberson talks about asking the questions that lead to insight and living from the heart, he is describing 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 great marketing campaign based on what is true fulfills its purpose: by resonating with hearts and minds.

What is true is what resonates. The truth can be brilliant and uplifting. It can also be dark and anxiety-ridden. The truth is the light and shadows of our nature.

This podcast explores the lives and work of our guests. The exploration reveals the complexity of the human condition. When we hear our guests talk we are reminded of what is most important to us and what it means to live.

I study and express the humanities. I do it professionally as a teacher and as a private citizen. I am a humanist. The humanities ask the question: what does being human mean? It seeks the truth of being human. The humanities – history, philosophy, religion, language, literature, 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 19th 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 deathstars. 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

shadows, we swim in gray seas, and 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 Elberson does in his work, we connect to the ages when we excavate and clarify what is true.

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