
COMPILATION OF PODCAST REVIEWS - 2021

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Every week, I share something of value from the world of storytelling through my 'Story Rules on Saturday' Newsletter.

The first of those emails every month is a list of reading/other content recommendations -including a podcast review.

I thought it would be useful for you to have all those podcast reviews in one place, for leisurely reading. So here goes - a compilation of all the podcast reviews for 2021.

Podcast	Review
<u>The Prof G Show: Bitcoin and Cryptocurrencies</u>	<p>I've written about this thought-provoking podcast before. But I found this episode to be highly insightful - especially given the massive Bitcoin rally over the last year.</p> <p>In this episode, Prof. Galloway speaks with Michael Saylor, the founder and CEO of MicroStrategy, an enterprise software firm, that has made <u>a series of massive investments in Bitcoin</u>.</p> <p>Saylor does a great job of articulating why Bitcoin is rallying so much, and why now.</p>
<u>How I Built This with Guy Raz: Interview with Tim Ferriss</u>	<p>Guy Raz is one of the Masters of the podcasting world, having launched several successful shows like 'TED Radio Hour', 'How I Built This' and (my son's favourite) 'Wow in the World'.</p> <p>In this conversation with bestselling author, podcaster and human guinea pig, Tim Ferriss, Raz does a fabulous job of interviewing the maverick entrepreneur.</p> <p>Raz has the knack of 'sniffing' a potential surprising story, and so knows where to move ahead vs. where to dig deeper.</p> <p>Great conversation.</p>

<p><u>Not Just Cricket: Interview with Virat Kohli</u></p>	<p>Mark Nicholas, an ex-player is an astute observer and writer of the game of cricket. In this short, but fascinating interview, he speaks with Virat Kohli – who is likely retire as one of India’s all-time greats (dare I say, in the top 5).</p> <p>In a deeply personal conversation, Kohli opens up to how his father’s demise changed his outlook forever, how his perspective on fitness and food underwent a transformation and most interestingly, his struggle with a bout of depression.</p> <p>He says that he felt like the ‘loneliest guy in the world’. Powerful stuff.</p>
<p><u>Cautionary Tales with Tim Harford: Martin Luther King Jr, the Jewelry Genius, and the Art of Public Speaking</u></p>	<p>I’ve been listening to podcasts for some time now. <u>Pushkin Industries</u> clearly leads the pack with the enviable roster of Malcolm Gladwell, Michael Lewis and Tim Harford.</p> <p>I loved Season 1 of Cautionary Tales (by Tim Harford) and had recommended it on this newsletter too.</p> <p>But, even with my high expectations for Season 2, this episode blew me away.</p> <p>First of all, it deals with a topic close to my heart – public speaking. (So, technically it’s about improvisation in any performing art, including public speaking ... but the two examples Tim cites are those of famous speeches).</p> <p>But more than the topic, what’s incredible is Tim’s absolutely masterful control of the narrative. Listen to it to observe (and learn) how Tim withholds crucial information and releases it bit-by-nail-biting-bit to the hooked audience.</p> <p>All he’s doing is following Chris Nolan’s advice (<i>“The only useful definition of narrative is that it’s a controlled release of information. The way in which you release that information is all up to you”</i>).</p>
<p><u>Think Fast, Talk Smart: Writing to Win: How to Quickly Capture Readers and Keep Them Engaged</u></p>	<p>‘Think Fast, Talk Smart’ by Stanford GSB prof Matt Abrahams, is one of the most popular podcasts on Communication.</p> <p>It consists of quick, snappy conversations with experts (typically academics) from the world of communication and distils their advice into short 20-30-min episodes.</p>

	<p>In this episode, I liked some pithy lines of advice given by the guest, Glenn Kramon, a Stanford GSB lecturer in management and editor at the New York Times.</p> <p>I loved this one-liner from Glenn, when he was asked to share the best communication advice he's ever received: <i>'Say what you like and what you would like. Not what you don't like.'</i></p> <p>Simple advice on the importance of starting with appreciation.</p> <p>Glenn follows it up with a great personal example. So Steve Jobs was once visiting the New York Times to give them advice. Here's Prof. Glenn: <i>"(Steve) visited us at The NYT... to talk about how we could improve the paper... he knew we were slow to accept that computer screens would replace print newspapers. He could have called us chimpanzees, but he followed that fundamental rule of writing and speaking with influence. 'Say what you like and what you would like, not what you don't like'... So Steve started by saying what he likes. He told us that the nation needed The New York Times, that he and his family were such avid readers that they would fight over the Sunday print sections in their living room. We were so flattered that we would have followed him off a cliff after that. And then he said what he would like, for example, he told us the Times needed to make it easier for people to sign up online and offered his own iTunes as a model. So he never said what he didn't like, that the Times was still in the Stone Age and wouldn't survive unless we move forward in time."</i></p>
<p><u>The Next Big Idea:</u> <u>'Chatter: Learning to Love the Voice in Your Head'</u></p>	<p>The 'Next Big Idea Club' is a venture by heavyweights from the world of social-science storytelling. Adam Grant, Malcolm Gladwell, Susan Cain and Daniel Pink back this club, which is operated by Rufus Griscom. As part of the club, they recommend one non-fiction book every month.</p> <p>In the podcast, they interview the book's author. This interview with psychologist Ethan Kross about his new book, <u>'Chatter: Learning to love the voice in your head'</u> is a fascinating one.</p> <p>We all have that voice in our head right - often passing snarky judgement on what we are planning to do. This book is about that voice.</p> <p>I especially liked the concept of "Distanced self-talk" - when you use your name in third person instead of first. Apparently, it gives you perspective and almost sounds like you are getting advice from a different person.</p>

<p><u>Business Wars: Vaccine Wars</u></p>	<p>If you have heard the 'Business Wars' podcast before, you'd know how good it is.</p> <p>If not, you are welcome.</p> <p>This highly produced show narrates the story of major business rivalries (Pepsi-Coke, Netflix-Blockbuster, Tiktok-Instagram) in an edge-of-the-seat, compelling manner, with taut scripting, immersive sound effects and a great voiceover by host David Brown.</p> <p>Like Lewis, they too deep-dive into the crucial moments that matter and hold your attention throughout the show.</p> <p>In this series called 'Vaccine Wars', I absolutely LOVED how they've narrated the story of the race between various pharma and biotech companies to make the vaccines for Covid-19.</p> <p>Here are some of the new things that I learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oxford University had a condition before it partnered with any pharma company - that they could only sell it on a no-profit basis. AstraZeneca was game and that's how CovidShield was made (and is being sold at a fraction of the price that Pfizer and Moderna are charging) ○ Pfizer refused the US government's offer for financial assistance - since it did not want that to impact it's pricing and other decisions ○ The world had almost given up on mRNA as a technology... but <u>one woman's dogged efforts</u> meant that when the pandemic came, we were ready to apply it and create the first mRNA vaccine. <p>Highly recommended listening.</p>
<p><u>Naval Ravikant Podcast: Interview with Matt Ridley</u></p>	<p>Naval Ravikant (just known as Naval to his legions of adoring fans) is a Silicon Valley institution. There are Twitter accounts called @NavalBot, @QuoteNaval, @NavalismHQ, all of which are dedicated to sharing extracts/quotes from Naval's work!</p> <p>(There's a book called "<u>The Almanack of Naval Ravikant</u>" written by someone, who's presumably a fan)</p> <p>Anyway, here's what Naval says about Matt Ridley in the podcast intro:</p> <p><i>"I don't have heroes, but there are people who I look up to and have learned a lot from, and <u>Matt Ridley</u></i></p>

	<p><i>... has got to be near the top of that list. Growing up, I was a voracious reader, especially of science. Matt had a bigger influence on pulling me into science, and a love of science, than almost any other author. His first book that I read was called <u>Genome</u>. I must have six or seven dog-eared copies of it lying around in various boxes. It helped me define what life is, how it works, why it's important, and placed evolution as a binding principle in the center of my worldview."</i></p> <p>And here's what he says about who this book is for:</p> <p><i>"So I recommend this book for two classes of people. One is innovators and would-be innovators themselves. If you're an entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, Shanghai or Bangalore and you're thinking about creating products—whether it's social media, launching rockets, building airplanes or genetic engineering—you need to read this book because it will give you a better view of the history of innovation as well as the future of innovation than any other book that I know of."</i></p> <p>I think the podcast episode (which is in 2 parts) is great listening for those who wouldn't have time to read the book... or (like me), would like to get introduced to the ideas in the book before picking it up.</p>
<p><u>Build for Tomorrow</u> <u>by Jason Feifer</u></p>	<p>This is one of the podcasts I stumbled onto by happy accident.</p> <p>In fact, I was doubtful of giving it a listen, because I had never heard of the host, Jason Feifer, who, to be honest, doesn't have a <u>stellar resume</u>.</p> <p>But oh my gosh, is he a fabulously engaging storyteller...</p> <p>His podcast is structured as a 'narrative' show - the apex format of non-fiction podcasting (think 'Revisionist History', 'Freakonomics', 'Against the Rules'). What makes it interesting is the kind of topics he picks up for his deep-dives.</p> <p>For instance, consider this utterly fascinating episode titled "<u>When exactly were the good old days?</u>" - in which he digs deep into history to find out - was there ever a period of time when people did <i>not</i> crib about some period in the past being the 'good old days'?</p> <p>Turns out, no! Present day Americans looked up to the ... 1970s/50s maybe? But those dudes looked back fondly to the 1920s... who looked back further still, who... you get the picture.</p>

	<p>The episode culminates its history joy ride with a fascinating revelation from Sumer, the cradle of written civilisation.</p>
<p><u>The Seen and the Unseen by Amit Varma</u></p>	<p>If you are readers of this newsletter, it is highly unlikely that you haven't heard of Amit's stellar podcast.</p> <p>It is India's most popular weekly podcast.</p> <p>In the show, Amit interviews leaders from across fields and does a deep-dive into their upbringing, their philosophy and their major achievements.</p> <p>In Amit's own words, '<i>The Seen and the Unseen features long-form conversations that aim to give deep insights into the subjects being discussed. Timeless and binge-worthy</i>'</p> <p>Amit specialises in really long, meaningful conversations. Here's the guest list and episode duration for his last 5 interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manu Pillai (3:22 Hours) - Barkha Dutt (2:35 hours) - Josy Joseph (3:09 hours) - Uday Bhatia (2:38 hours) - Prakash Iyer (2:53 hours) <p>Amit leaves no question unasked, no topic unexplored in his conversations.</p> <p>I love how he would ask a simple question - say about the guest's childhood, wait for the guest to give a long, comprehensive response and then pick separate threads from elements of that response to weave individual conversation topics of their own.</p> <p>If you want to know more about a particular leader or topic, pray that Amit Varma has interviewed them!</p>
<p><u>The Rest is History by Dominic Sandbrook and Tim Holland: Silicon Valley</u></p>	<p>In this fascinating two-part episode, historians Dominic Sandbrook and Tim Holland interview Marc Andreessen. Marc, the co-founder of the storied VC firm 'Andreessen Horowitz', is Silicon Valley royalty.</p> <p>He is a great guest to talk to, given he helped shape the internet's early history by co-creating Mosaic and co-founding Netscape in the early 1990s. I found his description of '<u>Eternal September</u>' fascinating.</p>

	Listen to this conversation for an insightful deep-dive into the history of Silicon Valley.
<u>Tim Ferriss with Naval Ravikant and Chris Dixon</u>	<p>In this fascinating conversation, Tim Ferriss (author, podcaster, Creator Economy God) talks with Naval Ravikant (founder of Angel List and Silicon Valley legend) and Chris Dixon (partner at VC firm a16z and evangelist of web3 and crypto).</p> <p>They talk about all things crypto, NFTs and web3 - and they do a great job of using analogies and perspective to give us an idea of why this is such a massive deal.</p> <p><i>"Denying and pushing back against NFTs and crypto is basically saying, 'We're not going to have a collectively owned future. We're going to have a corporate-owned future, and we're going to have a government-owned future.'"</i> - Naval Ravikant</p> <p><i>"This should be the greatest time in history for creative people."</i> Chris Dixon</p> <p>We are at the cusp of the next big revolution in the internet - heck, one of the seminal moments of innovation in history - and this conversation is like getting a ringside view of the action from industry experts.</p> <p>(H/t: Gururaj Sundaram)</p>