

## The Business of Glorious Uncertainty

**Ross** Welcome to Renegade Inc. All you ever hear business leaders calling for is certainty. The problem with this is that the only thing in life that's certain is uncertainty. So how does philosophy allow us to navigate uncertain times?

**Ross** Anders Indset, welcome to Renegade Inc. Great to have you.

**Anders Indset** Happy to be here. Pleasure to be with you.

**Ross** If we look at the etymology of the word philosophy, and you've thought about this a lot as a philosopher, you can get it down as a definition, to the love of wisdom. When we look around the business world, Anders, when I look at it, not a lot of wisdom to be had. How do you marry the fact that philosophy is a love of wisdom and the business world is, well, pretty much devoid of it?

**Anders Indset** Yeah, I think one of the greatest paradoxes that we have right now is that we have a lot of information and we are trying to validate this information by building a knowledge society. And I think the problem is that we think that we can build a knowledge that is predefined of our history that we have come up with and written books about, and we can live off of that. And I think the actual issue with that is that people underestimate the human factor of thinking and understanding topics. So I think that the lack of philosophy in business is, in fact one of the key things that we need to work on. But when I say that, I don't mean the academic analytic philosophy that I very much value, but I think the practical applied philosophy. So how can we make sense of the world? How can we get a better understanding of the world? How can we together create a society of understanding to try to figure out what other people need, try to cope with other perceptions of the world? So I think that's what we're seeing right now, is that philosophy is, in fact moving into the business world. And I think that it's strongly needed.

**Ross** And would you agree with the statement that we're drowning in information but starving for knowledge?

**Anders Indset** Well, see, there's always been a knowledge society that we have been gathering all this information or information society. It's just the volume that we have right now. And and I think technology is doing a good job. AI, algorithm's, predictive analysis of our behaviour, is doing a good job of coming up with knowledge, but it only builds on existing models on how to interpret the information. And progress is made by either as human beings screwing up, making big mistakes, or combining things that technology cannot do or getting a deeper understanding and a holistic view of things. And that's lacking. So we are trying to cope with this fake news society and all this fatal information society by applying technology, which on the one hand is important. But we need to solve the other challenge, which is the actual thinking in itself, and we're back with with Hegel and why his art of thinking is so much relevant today. And I think that's a big issue, to get the education proper, to not teach people absolutes and have them in a finite system, but to teach children how to work together, collaboration, co creation, and becoming young philosophers, if you

like. And I think if that is combined, then I think this jungle of information is not a problem at all.

**Ross** We'll come to education certainly in the second half. Let's just focus on the corporate world for a minute. You talk there about a big screw up or making mistakes, embracing those mistakes. You also talk about it being about the big picture. The two things that I've seen within the corporate world is that nobody, absolutely nobody, puts their hand up and says, yep, look, I've made a mistake because they're absolutely terrified about what their boss would say about what colleagues would say, or ultimately whether they'd lose their job. And absolutely everybody also isn't about the big picture. They're into a silo mentality. Oh, well, that's that department does that. That's those people that do that. We don't do that. So you've got a problem here. People a) don't make mistakes, which isn't alleviating because when you admit you make a mistake, you can build on that. And b), you've got a silo mentality that absolutely smashes the culture of the organisation apart. How do you get over those two things?

**Anders Indset** First of all, I think we need to have a training pitch within the organisation. Kind of if you look at football or soccer, like you have the pitch, we can play around a little bit. But when you're on the pitch, you have to perform together. So we have to take care of the weaklings and figure out the systems and structures. I mean, we don't want creative pilots flying into Oslo or Frankfurt. We don't want to have a search where we're trying to figure out how to do open heart disease. That type of innovation is not what we're looking for. We're pretty good with innovation, which basically means faster, pack knowledge, do more with less. What we're not very good at is, is you know, applying art or having this destruction of things. And that requires, of course, that we also make some mistakes. And the problem in the business world is, of course, as you said, we're not allowed to make mistakes. At the same time, we are getting aware of that vulnerability and having what we call soft skills, but it's actually the hard skills or the essence of being a leader or being a business, an entrepreneur in the 21st century. So as we are moving from management, you know, controlling and dictating people, we're trying to build leaders, and that requires empathy, that requires trust, relationships, and of course, as you said, creativity and innovation. And vulnerability is the birthplace of all of that. So I think it's about just showing leaders that it's OK to not know everything. And we are interdependent. We need other people and we need to co-create in order to come up with other views of things.

**Ross** In these heady capitalist days, soft skills have been derided for decades. When you make a point around hard and soft skills, just unpack this for us, because a lot of people now realise that it is soft skills that get things done. It isn't this Michael Douglas character in Wall Street, greed is good. That is a relic of an era that has way outlived its sell by date. How do we then say to the leaders at the top, maybe a different generation, actually, you do need the soft skills and none isn't weak? You do need those soft skills to be able to drive this business forward and create value.

**Anders Indset** Yeah, I think the last thing you just said, create value. So there's a lot of talk about purpose and building sustainable organisation. I come up with a term called prosperity, which means prosperity for posterity, so building prosperity for future generations. In the quantum economy I write about something called the Infinite Organisation. And what we are now understanding is that the old model of doing business is not working because it's built on

finite structures, on resources that are not for everyone. And Covid has certainly taught us a lesson in division where the rich have become richer and the reallocation of resources is something that we have never seen in history. It's gone down from 10 percent to maybe one, two or three percent of the world's population have all the resources. And I know maybe a thousand euro of transactions, only 10 or 20 euro are now with the product or the service created. Everything else is a finite sum transaction economy. So everything has become a part of the economy. And there is no working class in a hierarchical structure where people are producing products. It's a self expectation in a technological world. And with the increase of speed, this whole system collapses. Capitalism taught us that there is an invisible hand of the market. Adam Smith taught us a lesson about that. But there is no invisible hand. We have the church. We have the national borders that regulated some kind of balance. The capital stayed within the country. So when the Brits went off to South America to steal all the silver and used the strategic rivers on the island, they built this economy because they had capital and the capital stayed in the country. Now it is a fluid world. Capitalism is a self destructive system if it's put out freely. Now it's free, but it adapts. And it has adapted from this hierarchical model of discipline and authority to a free model of liberal democracies where we can do whatever we want. And now we are, as human beings, becoming consumers. We are producers and consumers of our own created reality that we are now investing in technology and exploiting our self, a self optimisation, a world of potentialism of likes where everything is becoming more similar and there is literally no regulation to this barbarian machine of capitalism. So we don't have an invisible hand. And that turns into a self realisation that this will not continue, will not work, which again leads us to the part of having a purpose or taking care of each other or starting to realise that the path that we are on is not going to work for most of the people on this planet. Which leads us to some kind of new form of capitalism. I call that a pop Western Buddhist capitalism where we talk about love and compassion and integrating that into capitalism. So what we have to do now is we must build a humanistic capitalism where more people can aim for some kind of prosperity with a new definition of what wealth means to us. It's not only what we have in our bank account with some numbers, and I think that is what we're seeing right now with a lot of young people coming up. But it is, of course, a very difficult task to combine capitalism and love and compassion and build a model that is sustainable. But I think that's the path that we have to put on forward. In my next book, I write about that giant nap that we have had since 1970 where we have just globalised the world and exported physical products and goods. Then came the 90s and early two thousand with the Internet and we opened up. And the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 symbolised some kind of prosperous world where everyone was into that liberal democracy and we had freedom. Now we are caught in our own freedom. So the problem now is that the exploiter and the exploited has become one and the same person. That is why we will never see a revolution in the US because everyone is rebelling against themselves. And this was prior to the pandemic. I wrote about this in 2019 with my latest book, *The Quantum Economy*, about the symptoms that we are now caught in this optimised chase and self optimisation. We are only working on the information in the logo's and competing against computers. We are trying to save information and react and that's a big problem. And this type of world obviously makes the world very similar. But at the same time, it leads to the biggest division that we have seen. So it's a paradox that has now put us in a situation through the pandemic that we thought that we could, you know, build trust through transparency and having a transparent system. That was the idea of the corporate when we took away that the strong managers. But transparency just takes away trust because if everything is transparent, you don't need trust. So we start to just have everything to rely on,

on data, surveillance cameras and everything. And that is, of course, a society where we don't trust each other and we don't trust ourselves. So I think coming back to my earlier point is that we are moving towards some kind of Eastern philosophy like a Buddhism capitalism, but is not actually the religion or the philosophy itself. It's just a lot of people that wants to live in a more compassionate way, come closer to themselves. But at the same time, how some kind of luxury from the capitalistic model. And that's a challenge. But I think that's where we are heading and we are way beyond the hierarchies. We are now beyond the liberal democracies which are a crisis of liberalism throughout Europe in that extent. And we have all seen what happened to the US. And the next level is, of course, with the technology that we either go into some kind of giant depression of self exploitation through digital technologies, living off of likes and shares, or we wake up and find our thinking and our self realisation to have some kind of balance between this technological outside world and our inner world of being a human being.

**Ross** Peter Worley, welcome to Renegade Inc.

**Peter Worley** Thanks for having me.

**Ross** Our book of the week this week is two volumes, no less. You've written it. It's called Corrupting Youth. Tell us why you wrote it and why we should read it?

**Peter Worley** I've been developing and doing philosophy in schools for the past nearly 20 years, and my main inspiration has been Socrates. And of course, Socrates is well known to have got into a lot of trouble, a bit of trouble, shall we say, with the authorities for, well, the charge was corrupting the young people. So that was what he got executed for, no less. Now, I was hoping to avoid execution in my little project, getting the children to think for themselves. But it did seem that there's a nice parallel there. So the book is my way of saying here's how to do what Socrates was doing, but also by drawing on Socrates and other ancient Greek philosophers too.

**Ross** Corrupting Youth, it's our book of the week, two volumes of it, we really recommend it. Philosophy in schools, teaching children to think critically, exposing them to a philosophical understanding. Why is it so important?

**Peter Worley** We all think, right? That's something we all do. So it stands to reason that we should learn to think well, that if there are ways and methods and tools to help us think better, we should do them. I mean, when I give lectures to students about doing philosophy, particularly, you know, students who are just about thinking about where they're going to go, what they're going to do in life, so A level students and stuff. I'll often say, look I'm going to try and talk to you about philosophy and what philosophy is and how it works. And you might think that I'm just here to persuade a few of you to go and do philosophy at university. But one of the messages I want to get across is that I'm speaking to every single person in the room because thinking philosophically, whether you go on to do philosophy academically, is a really valuable skill. Just being able to have a philosophical eye, have a different perspective or have many perspectives for that matter. I think that's another key thing about doing philosophy is about having lots of different perspectives and many perspectives at the same time, what I call two eyed thinking. And if I ask a child a question like can you step in the same river twice, most children will just say yes or no. They have their one eyed thinking

view on it. When I do philosophy in a classroom, they hear each and every child in the room give a different perspective and that might be a yes and no. It might also be a well I kind of think both because.... And by thinking about listening to all these different perspectives in the classroom, the children start to internalise this much more two eyed thinking, or maybe even 30 eyed thinking if we're in a classroom way of thinking that goes beyond their original one eyed thinking perspective. And that's what I'm hoping will happen, is that over time the children internalise this broader perspective.

**Ross** It must be really wonderful to see young minds really get involved with this and grapple with it. Someone once said to me that one of the most important and valuable things you can give to a child is a good vocabulary because then they can express themselves. But the ability for the child to think critically is right up there, isn't it?

**Peter Worley** It is. But one needs to be careful when talking about critical thinking. You know, I often hear people say critical thinking is very important, philosophy is really important. But if you ask them what they think critical thinking is, they might just say, oh, it's sharing different perspectives and listening to different points of view, which is what we were just talking about a minute ago. But important though that is, if it is critical thinking, it's just the start, just the very start. So if we're going to be critical, we need to be properly critical. We need to evaluate each other's responses, not just listen. We need to listen and we need to listen openly and we need to try and understand. But we also need to evaluate. And if someone says something that for whatever reason, we consider to be wrong or faulty in its reasoning, or not quite properly considered, or whatever it might be, then the critical thinking addresses that directly.

**Ross** Peter, what you're offering is a wonderful gift to these younger minds with the Philosophy Foundation. What are the ways that we, as an audience, can start thinking a little more philosophically?

**Peter Worley** Stop. Give yourself the space and time to think. I think that's the first thing. So we need to reflect. We need to give ourselves a time to, when we're in that time, we need to reflect in a way that gets us to not just consider what I think, but also to consider what others might think, to consider what I could think. What are the other possibilities? Once I've gone through that process of reflection, I might reason. I might then say, OK, so what do I think is right here? Do I think this is the case? And why? What are the reasons? What is the argument for this? What do I think of other people's arguments? And when someone said that thing that I considered a few minutes ago, on what grounds might they think it? And I might even try to be charitable about idea before I critique it, then eventually I re-evaluate. And I think again, and that's the four hours of philosophy - respond, reflect, reason, re-evaluate.

**Ross** Peter Worley, thank you very much for your time and good luck with the Philosophy Foundation.

**Peter Worley** Thank you very much for having me here. It has been great.

**Ross** Anders, welcome back. In the first half we touched on education. It seems to me that going into the business world and trying to teach old dogs new tricks and say, look, you've got to get across philosophy now because a love of wisdom within this organisation is going

to create value, is quite a difficult sell. If you've got graduates coming in who have been exposed to philosophy at school, maybe through university, and then they come into the organisation and they realise that they can create value with their soft skills because of their love of wisdom, you've got a much easier sell and you've got a much easier candidate to be able to talk to. Are we exposing children and students to philosophy, not as in learning historical philosophy, practical philosophy, are we exposing them to it, getting to think critically, getting them to understand a historical context early enough for you to be able to work with them when they are in jobs, in positions of power, so they can make some kind of difference?

**Anders Indset** Yeah, I think there is a shift around the world to new educational systems. There is a young school system in Germany where children come to school in first grade and start to learn philosophy, practical philosophy. Every opinion counts. You can talk about it, you can question things. You can look at things from a different perception. You can co-create and collaborate. The teacher becomes more of a fluid entity of the group, even at a very early stage. I think these are skills that you can learn because the most essential thing for me today is that even though there is a lot of genius wisdom found in ancient thinkers, works like books and stuff, and there are, of course, the intercontinental philosophy and the likes of Emmanuel Kant, Hegel and even Nietzsche. And you see also with the economic system which we talked about before with Engels and Marx and everyone. They could not have imagined the world that we have today, this technology driven, digital fluid, global, interconnected and interdependent world. They did not see that coming. So I think the challenge that we have is to educate people, to rethink these historical mastermind's in a new context in the new lights of the 21st century. And for that, you need people that are capable to see how other people have a path and a history of coming to the conclusion of an opinion that they have. And the problem today is that we're not allowed to have a different opinion. You only like and share the same opinion. These are the mechanisms of the social media that we have built. The reward, similarities and everything that we think that we know is an emotion, something that we feel is true. And I think these skills can be taught at a very early age. But as long as we keep building schools built like military structures or like prisons where young students are brought to a group of people, everyone is learning the same, they study for that one absolute test and then they go on with life. As long as we think that is the model, then we have some big issues. So lifelong learning, learning how to learn is actually the essential part of education. Learning how to learn, being curious and interested, and then learning how to teach. Because if you talk about your knowledge, talk about your information and try to share it and you're open to learn, then of course you strengthen your own arguments, you can work on the rhetoric, the ethos, the pathos, the logos, the presentation style, what have you not, and then you get into a learning environment. But that's the complete opposite of what we have in today's schools. And of course, that is essential for the young children. But we can also work on leaders and managers and executive education and try to build a consciousness for creating companies that last beyond the next shareholder meeting and companies that build stakeholder values and not only maximising shareholder values. And that's also a big part of education that can be changed and that we are also heavily working on to create some footprints and to build new programmes.

**Ross** Two of the most jailing words in the English language are 'I know'. It's very difficult, isn't it, to talk to a closed mind in that way, because when somebody knows everything, they're not open to discussing anything further. That often comes out of a place of insecurity,

thinking that they have to know everything. How do you break through that? How do you say, look, we can create within like sports teams do, we can create within a business, a practice arena, a rehearsal arena. You don't have to know everything. But then when you go out to the performance arena, the pitch, whatever it might be, then you can perform. How do you create that environment so people do feel able to put the armour down and then become open to new thinking?

**Anders Indset** Yeah, I think that's a great question, but I think I would take to cover that on the individual level. So I say that the biggest problem for society today is not coronavirus, it's just that our minds are infected, our thinking in itself. So it's not our call to action. We have been taught to live in an action economy, a reaction economy, attention economy. So it's all about the moment. We are caught in, the moment. We have lost the aspect of time. And the problem with that is that we are just like dopamine junkies and we are being dragged through life. For the first time of the pandemic, the first lock down, people started to watch, you know, documentaries, listen to e- books, take up arts. They had some kind of self realisation, never in panic mode. But actually there wasn't a problem. Like in Norway, the biggest problem in the first place was there is not enough Whirlpool's for everyone under cabin. So there were a demand on delivery time for that. And now in the second phase, of course, we see more depression, more frustration. We're not so worried about the future anymore.

**Ross** Why is that? Why has that shift happened?

**Anders Indset** The shift this happened because we have realised that searching for the purpose of life, we have come to the conclusion that the life can be a wonderful journey, but the end goal is nowhere. So we are on a wonderful journey to nowhere. But we can't find that one purpose. We are detaching us from religion. We had those models and structures to hold on to to give us a like a light in the future. But now we have come to the conclusion, why am I here? What am I doing? Is this what I want to do? But I think the biggest issue is the underlying force that we have had for decades now is that we don't think, we don't think about topics. We say, I know the self-proclaimed expert. I think that's a dinosaur. I think the biggest issue today is that we are caught in our absolutes. So we are trained to think in ones and zeros, blacks and whites. And your opinion is what you call knowledge. And that's the biggest issue. And the reason for that is that we don't have what we take to be self evident and we have to free ourselves from that. And your question was, how do we do that in terms that we start to listen to other people? We try to understand their path. If we understand why they see the world differently, then you can either manifest your own opinion and learn about yourself, or you can get a better understanding of the journey of this person. And then you combine that with an understanding of the world that we really understand what's going on. And then we come to a new understanding. And this dialectic journey is what we need to train. And that can be trained and it can be taught. I think at the end of the day, every human being should figure out for themselves what kind of purpose and intent they want to give to their life, right? And I think the essence is that why wouldn't you want to understand more about this world? Why do you want to just react and be distracted? You have two lives. One life up until you understand that there is only one life, then the second life starts. Then you start to figure out and focus on all of these things. And depending on your life stage, it could be an external crisis or something that happens, you come to that second stage. And once you realise that, then you look for ways to enjoy this journey and try to put some purpose into it. And I think the biggest purpose for me is to try to figure out how I can create this world and

make it a little bit better for my children and my grandchildren and define for me what are the things that I want to do to improve the state of the world today. And for that, I need to dig into some understanding of the world. And I think every human being can come to that conclusion.

**Ross** Anders, it's been an absolute pleasure to have you. Thank you so much for your time and good luck with the next book and we'd love to have you back when it's out.

**Anders Indset** Thank you so much. It's been my pleasure. Thank you so much.