

Simon Mainwaring:

From We First and Goal 17 Media welcome to Lead With We I'm Simon Mainwaring, and today, my guest is consultant, speaker, and author, Andrew Winston, whose new book co-authored with Paul Polman is called Net Positive, how courageous companies thrive by giving more than they take. And, we'll be discussing what it means to be a net positive company and why that's so critical to your business, it's growth and our future. Andrew, welcome to Lead With We.

Andrew Winston:

I'm glad to be here. It's good to see you, Simon. I wish we were in person, but-

Simon Mainwaring:

Right, I know. I mean, for those listening or watching, Andrew and I have known each other for 10 years and we've been circling around the sustainability and brand world for a long time, and it's just a pleasure to have you on the show.

Andrew Winston:

Thank you so much. It's good to be here. Congrats on the show.

Simon Mainwaring:

Tell me this Andrew. How have you survived the last 10 to 12 months? What's it been like for you? I mean, we've all been working away in our little kind of vacuums. How's it been?

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. Look, it's been so weird for everybody. I mean, the time kind of, I feel like a year just kind of disappeared. We locked down for a year before we went anywhere and waited through until we got vaccinated and we're seem pretty safe now. But, my work, it was fortuitous, I guess. I started to write a book, right as the pandemic hit. And in a way, it kind of cleared my calendar. All my speaking engagements got canceled or virtualized or postponed and everything kind of slowed down, and it worked out because I needed more time than I thought was going to write this book. It was kind of a harder, deeper journey than I expected. So, that kind of worked out. And now I think, as the world's coming out of it, I'm now going to shift from just writing to talking and talking to people over and over again, trying to get the message out. So, like you, my business shifts really dramatically based on kind of what I'm working on.

Simon Mainwaring:

Absolutely. I think it has for all of us, thought leaders and writers like ourselves. It really, it's kind of a new day. And, I want listeners, firstly, Andrew's book Net Positive. He co-wrote it, co-authored it with Paul Polman who's a former CEO of Unilever. I just want to get this out of the way. You should order this book right now because absolutely essential for companies to understand how to become net positive. So please order it, share it with those in business and entrepreneurs that you know. We all need to be net positive and he gives a roadmap for exactly how to achieve that. So, I just want to share that out. And, for those who don't know, Andrew, this is build on a long period of work, from Green To Gold, The Big Pivot. One thing I wanted to ask you, Andrew is, how is this a build on that work? Have you seen an arc, a narrative arc in terms of the dialogue around sustainability ESG, net positive? Give us a sense of the shape of that.

Andrew Winston:

Well, I guess, my work has tried to mirror, in some sense, mirrored what's been happening around us. I feel like, I always say my job is to try to get people to the table, to convince them of the urgency, to get them to see the value in using a sustainability lens. So, I get them to the table and then hopefully, the table's on wheels and I try to just gradually move it towards where we need to go. So, I think my books have always been kind of pushing companies a little past where they're comfortable. And that's what we need to do, or you're looking backwards. So, yeah. I mean, the first book Green to Gold was in some sense, just a basic story of, "Hey, green isn't scary, don't worry business. It can make you money," because there was just this general sense that it's compliance, it's expense, whatever you do, that's sustainable costs more money.

Andrew Winston:

And as you know, we still deal with that. I hear that still all the time, but much less. And, I evolved, just feeling more and more urgency, really, that the problems we faced are getting bigger. We're not acting on them fast enough. Business wasn't pivoting enough. So, I wrote a book seven years ago, The Big Pivot, to say, it's not just enough to say that green is good and you can make money. We actually have to start solving the world's problems. And, that has to be the goal of a business and work back from there to figure out how to be more competitive, make money, use markets, use strategy, do all the things we do, but start from the premise of we got to solve problems.

Andrew Winston:

And so, Net Positive is kind of a really perfect kind of extension from that. The themes are really, the underlying themes are the same. This is kind of a big pivot, but Net Positive by doing it with Paul just has, I think, far more richness and detail about how, about going in depth in part into the Unilever story and leveraging a bunch of other company stories so that we can see what it starts to look like to build a company that really does serve the world and creates positive impact for everyone that they touch.

Simon Mainwaring:

And I think, those who are rising to the challenge of the role that business can play are kind of intersecting with this new language out there. Net Positive might not be familiar to everyone. So, if you could explain what does net positive mean and why was Unilever such a powerful example of that?

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. I mean, a lot of people in business are setting net zero goals. People talk about carbon neutral, carbon positive, carbon negative. They all kind of mean the same thing. And, they're usually around carbon. I mean, it's around kind of your energy and carbon footprint. We're using that positive in a really broad, just in a sense, the main definition of positive, it just creates a positive impact. So, we define it as a business that creates improved well-being for everybody that they touch, all stakeholders, employees, consumers, communities, and across kind of every dimension of the business, every product, every factory, every country they operate in every region. And, that's the north star. That's the goal that we're shooting for. There's no company that's there yet, not even close, really. There's companies with pieces of their business that really do accomplish this.

Andrew Winston:

And Unilever, look, Unilever's been kind of known as a leader for many years. It's justified. In the globe scan survey that comes out every year, where they survey people like us and people who think about sustainability, Unilever's been number one for 11 years, and that's kind of an unusual level of performance, in any dimension, in a business. And in that same top 10 is usually Patagonia, Interface, Ikea, the kind of usual suspects. But to me, what makes Unilever unique is, most of those other success stories have been family-owned or privately-owned, and kind of have a lot of leeway. No one had really tried like Paul to take a 50 billion revenue company, a public company, and try to shift it in a really fundamental way towards this path. So, I feel like there's a lot to learn from that journey. And that's what, hopefully, we're kind of bringing to the table.

Simon Mainwaring:

And before we dive into the details of that journey, for those, again, who are probably aware that we're in trouble, whether it's climate, plastics in the ocean and so on, but they don't know where to begin, yet at the same time, they've got the challenges of COVID just keeping their business going and a lot of distraction and other priorities. Can you just articulate the business case for being net positive? What's it going to do for them?

Andrew Winston:

Well, the core idea of the book is not just what net positive looks like, but this is the path for profiting and thriving. You're serving the world, but you're serving needs. Then, that's what companies do. They solve a need for a customer, and these are the largest needs humanities ever really face. We're going to see multi-trillion dollar markets in transportation, building, consumer products, finance, all shifting and it's happening right now, all shifting to low carbon, to less inequality, to dealing with biodiversity, just dealing with our really big challenges. I mean, the business case for sustainability has been elaborated many, many times for many years, and it still takes a while to convince people.

Andrew Winston:

But, I've always described it in a few kind of key buckets of value that companies lower cost. That's kind of the obvious one. They use less energy or whatever. They reduce risk. They're kind of managing their big risks in their supply chain and their operations. They drive new revenues through innovation, by solving problems for consumers and for the world. And, they drive intangible brand value. A lot of that is about loyalty and attracting and retaining talent. That's been kind of the biggest advantage for companies that have gone down this path.

Andrew Winston:

Unilever's been one of the most in demand employers in the world. And they often cite that as one of the best examples of the value it's created, because they'll admit, they make shampoo and soap. It's not sexy, but they're as in demand or more than Google or Microsoft, or tech companies in so many of their markets. So I think, that alone is a huge part of the business case. But, look. The data on this has gotten better and better. There's lots of studies showing companies that take a long term view, that take a stakeholder view are outperforming. They're having greater return on equity, or their profits are growing faster. In general, not everyone, not uniformly, in general, they are outperforming now. And I think, that's going to be the case, indefinitely. These are the ones getting prepared for the future.

Simon Mainwaring:

No one listening or watching should fail to realize that these are all P and L, cost savings or profit centers for the business, the ability to attract and keep the talent you want to make them effective advocates, to make them more resilient.. These are all meat and potato bottom line business drivers. At the same time, implicit in this dialogue around our responsibility as business leaders, large and small, to solve for our future is some tension around the idea of growth. Because if we've got to skew our businesses to do less bad and more good, mindful that this is a planet of finite resources, does that put a cap on growth, especially if you're a publicly traded company? How do you resolve that tension?

Andrew Winston:

It's the really big question. It's one, I think, we've all been struggling with for a long time. And, I tried to address it somewhat back in The Big Pivot era. Look, I think we want the companies that are doing the right thing to grow. And, there's a lot of reasons for that. So, if you're buying a product from Patagonia and they make a jacket that lasts three times as long as other jackets and they'll repair it indefinitely, you want them to sell more because people are still going to buy jackets. There's still amount of consumption that's going to happen. But what I learned a lot from Paul in this book writing, and we make the case for is that, so much of what companies do that find purpose and bring purpose into their brand is serve the community or serve the world.

Andrew Winston:

So, Unilever for example, has soap brands like Lifebuoy, where they've done hand washing campaigns around the world, and they've reached a billion people to teach them to avoid diseases that can kill them. And the cases that the larger the brand is the bigger the impact. So, it is win-win in that sense that a business does still need to thrive financially to grow. And the better it does, the larger its impact, the more influence it has, the more it can do the kinds of programs that tie into its brand. But that really works if you tie it deeply into the brand. If it's not some additional cost center, it's just core to what that brand is. So, Paul likes to say that people aren't and the Lifebuoy brand who work on that brand are not just selling soap. They're helping solve for disease. They're helping solve for health. And that's part of what the brand is.

Andrew Winston:

So, we actually want the companies that are doing well, that are trying to operate on only renewables that are trying to put recycle content into all their products that are trying to move away from packaging. We want them to grow. We need the better ones to outperform the ones that are lagging. All that said, we do need to have a conversation about consumption. And we talk about that towards the end of the book on kind of the biggest issues that we got to start really thinking about consumption is a problem. We can dig into that because it's a tough conversation.

Simon Mainwaring:

I completely agree. And I think, awareness around that is rising very, very quickly. And before I go to actually, how you execute against that is, at a small company level or a high company level, what is the biggest obstacle that you see in all of your work with these companies? What is it C-suite buy-in? Is it just legacy investments in capital and infrastructure that they just can't walk away from what's ... Before we go to actually how you commit to it, what's the obstacle?

Andrew Winston:

Well, I mean, you're getting at some of the tactical ones and there are tactical ones, and practical things like the pressure for short term performance that comes from Wall Street. And, in the book we discovered in some good research that CEOs, there's a survey that says that when CEOs cite the pressures on them for short term, that investors actually aren't number one, it's their own board. That comes out number one. So you're right, there's this tactical stuff. But to me, the real hurdle and this sounds very kind of soft or something, but it's the narrative. It's the story. It's the story of business. And we all know, brands are stories. Business is a story. And the story has been for 50 years that the only thing you're supposed to do is maximize shareholder value. So to step out of that paradigm, as [Donna Meadows 00:13:22] used to talk about the paradigm shifting, and even understanding that you're in a paradigm. That's the biggest hurdle.

Andrew Winston:

We have a little box in the introduction to the book called [Milton Friedman 00:13:34] is dead. And, it's a hopeful statement that we are, that we will let go of this shareholder maximization model and see shareholders as a stakeholder that you serve by doing everything else, by serving stakeholders and solving needs and solving the world's problems that shareholders will do just fine. And that's actually kind of old school. Before the [inaudible 00:13:55] liberal economics, that's kind of what businesses were about. Johnson and Johnson had their credo that they started in the forties. And it was about, we serve patients and doctors, and shareholders were like the fifth.

Simon Mainwaring:

I know. I don't know where we lost sight of this fundamental presumption that business should actually be good for people. Where did that go? How did that happen?

Andrew Winston:

Look, it was a concerted effort in part, right by market based ideologues, people that are part of the driving of inequality. It was the very wealthy that have driven this, and the very powerful that have driven this story so that basically, we keep funneling money upwards and it's worked. Inequality's gotten drastically worse. Taxes have gotten lower almost everywhere, on the wealthy and on business. And it hasn't served. It hasn't trickled down. They made the case that there was trickled down and I got an economics degree. I'm open to theory. Had it ever worked anywhere at any scale, we could put it in the toolkit. It doesn't. So, the fact that we're still acting, the republican still act like it does, sorry to name a party, but there's still this belief in that as an economic model. It just doesn't work.

Simon Mainwaring:

And actually, it's a powerful demonstration of the power of narrative where you can create the optics around something without actually the experience to follow. And that's equally dangerous in a negative sense. And, I want to get to the tangible actions for how someone becomes net positive, because that's what's so powerful about your book. If you're a small company or you're a larger, high growth company, where do you start? If you're aware that we've got to change, but you've got all the sort of complications that everyone's dealing with right now, just give us maybe 1, 2, 3 steps about how to think about becoming net positive.

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. So actually, it's funny. Today, we were kind of finalizing a list we're putting, just going to put a PDF on the website next week with launch that has like 30 questions. It's a readiness assessment. How ready

are you as an organization to kind of start down this net positive path? And there's a few kind of practical opening, foundational questions, and this is the stuff that I think you got to kind of get your head around and get lined up. Does your organization know its own footprint and understand how it affects climate and inequality and other major challenges throughout its value chain and how they affect it? This basic understanding of the world's thresholds and how it affects the business. Do you understand what stakeholders expect of you, now and in the future? So, kind of gathering the basic data, quite literally, what's your footprint along your value chain as the very first step, but you start to get this understanding of stakeholders.

Andrew Winston:

What do employees think? What do they want? It's getting the basic understanding of where you are, any good change effort. But then, a lot of it, I think, it really does start with very personal things. The book really starts when we get into the steps or kind of the things to do. It really starts very much with yourself, the reader, the leaders of companies and about caring and empathy and humility. You got to embrace a different set of values than business has been known for. And, start with yourself. Do you have your purpose? Do you know basically what your purpose is? And move from there, to the organization's purpose and kind of build up. But that starting point is really like data, footprint, and what people expect of you, those basics and engage your employees. I always tell people, just start doing that. You will find so much power and engagement and excitement if you ask them to be part of the journey and to take the company to a new place they want to.

Simon Mainwaring:

And specific to somebody that's looking to make that move because they realize they are [complicit 00:17:34] in the problem. Even if it's just through inaction, what's the carrot and stick? What is the upside, which you started to touch on then? But what's the downside if they don't do this?

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. I think, there's always going to be exceptions that don't disprove the rule. People will say, I've been asked a version of the question. Well, sustainability is so important. Why does Exxon still make so much money? There's no guarantee that every company that does stuff that's not great for the planet is going to just disappear. That's crazy. But the larger argument, the carrot is frankly relevance, and relevance in every dimension, not just kind of some moral relevance, but are you actually serving the markets of the future? There's going to be these massive changes in how we do everything, transportation, buildings, consumer products, all of it.

Andrew Winston:

Are you actually ready to serve those markets and those products and services? And are you relevant to the millennials and gen Z that are becoming well over half your workforce and decide who they buy from and who they work for based in part on values? Are you relevant to these important stakeholders? That's the larger argument. You can break down within that, the business case. The buckets of value that you can create, but it's fundamentally, are you still going to be around? Does it make sense for you to exist? You have a purpose.

Simon Mainwaring:

And, one of the challenges in this space is, as things move in the right direction too slowly, but they move in the right direction, the dialogue that gets spun up goes through its own evolution show. We

say, we saw it with green. We saw it with sustainability, ESG. Now a lot of people are attacking the optics of ESG. So, where are we in that sort of life cycle of that? Where are we in terms of the transparency, accountability, the legitimacy of the efforts out there? Because these, again, all you and I care about are the timelines.

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. I just care about the outcomes. I don't really care that much about the language or the terminology. We could debate net positive, or regenerative, or sustainable. I don't really care as long as the outcomes are the same. Look, I think there is a backlash happening against ESG in the financial world, because money is rushing into these ESG funds and a lot just have named themselves sustainable funds and aren't really changing their investment behavior. And there's a lack of perfect metrics and all the ESG rating companies out there are growing and evolving. It's anarchy. It's chaos at the beginning of a new system, but this is kind of what has to happen. It's creative destruction, whatever you want to call it. To me, it shows that everyone's at the table, that we're starting to work through these issues and say, "Okay, we don't have the right metrics. We better develop them. We don't have the right ways to communicate about this." This is the painful development of a new way of doing business. Some old ways have to be destroyed. I think, that's the normal path.

Simon Mainwaring:

You said something really provocative in the book which is, there's no net positive company out there. What do you mean by that? And kind of, what's the miss?

Andrew Winston:

Well, I mean, we got to be honest. The idea that you're creating a positive impact and wellbeing on everybody you touch. Again, it's almost impossible at this point. There's now companies with goals like Google, to be powered only by renewable energy at their data centers. This system's not in place to do that. You need storage. You need the grid that you're plugged into locally to be net zero. So, it's physically impossible to some extent. The intentions can be there. I think, you can do a lot on the people side. You can ensure that there's living wages. Human rights issues are taken care of. There's no slavery in your supply chain. There's a bunch you can do to make sure that you're serving people very well and that you're innovating to solve problem.

Andrew Winston:

But some of it's just systematic. We're not there yet. We have to develop these partnerships that we talk about a lot in the book so that everyone can get to net positive together. It's also in a way it is a north star. Even for yourself, you say, am I have a positive impact on the world? Not every single thing you do, not every single step. So, I'm not sure in a way if it's reachable, but even getting part of the way there, or 90% of the way there would be a dramatic improvement.

Andrew Winston:

So again, you're not going to be able to eliminate all impacts of your existence as a business, but when the system starts to change, you can then move from just trying to reduce bads to adding more good. You can think about, "Okay, we got ourself down to zero carbon. How do we help the community, our employees?" And you're starting to see companies do that, help their employees get solar on their house. That's a net positive action where you're going beyond your own direct impacts and trying to improve something in the community around you.

Simon Mainwaring:

So many of us, Andrew, are just anxious about the future. We're anxious about our kids. I was talking to my daughters the other night and they were saying, "Should we have kids or not?" I was just so gutted, man.

Andrew Winston:

I've heard that.

Simon Mainwaring:

So gutted. They're 19 and 22 years old. And I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" But, paint us a picture of what it could look like if we do commit to these net positive principles. There's enough doom and gloom that inspires apathy out there, but let's talk about the positive for a second. What's that vision for how humanity and more particularly business could show up?

Andrew Winston:

Well, it's funny. I think, we've had a problem with what you're asking in the sustainability community of painting the positive vision. It's not that we've been doom and gloom, but we've been trying to raise awareness and get people to see that this is a problem. And I think, it's been harder to paint the picture. But I think, we're getting better at it. And we're seeing, like I said, we're seeing pieces of it, right. There's businesses that are in parts of their operations. And, there's so many now kind of clean tech products that are growing so fast. There are buildings that generate more energy than they need. They have been built. There are examples of that.

Andrew Winston:

So, that gives you this sense of what it could be. There was in this weird way, if you remember, in the first few weeks of the lockdown in March and April 2020. Do you remember how LA, Beijing, there were all these cities that all of a sudden there was a blue sky, and because literally everyone had stopped driving for a few days and all the factories were slowing down. This isn't the way we want to get there. But it was actually, I think, really important because it showed people, "Oh, I could live in an LA where it's really clean air and I see a blue sky and I see that there's mountains that you can actually see from-"

Simon Mainwaring:

I'm in LA right now. My wife and I did exactly that. We're like, "Wait a second. There's mountains there?" Wow.

Andrew Winston:

So, I think it actually helped people start to see what's possible. I mean, it sounds kind of obvious, but imagine the air is clean, the water is clean. There's enough for everyone. There's sufficiency for everyone. They have healthcare. There's diversity. The pay gap is gone. I mean, basically, it's the sustainable development goals. Imagine we've reached those, and what kind of world that is? And, I think for a lot of us, the motivation isn't just my own personal benefit. It's like, I want to live in that world. I will feel better myself. So, maybe that's selfish, but I want to live in that world where there's enough for everybody. It doesn't mean there's no inequality or there's no billionaires. It just means everybody's got enough to thrive. I just think that it's an amazing, exciting vision. That's so much more connected.



Andrew Winston:

And you talked about what's the carrot or what drives this? Don't you want to wake up and go to work in a business that's trying to do that? I mean, isn't that just far better than just walking into a business that just is trying to hit quarterly targets of some kind, that is just trying to raise their quarter by 6.3%? I mean, I've been in those companies. I've worked in those companies. There's no mission. It's not exciting. And I think, younger generations won't accept that really as a place to work. They're going to want want meaning.

Simon Mainwaring:

Oh no. They give me a hard time and we work in this space and we're not doing enough.

Andrew Winston:

I know it's true.

Simon Mainwaring:

Yeah. It's awesome. But, let me ask you. Everything you are suggesting turns on kind of an individual assumption of a role in this change and more specifically for leaders, whether you're a founder or a C-suite or a CEO to be a different type of leader. So, how would you characterize this leader that's going to help us get there? Because without that leadership, it's just hope.

Andrew Winston:

Yeah. We talk, that's actually, as I said, kind of the opening steps of the book are really starting with yourself and we have a chapter called 'How much do you care?' kind of after laying out the introduction, and kind of the principles of a net positive of company. We start with yourself. And, there's a handful of principles. I mean, it starts with a sense of duty and purpose. There's humility and empathy. I think, for me, empathy, is what's lacking in the world. The lack of empathy is what causes almost all major problems. If you can't put yourself in other people's shoes and you feel like it's a zero sum game, you're going to end up fighting to say the least. So, there's that empathy, and there's a belief in partnership and openness to partnership, which they all build on each other.

Andrew Winston:

You kind of need to be humble to go out to the world and say, "I don't know how to do this," to go out to NGOs. This is one of the things I think Unilever's done really well in joining all these partnerships and publishing their human rights report on their supply chain to say, "Here we have some problems. Instead of just throwing bombs from the outside, why don't you come in and help us fix it? We don't know how [inaudible 00:27:02]." That takes a lot of guts and you have to have a belief. And so, in the end, the most important one of these and it's in our subtitle is courage. And I think about this a lot, the courage it takes to say, "I'm not going to talk to the investors every quarter. That's not helping my business. That's not helping me." And just to kind of break the mold.

Andrew Winston:

I think we have a kind of a pandemic in business of fast followers. I hear that from clients all the time, but we're fast followers. We don't want to do too much, but then nobody leads. How fun is that? So, you need to have the courage of your convictions to do the right thing, to do the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and ask that of your organization. And to do that, you have to be someone who's

inspiring and walks the talk. You have to be followable, follow worthy. So, you have to walk the talk, and if we've learned anything in recent times, everything about our lives is pretty transparent. You're literally seeing into our lives, our rooms now.

Andrew Winston:

We're all talking from our homes and leaders can get caught out by doing something in their personal life. We've seen the videos go viral. If someone does something and they get fired, everything's fair game. And you have to show that you walk the talk. And I think, those are the kind of key principles of the kind of leader that we're going to need. And that's on top of regular leadership principles, curiosity about the world, understanding trends that are driving your business, understanding technology, the ability to kind of groom people. There's all these other things that have been part of being a good leader and a good executive forever. You can go to [Drucker 00:28:45], but we're adding in that kind of that dimension of that empathy, humility, courage, all that stuff. You need to go this extra mile.

Simon Mainwaring:

And I think, the appetite for engaging around this change is just building every day. There's more and more of us pushing that rock up the hill, shall we say? But what would you say is the one thing you want people to take away from the book? If there's sort one key idea, and again, everyone get this book, Net Positive. What's the one thing you want them to take away? But also, what's the one thing that keeps you up at night?

Andrew Winston:

It's an interesting question. I mean, I'm thinking about the keep me up at night, but the one thing I guess that we hope that people take away is that, the way to thrive as a business and as a person is to take this journey towards net positive. And that, it's possible, that it's doable. It isn't just pie in the sky utopian fantasy. It has begun. And so, it's both that this is really the only path, this isn't a nice to have, that this is what has to happen now. And, it's the profitable path. That's the core of it all.

Andrew Winston:

What keeps me up at night? I mean, there's lots to be optimistic about. I mean, the clean economy explosion is unbelievable, better than anybody expected. The youth, the Greta Tombergs of the world, they're pissed off, they're taken to the streets. It's amazing. All of that is great. I think what keeps me up is that the horizon that we're shooting for, the dichotomy of being in sustainability is, we have won the first battle. Every company's at the table now. But, the horizon we're shooting for keeps moving away from us. I mean, for one, I'm really tired of articles that say, "This thing happening faster than scientists thought, melting faster, bigger." I'm like, "Why is it still faster than scientists thought? We got to change our expectations."

Andrew Winston:

And what keeps me up at night is that, we are in this historic swing toward kind of every person for themselves, especially in the US at the very time that we need to be completely connected and work together. And, part of that is driven by the other thing that keeps me up at night, which is the misinformation malignancy in the world that has convinced people that maybe climate change isn't so bad or vaccines are dangerous for them. These really counterproductive things that make it very hard for us all to work together. And that's what keeps me up is how polarized. I mean, I live in the US. I can't speak for other countries, but polarized is an understatement.

Andrew Winston:

We're at risk in this country of actually falling to autocracy. We're still at risk. Our democracy is at risk. So that's the thing that actually keeps me up at night because we can't solve climate change and inequality in an autocratic country that is run by people who don't care about those things. We just can't. We can't possibly do it. And, that's scary for us in the world. If the US isn't on board, if the US isn't moving fast on climate, it's going to be difficult. I mean, we are big and it has to happen here.

Simon Mainwaring:

And let me ask you a curious question as a fellow author, you and Paul have written this book and you've written several other books and I've found in my process of writing a book, it changes me as a person. How is writing this book with a Paul change you?

Andrew Winston:

Yeah, it's a really interesting question because I thought about this a lot lately that if I wrote a follow on, I've realized, I can't believe I'm even saying this because writing a book is incredibly painful. I've heard interviews with authors, in podcasts for years, almost none say it's enjoyable. They talk about how painful writing is. And, I always say to people, it's great to have written a book.

Simon Mainwaring:

Completely agree.

Andrew Winston:

I mean, look, every time you go through a book, the reason, even if nobody reads it is the process of thinking it through, gets your ideas together. You move your thinking down a path that changes you. I think differently about sustainable business because I've thought this through with Paul. But on a personal level, it's that question of, our overarching question in the book is, is the world better off because your business is in it? And I can't help but ask, is the world better off because I'm in it?

Andrew Winston:

So, it also happened to come. I talk about this in the preface, the book came while I was working on it. Three weeks into the pandemic, I turned 50, these kind of midlife moments, sending my kid to college. There was a lot of personal stuff for me. Transition. Asking that question, when you hit late middle life, you're like, "Am I having the impact I want to? What do I do for the next, hopefully 30 years to have that impact? So, it has changed me in thinking about that impact. And, how do I be net positive? And how do you apply the same principles to your day to day?"

Simon Mainwaring:

I think it's really powerful what you said, because effectively, we're all having the same visceral personal experience of time lines that are contracting towards us, which is our own existential crisis and why were we here. And, was it meaningful? And, will we make a difference? And, did we discharge our responsibility to future generations? I want to say, Andrew, as a friend and as a colleague, I deeply respect. Thank you for your leadership through all of your books and also to Paul as well for co-authoring this incredibly important book called Net Positive. And please, everyone go out and get the book. The time is now, and we need guidance. It's not about why we should do it. It's about how we get it done, and Net Positive will tell you. And thanks so much, Andrew, for all your leadership.

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Andrew Winston:

Thank you also for the leadership you've had in this realm. It's been great to watch. And, thank you for bringing me up.

Simon Mainwaring:

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