Aza Raskin: Imagine a world where trust has collapsed, you can no longer trust the government or the media. Every fact you learned in school is now a fiction. What's happening to you now is your only reality. The question remains, can you restore trust? It's a question our guest on today's show has been researching for years.

Rachel Botsman: So how many chapters of trust that we had in human history and is this unique what we're seeing or have we been there before?

Tristan Harris: That's Rachel Botsman and she divides the history of trust into three chapters. In the first chapter, trust was a local affair.

Rachel Botsman: When we lived in villages and small communities and sort of physical proximity and trust was largely based on family and friends and close relationships. Local trust existed for a long period of time.

Tristan Harris: And that arrangement worked until suddenly people found themselves surrounded by strangers.

Rachel Botsman: When we went through urbanization and mass migration and the industrial evolution, we realized that we needed new mechanisms.

Tristan Harris: And now we've reached the second chapter, institutionalized trust.

Rachel Botsman: It was genius really that we started to figure out that trust didn't have to flow directly between people. That trust could flow through intermediaries. So whether that be large institutional systems or even the invention of brands, all these kinds of mechanisms from contracts to insurance that really allowed trust to scale and human interaction to change in a way that we'd never seen.

Tristan Harris: But technology has once again reshaped our interactions with strangers and the mechanisms of trust are breaking down. The next chapter of history, Rachel says, is frighteningly devoid of structure.

Rachel Botsman: Now it should be clear, I still very much believe institutional trusts are important and that it's not like one chapter closes, another one opens. But what technology inherently wants to do is to take this trust that was hierarchal and distribute it back to people and often strangers. It becomes harder and harder to know whom to trust. And when you don't know what or whom to trust, that creates a vacuum, a vacuum for bad actors and misinformation and people that actually know how to manipulate that vacuum, and that's the polarization and sheer chaos that I think we're seeing all around the world today.

Tristan Harris: Every day that passes is a day that we lose trust in some of these systems. We're losing trust in our leaders. We're losing trust in our discourse. We're losing trust in the democratic process. And the risk isn't just that we hurdle back into an era of local trust, it's worse. With the onslaught of new methods of deception and bots and deep fake technologies we may give up altogether. We

	may be get trust apathy. So the question remains how do you reboot trust from that state?
Rachel Botsman:	This image of trust being in a state of decline and trust in a state of crisis isn't accurately describing that what actually is happening is we are giving our trust away too easily.
Tristan Harris:	Rachel wrote the book, *Who Can You Trust* and has a podcast called Trust Issues and she and I had a conversation about how we navigate this next chapter of trust together.
Tristan Harris:	I'm Tristan Harris.
Aza Raskin:	And I'm Aza Raskin and this is Your Undivided Attention.
Rachel Botsman:	Defining trust is probably one of the hardest questions and I've given a lot of thought as to why it is so hard to define. One of the issues is that the language we have around trust is often the language of money. And this really informs the way people then think about trust. So they talk about building trust and trust as a currency, as capital and trust really isn't a physical thing. You may have manifestations of it like a handshake or a contract, but it's more like happiness or love in that sense, in that it's a belief at the end of the day, it's a human belief.
Rachel Botsman:	The way I define trust is deceptively simple. Trust is a confident relationship with the unknown and the keywords there obviously are confidence and unknown. Often people think of trust as knowing the outcome of knowing what to expect of someone, but actually if you know what the outcome is, very little trust is required. The very essence of trust is actually about not knowing and coping with uncertainty and that's why trust is incredibly multifaceted, incredibly contextual, but also very fragile.
Tristan Harris:	So situate us for a moment on, first of all, your personal story. How did you get interested in trust?
Rachel Botsman:	I was actually working at the Clinton Foundation 14 years ago and starting to see the way technology was changing the way information could flow, the way it would change the flow of value and potentially trust. Now that seems really obvious now, but this was still the very early days of things like eBay and Amazon and Netflix. And so I just started immersing myself in it and couldn't find answers as to how did these marketplaces work. And so that led to my first body of work around what people then called the sharing economy, which was essentially around how technology could enable us to trust strangers.
Rachel Botsman:	And what I find really interesting is sort of the first five, six years, the conversation, the feeling around this was completely different. It was all about empowerment and democracy and decentralization and putting control back into the hands of people and micro entrepreneurship. That's why I think language is really interesting because language often reveals a sort of sentiment towards things. And then 2012, 2013 I started to feel things shifting and really

started to become fascinated with this question as to how could people say they don't trust institutions, banks, the media, government yet get in cars with strangers and that maybe I didn't understand what was going on at a more fundamental level to the way trust works in our lives, the way trust flows in society and what is really happening and about to happen. And that led to sort of this next body of work around how trust was shifting from institutions.

Rachel Botsman: So a trust that historically had always flowed upwards to experts and CEOs and referees and regulators and how messy that was becoming through platforms and networks and marketplaces and that many things that we were seeing in all different areas of our lives we're actually a consequence of this really big trust shift.

Tristan Harris: So why don't we start with first the excitement phase, how exciting that was, that trust could create that relationship of certainty at a distance. How did we get from that to losing faith in the system?

Rachel Botsman: Yeah, I mean I think it's like we've almost forgotten that happened, that phase. Every entrepreneur had this vision that we could essentially change human relationships through technology, that we could bring each other closer together, not drive each other further apart. And I think that was coming from the fact that these systems work surprisingly well. Yes, of course there are issues with eBay sellers and Airbnb hosts, but the fact that you could transact with a stranger and stay in a stranger's home and that even buying drugs off the internet, that the systems work, that there was a system of accountability and that suddenly many, many people that have been sort of marginalized by big systems because suddenly take back control. And I think that was very much tied to an overall faith in the good of humanity.

Tristan Harris: That's what I remember the most about that period was just wow, people are that good to each other from a distance. Meaning I can buy that book from that person on eBay I've never met and they could totally scam me. And yeah, maybe they'll hit a reputational point that they can start a new eBay account or whatever. And for the most part that people were really good to each other.

Rachel Botsman: Yeah. I mean, I cannot remember a negative question in an interview for the first literally five years. And when I wanted to start talking about unintended consequences, if these things got too big, they didn't want to hear it at events. All it was, was positive enthusiasm. And I remember the first article I read around rent inflation in San Francisco and then reading more and more about landlords commercializing supply on Airbnb, and these things started to point to issues of scale. Then the tide turned and all of a sudden I think people looked at it and said, oh, it might be called the sharing economy, or it might be called social media, or it might be called crowd financing. But is it any different? People started stripping back the experience and the apps and the design and sort of the brands and started going back to what were the intentions of these companies and what were the unintended consequences as they scale. So I think that was all going on.

Rachel Botsman: And then the second thing that started to really rise up very, very quickly was the realization that if you remove this sort of hierarchical way of looking at trust and filtering information or protecting worker rights or whatever it may be, what sits underneath these things, as much as human beings like the idea of decentralization and democratization and self-empowerment, when things go wrong, we desperately still need a center. We still need that leadership. That's where I think people started to get really scared that there was no safety net, there was no backstop, and this was the early days of things going wrong. It still hadn't affected an election. There still wasn't really talk of addiction and that still was to come. But I think people realize there was a void in keeping them safe, that if you remove the trust and faith that we had in institutions and you completely put it in networks, who is responsible when things go wrong?

Tristan Harris: There's no one to call if things start to break down, there's no centralized police force, there's no centralized customer service. I think we have to walk through the transition from local trust to institutional trust to distributed trust. How game-able was local trust. I mean if I asked a friend in my village where are the berries or where are the fish? If someone really lied to you and they were in your tribe, there's consequences, so that's that local situation. And institutional, if money is a store of value, institutions or brands are a store of trust, they're able to accumulate long term reputational authority on these kinds of topics.

Rachel Botsman: Yeah, I think it's that transition from local to institutional. The change, the flip was very clear to people. It's sort of moved from I am responsible for making this decision about whether this other person is trustworthy. So I understand that responsibility cause it's really clear and it's really linear and it's really, really direct and tangible. Like if you give me your metal pot and I trade it for a chicken and that's my responsibility, that's a stupid trade. And we understood that transition from right, oh now I'm abdicating that responsibility and that decision making to the institutions, right? So the food authority or the CDC or whatever the institution is, will sort of put their stamp of authority and tell me whom I can trust. And so I think as human beings we really understood the transition of those phases, but it's not clear today how that works because we have this mix of institutions and these new systems.

Rachel Botsman: When I first started looking at this, the hope and the emphasis was how do you create trust between the two people that the platform was just the facilitator or the enabler. And I think in many ways people understood that relationship, right? So it's between the driver and the passenger or the buyer and the seller or the lender and the borrower or the host and the guests, and the platform's role is just to facilitate those two things. And I get that because it's clean and suddenly it's changed, right? Where we're saying, whoa, whoa. No, like I don't want that responsibility. Like that can't just exist with me. And so where does trust lie? That question has shifted even in the last three to four years that the design of these systems is no longer trying to just push it down between sort of the two actors or multiple actors on the platform. It's actually starting to say, where does this really exist? Where should it lie?

Tristan Harris: Imagine if we actually successfully transitioned Uber from being a centralized company worth billions of dollars with an office in San Francisco into a decentralized thing where there actually is no corporations sitting in a real building with real CEOs. It's just code and the code does the same thing that Uber does now, if there's now some kind of problem or a driver starts misbehaving, who do you call if that trust starts to break down, what happens if like 50% of drivers just decided they start conspiring to say, what if we all start driving people to the wrong places all at once? Suddenly there'd be no one to call. There's no human being you can get who runs this new decentralized Uber, I think that's kind of the essence of some of the things are talking about.

Rachel Botsman: It's so true and I can't emphasize enough how much I think these issues are tied to scale and complexity. And the reality is, is that we are quite, lazy is not the right word, but you almost don't want to overthink trust decisions. Like you couldn't ever really leave the house if you're always thinking about everything and everyone that you needed to trust you really couldn't function.

Tristan Harris: There is this kind of interesting relationship that you're making me think of between trust and the use of conscious energy. Because if we have to research and understand, who everyone is and where everything came from before. Exactly which journalists wrote this and whether they have the credentials or whether they're biased, the world getting more and more complex means that we have to rely more and more on an untrustworthy systems. And this is what's so damaging, if the basis of those trustworthy signals starts to break down, if we questioned the CDC, if we question whether Facebook is giving us that news, our conscious energy is the last thing that we have to devote to making choices. And so the more we have to apply it to investigating the trustworthiness of everything, the more exhausting the world becomes.

Rachel Botsman: I think you're absolutely right. The newer emerging systems of trust are pointing their fingers at sort of the older forms of institutions are saying that, you're outdated and regulation doesn't work and blah, blah, blah. And then these older institutions are also being pointed up saying you can't trust them. And so suddenly it's throwing back on the individual, and I think fundamentally what we're searching for is a feeling of being back in control. That's what we feel like we've lost, whether it be control of our information systems, whether it be control of our energy and how we spend our time.

Rachel Botsman: But then I think it leads to these key questions that we see coming up now, the question that's been asked over and over again, like would you trust Facebook to be the arbiter of truth? Do you trust that Uber can fix regulations and protections around workers? The question that we're fundamentally asking is the same, can the platform play the same role as the old institution? I don't think we know who we want to be. The facilitator, the mediator, the arbiter, like it's a changing nature of roles and characteristics and identity. So the message is to be expected, to be honest.

Tristan Harris: One of the problems I have with the way the tech industry is currently handling a lot of these problems, it's very defense oriented. It's very whackable oriented.

	Facebook took down 2.2 billion fake accounts that it's AI caught. These are 2.2 billion new false accounts.
Aza Raskin:	Isn't that as many people as actually are on Facebook?
Tristan Harris:	Yeah. There's 2.7 billion people on Facebook. There's 2.2 billion fake accounts that they took down in one quarter, in one three month period.
Aza Raskin:	Wow. So if I flip a coin, it's like real, fake.
Tristan Harris:	And the line is, I'm sure they caught all of them.
Aza Raskin:	Oh yeah, they definitely have all of them.
Tristan Harris:	So what it really points to is something that's missing infrastructurally from the internet, which is authenticated trust and identification. Why do we have a driver's license in a society? Why do you have a gun license? Why do you have a passport? Because you have to be able to say, certified by some authority, I am who I say I am. But what happens when in the internet you're not logging in with your passport? Anybody can basically be anyone else on the internet. So when I can pretend to be anyone commenting on that Reddit thread or that New York Times article and create a flame war of outrage leading up into the 2020 elections, if not around the world, everywhere that's going on already. This is so serious that when you realize that you can't actually deal with this channel and we're best off shutting down certain channels and certainly advise people that they can't count on the normal shortcuts that they use to discern that this might be trustworthy.
Aza Raskin:	An interesting place to go from there is the way that China is combating deep fakes.
Tristan Harris:	What's interesting about the China model is moving from a stance of defense to deterrence, so they have instituted a law that says you can share a deep fake, but if you share it without labeling that this is fake, then you actually get thrown in jail.
Aza Raskin:	Yeah.
Tristan Harris:	It's not throwing everybody in jail for whatever speech they do. It's saying if you are not labeling something, so it's a really interesting idea here that Facebook or Twitter could implement. Obviously they're not going to throw people in jail if you post something and don't label it, but their version of jail is like, you have violated our platform guidelines. We're going to kick you off for 48 hours. We just basically disable your account for 48 hours. We could actually implement a secondary sanction-
Aza Raskin:	Right, so that if you are caught re-tweeting or re-sharing a post in which a deep fake is not labeled, you are also de-platformed. You're taken off.

Tristan Harris:	And imagine they do this for mainstream media before, say a CNN or a Fox news or a BBC where if you publish on mainstream television a deep fake video without labeling it as such, then they'll actually disable your account on Facebook for 40 hours. That creates a real disincentive and it makes all players much more careful.
Aza Raskin:	It's really interesting because Facebook, they are essentially a government, but they don't have the monopoly on violence.
Tristan Harris:	They have a monopoly on attention.
Aza Raskin:	They have a monopoly on attention so they can't put you in physical jail, they can put you in attention jail.
Tristan Harris:	Right. And now this gets uncomfortable because who are they to put those laws in place? I don't like that proposition either. However, we know that no laws is a million times worse than some basic policies and they obviously have community guidelines and policies now, where does asking them to strengthen that list?
Aza Raskin:	So you know, there's another really interesting thing here, and this is taken from Mongolia where when they're passing amendments of the constitution, the way they do it is they take a representative sample of citizens, a thousand or something like that. They bring them to the capital and they go through a multi-day deliberative process to decide. It's super cool-
Tristan Harris:	And it gets deliberative polling.
Aza Raskin:	Deliberative polling, deliberative process. Facebook could be doing deliberative polling all around the world to figure out what are the appropriate norms for that country, so it's not who are they to decide, but they are the platform by which each group gets to decide and that looks a lot more like the way nature works where it's a decentralized and governance process.
Aza Raskin:	The question is who are we to decide? Well, we are we to decide, right? That's our job as a liberal democracy to make decisions about our values and then enforce them using behavioral techniques.
Tristan Harris:	Where is wisdom right now? Who has the wisest view about how to even arbitrate these questions?
Rachel Botsman:	Yeah. I don't know if I look for wisdom. You sat in those meetings with regulators and entrepreneurs and VCs and the big tech companies, and it's become too much. You're wrong, I'm right. You don't understand. This thing is new. It's too complex. You're a dinosaur, you're from the old world. We've intentionally or unintentionally created polarization between who knows and who doesn't know and who's right and who's wrong. And I think what is genuinely missing from so many of those conversations is empathy. That everyone's afraid in some way. Everyone's scared that they've done something

wrong or they've got to give up power and control or whatever it is, or they're irrelevant even. When I was watching the Facebook hearings, it was funny, but it was also deeply sad because it was showmanship, right?

Rachel Botsman: It was like, I'm going to humiliate you. I'm going to bring you down, I'm going to score points. And that's where I think so many conversations, well intentioned conversations that are trying to find a way through that's where they end up. I felt it on panels. I won't do panels anymore on this topic because the moderator wants you to sit on a side. They want you to, right? They're like, pick a side. Are you for or against? I need to know. I need to weight my panel. And you're like, whoa, I can't answer that question.

Tristan Harris: What's your diagnosis of why that that's true?

Rachel Botsman: I think it has a lot to do with identity. I think people want to know what side you're on, whatever the issue is. That's why I've become a lot more conscious in my work in any label that is a binary or a polarizing label like remain, leave, anti-pro, for and against, right, left. I learned this the hard way because I made this series on anti-vaxxers and one of the things I wanted to be very careful of not doing was pitting the expert against the anti-vaxxer. And what I realized from speaking with anti-vaxxers and really trying to understand where their views come from, I realized that they care about the same thing that I do. They care about their children. And I know it sounds such an obvious point, but we lose sight of this. I think often in these conversations we care about the same thing, but our views on how we get there are very different and it's really, it's really hard to do.

Rachel Botsman: Like I'm very pro vaccinations, I had measles when I was a child and lost my eyesight for a while. It took every bone in my body to not get angry and defensive and even to sort of shut these people down and what was going on in my head was like just stupid. Right? But they weren't stupid. They were incredibly informed and at certain points in the conversation I was actually like, oh, maybe I have got it wrong because I didn't know that about the CDC and that relationship to that pharma company. And so I think when we sort of open ourselves up to really trying to understand the belief system and what someone else cares about, it's not the solution, but it's a way to find more common ground.

Tristan Harris: And per the attention economy, it's never been easier to lose the context behind someone else's statements. Technology creates the ability to connect with someone across the world, but you don't know that person's world because you're just seeing 140 characters of text with them and so it goes back to your point about if trust is our relationship with unknown and trust is scaled by technology, it's not doing a good job of pulling in the full contextual space that that other view might be living inside of. And then there's this co-evolutionary force of increasing polarization, increasing identity, which means that it's easier than ever to project the least charitable view of anything you see onto a person in front of you.

Rachel Botsman: Yeah. I'm thinking a lot about beliefs. This idea that you and I and others can't have any kind of shared sense of reality because we don't know what is true or false or what is fact or fiction that the stage on from that, the term being used, which is brilliant, is this idea of reality apathy. That we reached a stage where we don't care. Going from a world where we're both seeing the same things to not knowing whether what we're looking at is true or false, fake or real, to not really caring.

Tristan Harris: Yeah. And I think the issue of caring is really important. I was just talking with someone on the phone last night who does work on elections around the world. I was talking with her about how at the end of the day, if you don't know what to trust, you just go back to trusting the people around you. Right? Like imagine a world where you don't know if anything you've seen on social media is true. Like it could all just be false. So I don't know what to trust, I'm tired of it. I don't really have time. I've got to feed my kids, what are we going to do? I'll just trust the people around me, because that's just a lot easier.

Rachel Botsman: You go back to local trust.

Tristan Harris: Right.

Rachel Botsman: You revert back. Yeah. We contract when people stop trusting what they see and hear outwards, they contract and they look inwards. We were talking about trust surveys, which I take with a pinch of salt because I think they miss how contextual and subjective trust is, but I found it really amazing. That key theme that was emerging was that the most important trust relationship in people's lives it's starting to become the employer and the employee. Then I actually found that really frightening that people are starting to turn to the people that are employed by for information on all these things that we used to get from a variety of sources and I think that's exactly what you're talking about.

Tristan Harris: But then you're just as good as sort of a dark ages, hearsay world, right? And we lose science, we lose any kind of gated institutional structure where we were trying to progress.

Rachel Botsman: I think next year we'll see the first case where a piece of evidence in a really, really high profile case is classified as a deep fake. It's only a matter of time. I shouldn't even put this out here, but some defense attorney will realized is that this is a unbelievable strategy that they can throw all photographic and video evidence into question.

Tristan Harris: You're making me think about ... Trust is important everywhere in society, but there are certain foundational places that if you lose it, you kind of lose everything. To me that deep fakes represents something like a civilizational epoch, which is a ... my co-founder at the Center for Humane Technology is called the vanishing point of human authority, where our minds are no longer an instrument to discern reality because we've actually entered into a phase where the technology we've created is sophisticated enough not to overwhelm our strengths, but to undermine the basis of our weaknesses for discerning what's

true. And that's like a crossover point, though once you cross it, you don't uncross it.

Rachel Botsman: So then you're not just losing faith in the military, the police, the judges, the Supreme Court. You're starting to lose faith in the mechanisms. What constitutes as evidence and that deeply concerns me because where do we go from there when we can't even trust proof and that even if something isn't a deep fake, even calling it to question benefits the defendant, I don't think we really have an alternative for the legal system.

Aza Raskin: This is going to go much deeper than what happens in courts. This is going to get very personal. Imagine you get a text message from somebody you don't know, but it's an image of you and them and they're like, "Hey, I met you at this conference. I don't know if you remember me, but I was going through my phone, found this photo of us and I just wanted to reach out." And you're like, "I don't really remember you." But they send some more photos, you start chatting back and forth and this is actually a spear fish against your own memory. If I want to generate images of people that you can't help but feel familiar with, it's really easy, I just take your top 10 Facebook friends and I generate a new deep fake face, which is sort of the average of their features and this hacks, the last 10 years of friendship that you've had with these people.

Aza Raskin: And I add in a couple of people that you liked on Instagram and now they're cute and familiar and we don't really have any defenses against this except to just doubt everything. There are also things that companies like Apple could do and that is when you take a picture, they could sign the picture with the depth data that comes out of it as this was taken on a real phone. Why with depth data? Because that way you can't just take a picture of a picture and Apple or Samsung or Google could be in a race to the top to become the trust company.

Tristan Harris: Right. And we've talked about this, that instead of focusing on privacy, the ultimate value that people should be competing for is trust. And this applies in multiple levels. Trust for - are you going to privilege the truth or accurate sources of information? Trust for - are you on my side or is your business model about exploiting me and treating me as a resource? So trust is going to become the ultimate currency of the future. And Apple and Google and Samsung are our best position to establish and compete for who can better earn our trust.

Aza Raskin: The thing that freaks me out most is not actually the deep faked images, that's really freaky. It's the deep fake text. It's like perfect photoshop, but for text.

Tristan Harris: This can be happening all the time and you'll have no idea.

Aza Raskin: Yeah.

Tristan Harris: So let's imagine like to break this down for people, I can go into Reddit, I could go into some channel that's super controversial, like the abortion channel or the gun control channel, right? And I can look for the posts that got the most

extreme flame wars, et cetera. And what I could do is then build a kind of classifier that learns the language patterns that tended to be the most outrage producing things and then I can generate a whole bunch of other text comments in other topics that sounded distinguishable from truth.

Aza Raskin: Here's another example of this, which I think will strike home for most people, medical stuff. Like when something's wrong with me, I go online and I search for it. It's now trivial to train one of these text generators on top of web MD and just generate an entire sightful of just reasonable sounding academically, plausible seeming.

Tristan Harris: It'll be in the perfect ... The language of the Mayo Clinic. It will sound, it will look indistinguishable as text.

Aza Raskin: Exactly.

Tristan Harris: The text you'd find at the Mayo Clinic.

Aza Raskin: That's right and you're going to have no ability to discern is this true or is this false? And the reason why I like this example is one, it's terrifying and two, you can see that any area where it is not your core expertise is going to be really easy to fool you. Right. How do you reboot trust?

Tristan Harris: The native thing to do for our psyche is to look at what local people around us, people will increasingly trust local sources of information. So local newspapers, because they have local reporters and so on. So knowing this certain state actors are creating a fake local newspapers, especially in the US swing States leading up to the election that's happened in 2016, but what happens when I can make a super credible looking fake news website and now China and North Korea and Saudi Arabia are competing to lure Americans into different persuasive looking local news websites. And we can't rely on the normal shortcut, so until we point the mirror back at ourselves and see that, that actually is the way that we drive trust. We use these little shortcuts.

Tristan Harris: Like I learned this in the Persuasive Technology Lab, if the website says that it was updated 10 seconds ago or yesterday, the recency of its latest update makes it look far more credible. It's a super simple credibility, persuasive signal to hack in terms of trust.

Aza Raskin: Or as every web designer knows if you want to make the webpage feel trustable, have an about page that has a smiling face of the people behind the website even if those people don't exist.

Tristan Harris: Exactly.

Aza Raskin: Right?

Tristan Harris: There's nothing that we can do to stop this until people actually asks more first principle questions about how do I know what I can trust and privilege the

	sources of information that had been around for longer periods of time and have track records.
Rachel Botsman:	Historically, what are technologies that realized at their full potential became a threat and the technology was changed because they knew the human consequence if this technology had actually run at it's full potential. When have we done that? When have we actually pulled something back cause we've realized the human consequence, what is amplifying us as humans that if it goes past this point it's a disaster.
Tristan Harris:	Well, I think nuclear weapons represents humans coming face to face with God like power to destroy ourselves. I think scaling it down to much more easier to deal with issue was the chemical industry. It used to be in the 1950s that there was no regulations on the chemical industry and we just, we assume things were safe until proven dangerous and you could just dump mercury in the water. And I think that's kind of where we are now that we kind of assumed all the technology was safe until proven dangerous. If you take all these different features of how technology has impacted us the information overload, shortening attention spans, polarization, conspiracy theories, election engineering, they actually all have to do with hijacking a human weakness, basically running over the mental environment and not caring.
Rachel Botsman:	Which is why I think it sounds deceptively simple, but some of the solutions actually lie in friction that's spoken about in the past. This idea of trust pauses, whether that be around a person, a product, a piece of information, someone we're voting for, whatever it is, trust actually, it likes the friction. The efficiency of technology is kind of the enemy of trust and so to stop the hijacking of human weaknesses, are there ways that we can design these trust pauses into systems so we simply ask ourselves, are we sure?
Tristan Harris:	Yeah. What are some examples of trust positives that could be implemented that you've been thinking about?
Rachel Botsman:	So it's funny once you sort of give it a term, right? You start to see very small, small examples of this idea. So I was signing my kids up for a national savings account here and I did the usual thing of like just going through 38 pages of terms and conditions in two seconds and this pop up box, but not in an annoying way like in this really bright obstructive but warm and sort of even funny way just came up and said, are you sure? Because there's no way you've read this information and therefore it becomes a conscious choice, right? I'm not going to sit there and read the pages and pages of terms of conditions, but I'm aware of what I'm handing over at that point in time. I think it's slightly different, but the little bump you get in Instagram that you're all caught up. That's a pause. That's something that makes you more mindful, right?
Rachel Botsman:	So do I really want to repeat this scrolling behavior or is this complete waste of time? I think it's interesting, Monzo, Monzo is a very hot FinTech startup in the UK that their sign up process was actually too quick, that it was you compare how long it takes to open a traditional bank account in days, even weeks, and

that you could do it on their platform in minutes. So they actually had to introduce a spinning circle. I thought that was really interesting. So these aren't complete solutions, but they are ways that make you very conscious of the way the system is working and the choices that you're making and who you're giving power to and what you're giving up and what you're superseding control to. And I think that's, some of the solutions lie in intentional friction. And so I'm just intrigued if sort of the language of the last 10 years has all been about efficiency and automation and speed, whether the language of the next decade will be more around friction and slowness and resistance and pauses. And I think there's something in that.

Tristan Harris: I'm reminded of consent based architecture. As soon as I go to Europe from the United States, I see the difference right? Every page you go to the internet suddenly pops up with this website would like to use cookies and here's this link to click on this thing. And of course no one reads these things and everyone…

Rachel Botsman: Bloody annoying.

Tristan Harris: …presses the blue button, just get out of my way. And it goes back to this notion of what is the distribution of cognitive labor? We can't research everything. It would be exhausting to live in that world. And so it comes back to where do we want to devote and invest that conscious energy. Where is it important to read the 38 page contract? It's a fundamental question.

Rachel Botsman: One of my favorite trust theorists is a guy called Diego Gambetta and he has a brilliant way of putting it where he says, "Trust has two enemies, not one, bad character and poor information." And you think it's only problems in the world today, they're tied to that problem. Attention may be finite, but trust isn't that way. And so what we actually need to do is be more mindful and careful about the products and the information and the people and the companies and the leaders that we're trusting.

Tristan Harris: How do we rebuild trust once it's been lost? Because I found this interesting, there's a study with I think it's Cass Sunstein basically showing if you're a politician and you've made a mistake, is it a good idea to publicly apologize or if you publicly apologize, people just use that as evidence in a low trust society that see how bad you are and they don't really listen or trust you in your apology. Do you know what, I think Mark Zuckerberg has famously apologized 15 times over the last decade. And so what does publicly apologizing gets you and how do you successfully rebuild trust or reboot it when you've lost it? I mean that's a critical question for our time.

Rachel Botsman: It's a critical, actually just writing a piece on it right now. And to be pedantic about language, because I think it's really important. It's part of the problem is in that question, which is this idea of building or rebuilding trust, so why is that a problem? Well, it's a problem because not just because your sort of alluding to the fact that trust is this physical thing. It's because it makes you think that you're in control of it. How do I rebuild or rebuild trust? Right? Well, we'll have a strategy or have a plan or we'll get someone in communications to advise us.

	Whatever it is. If I do the right thing, that trust will just, I can control the outcome of it. Trust is not something that you can build. Trust is something that is given to you and that you have to earn it.
Rachel Botsman:	Now, that may sound like a really subtle distinction, but it's huge because I think so many leaders, business leaders, political leaders, whatever the sphere is, is that this belief that if I control the setting and I control who's interviewing me and I control the timing around this and I say the right thing, then I can rebuild trust versus the public, the citizen, the user, the customer, they will decide when they're ready to give their trust to you. Now, that's not to say like in the period in between that you shouldn't be trying to earn that trust and continuously earn that trust of course, but I think what frustrates people is this idea of, I made the apology or I put out that statement or I did that press interview or we made those changes to our terms and conditions, or we paid that fine, or we fired the CEO or whatever the thing is. Like I paid the price now and we're not through it.
Rachel Botsman:	Why isn't trust back? Well, people aren't ready to give it back to you because you haven't demonstrated that you deserve it. So that's the first thing that the timescale and the control that often the person who's lost trust, it's different from the people who are giving their trust and we underestimate that. The second thing is that when you look at particularly companies, but this applies to politicians and even us as individuals, right? In relationships, when something goes wrong, what do we point to? We point to capability problems. We point to functional glitches, systems, bugs, design errors, algorithms, engines, faulty products, whatever it is, look at it in banking, look at it, what's going on with Boeing right now? Even WeWork with the business model, Facebook ... the system, right?
Rachel Botsman:	So the solutions become capability fixes. If you look at whatever Facebook brings out, people almost laugh at it, right? Like because they're all capability fixes, we'll increase security measures, we'll change transparency around ads. None of it is about character and until people address the character side of the equation and the character side has the lead, particularly during a crisis and through the lens of trust you're already talking about integrity and empathy. They're the traits that people are looking for. You have to put those front and center because if you're focusing on safety and product reliability and the competence and you can rely on this thing versus the character, your sort of going to the how versus why this happened. And so you don't have any reassurance it's not going to happen again.
Tristan Harris:	So if you were Mark Zuckerberg, what would you do that would be a demonstration of having the character that is worth the re-earning of our trust? Sort of a contradiction in that question because it wouldn't be a strategic decision about figuring out what I can say, the premise is I would be the kind of person who's coming from like some kind of deep humility and I'm not calculating the humility, I am coming from the place of I screwed up.

Rachel Botsman: You've hit the nail on the head. And this is why it's so difficult now for them to recover because everything seems calculated, right? Everything seems like a group of people in a room making a decision. Like, even I think the announcement was made today where it's from Facebook or whatever ... by Facebook that's appearing now and what's in Instagram and tying the Facebook brand now it's at the bottom of your feed.

Tristan Harris: Now it is, yeah.

Rachel Botsman: And people were like, yeah it just got in. Like get rid of it. It's interference, right? And now you can see, I can imagine the conversation, they've hired a branding agency, right? And people don't realize that what's happened in Instagram or part of our ecosystem and we keep being hit with this. So why don't we attach the Facebook brand, the WhatsApp brand, right? But the intention still feels about them versus what really is in the best interest of users. So I think the leaders of Facebook, they are in, the only thing that is going to work now is a very, very grand gesture around their intentions and motive to generally demonstrate that their intentions are in the best interest of users. And that has to lie around the business model. Anying anything else, anything else to be honest is a waste of time. It's not going to move people on.

Tristan Harris: Well, you know how much I agree with you. That's why we came up with this sort of description that sometimes listening to tech leadership is like watching a hostage in a hostage video. Like the things that they're saying don't make any sense until you see the gunmen holding a gun at their head from off stage and the business model is that gun and you're like, oh, that's why they're acting so crazy and saying all that jibberish.

Rachel Botsman: And I want to be clear that I've met many tech leaders and I don't think they're bad people.

Tristan Harris: No.

Rachel Botsman: I think they are trapped and I think the things they are told internally that make complete sense internally don't work externally. I sat on a panel with Ruth Porat who's CFO of Alphabet, the holding company of Google. And I remember this moment where she said that there's no trust issues with Google. People perform trillions of searches on our platform every single day. And my mouth like nearly dropped. But then I realized like everything that's put in front of her, the indicators, the barometers, like the way they measure trust is in the same way that they measure growth and profits and money. And so I think it's often the internal narrative doesn't help their decisions and how they really need to behave and the way the external world actually perceives what is going on.

Tristan Harris: Totally. Yeah. I mean, you come up with a narrative to tell your employees that Facebook will say, " Well, we're just like a post office. We're just delivering messages to people. You don't blame the post office if a bunch of bad people start sending bad messages through the thing. We're just a neutral platform." All that it's so, it sounds so convincing. And the problem is when you're in that

environment, you're living inside of the filter bubble. I mean, we think filter bubbles are bad outside Facebook, they're actually much worse on inside of many of these corporations as you said. And there's no incentive to talk about things humbly. I don't know if you know this, Rachel, I used to be a tech entrepreneur. I had a small startup company and Google had acquired us, but it actually came through kind of a failure like the company was kind of dead.

Tristan Harris: We kind of had stopped growing, there wasn't much we could do. And here I was, I was 26, 27 years old. I had 11, 12 people working for us. And when you're running a startup and you've raised venture capital and you've got millions of dollars and you've got employees and their families relying on you and you've got to be successful. Like if you doubt what you're doing, where can you safely express that doubt? I say this because as a tech founder, you're not often able to go anywhere, right? You can talk to your co-founders about some things, but you can't fully doubt the whole thing. You can talk to your board maybe a little bit, but they need you to succeed. You can talk to your family and they'll be there for you emotionally, but they won't understand the issues.

Tristan Harris: And so there's no safe place to go if you think about it, where you can actually completely epistemically doubt the foundation of what you're doing, whether it's even good at all. Right? And I say this because we started this group called Doubt Club where my founder friends and I would, there was only a few of us, it was under hyper secrecy. And I talk about it now, six, seven years later. But we gathered in a room and went around in a circle under complete confidentiality and expressed what are our doubts about our companies, our missions and then just in our lives. It's like a support group. And it's remarkable how helpful people found it to be because you got to actually think the thoughts that were kind of boiling in your head, but you couldn't kind of go there.

Tristan Harris: And it led to several of the people either getting into talent acquisitions or abandoning their companies or projects or doing something else. And everybody found it very helpful. But what I worry about is at this level, at this scale where $500 billion of Facebook stock and a trillion dollars of Google's market value are reliant on not asking those questions. It's too costly and your cognitive dissonance will settle in and you don't want to be thinking those thoughts in the future. So don't think about them now.

Rachel Botsman: Yeah, and it's actually related to something Marc Benioff talks about as a leader in a tech company, there's always this push and pull tension between sort of these three layers of trust that we always need to be thinking about. Which the first is trust in yourself. So do you genuine believe that you're making good, ethical, the right decisions, trust in others, and then the trust other people have in you. And to your point, I think many leaders once you lose that faith in yourself, where does that take you? How do things start to unravel? There isn't enough permission to actually say, I don't know. I don't know.

Tristan Harris: It's very interesting. It's like we're all obsessed with the trust crisis on the outside but no one talks about the trust crisis on the inside.

Rachel Botsman: Yeah, that's what I was getting at. Like what is the crisis of faith and confidence that I haven't seen that piece yet. Like I've never seen anyone sort of beautifully bright that. You asked me what I would do if Zuckerberg, if I was, I would let someone in at that level to my deepest fears. The things I'm really struggling with, the things I know, the things I don't know, things I thought I used to believe things I no longer believe, things people tell me things that I want to believe are true. I'd really talk about that in a dialogue.

Tristan Harris: What does trust look like in the 21st century? Is there any bright spots of hope in ways that you think this is turning around?

Rachel Botsman: I do. I mean this sounds very conceptual but it is actually really a reassuring that trust isn't destroyed. I found it really reassuring to think of trust like energy that it continually changes form and I think it will find a new form and that's what we're living through now that I think will take parts of the institutional world and parts of the distributed world and these two things ... There will be examples where these two things come together in media and in finance systems and in voting systems and in science and education and knowledge and that's what I remain optimistic about is like how do you take these older forms of faith in institutions and systems and merge it with what technology inherently wants to do. And that's where I think the bright spots will lie.

Tristan Harris: Rachel, it's been so great having you on the podcast, thank you so much for coming.

Rachel Botsman: Pleasure. Take care.

Aza Raskin: We are moving to a low trust world, right? Which means that we are going to value face to face interactions more because those are one of the few things you'd be able to trust. So that means for a technologist, if you want to get ahead of this wave, the thing to do is figure out how to make experiences that get people off screens, which are low trust environments and into real life situations with people that you know, which are high trust situations.

Tristan Harris: Yes. Overall, I mean so much of the humane technology conversation and movement is kind of an act land movement for the human psyche. We already know how to do high trust, it's in person and it just so happens that rebuilding trust nicely corresponds with the things that would also rebuild the social fabric.

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