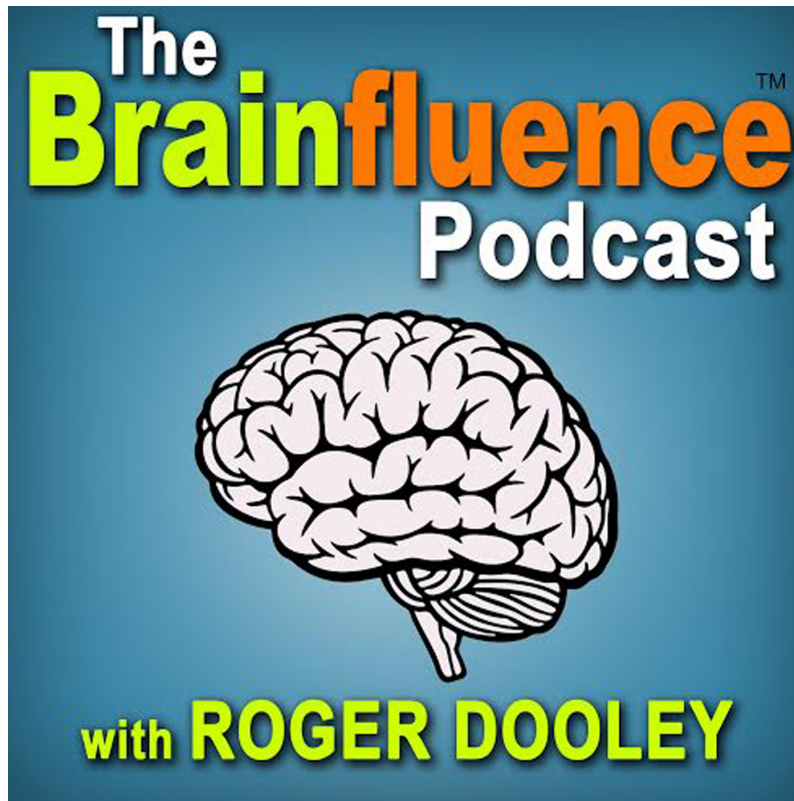


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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Clainer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to RogerDooley.com/Friction, or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley. Joining us today is one of the people I turn to if I'm trying to figure out, not just what's happening now, but what is likely to happen in the future. Brian Solis calls himself a digital anthropologist and futurist. He's a sought after keynote speaker, and an award winning author of seven bestselling books.

Brian's titles include some of the books we've discussed on this show, in fact, *X: The Experience When Business Meets Design*, *What's the Future of Business?*, and *The End of Businesses as Usual*. Brian has a new book out now called *Life Scale: How to Live a More Creative, Productive, and Happy Life*.

Welcome to the show, Brian. It's great to have you back.

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Brian Solis: Hey Roger, it's great to be back. God, I haven't seen you since South by Southwest. I'll take any moment I can have with you.

Roger Dooley: Great. Brian, we see some authors who keep writing the same book, with a few tweaks, but your books are all really different from each other. Up until now, you've focused on topics like customer experience and business strategy. Life Scale though, is aimed more at individuals. Where do bookstores place this? Is it in self-improvement, or is it a business book, or what is it?

Brian Solis: Yeah. That's a good question. In fact, I think you've just given me a homework assignment. Normally, what I tend to do, when a new book releases, is I go to the stores in the cities that I visit, and try to find them, sign them, put a little secret stash inside of the books. I've only been able to do that once, while we were in Austin, Texas.

Roger Dooley: Right, and put them cover facing-out of course, too.

Brian Solis: Well hopefully, because I love the cover of this book. I think it originally was classified as a business book, and that was by mistake. It's my first personal book, written for the general audience. I have to tell you that I'm learning a lot ... After doing seven business books over the last decade, I'm learning a lot about what I would do next, if I ever write another general interest book.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Was there some part of your life journey that took you to departing from the business genre, and going to this one?

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Brian Solis: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'll just tell you the truth. I was actually trying to write another business book. I'd been three years since X: The Experience When Business Meets Design, had come out, and that book, from a design perspective, and then also from a content perspective, really pushed my limits, and also tried to push the boundaries of what a print book could be, I should say.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I was going to say, that pushed the boundaries of print too. For those folks who haven't seen it, check it out in its physical form, in your local bookstore. It's really an impressive title.

Brian Solis: Thank you. Thank you. A lot had changed. I had noticed that between What's the Future of Business, X, and then trying to write what would've been my eighth book, I just noticed changes in myself. Along with all of the research that I write, just my ability to stay in deep concentration, and to stoke creativity and critical thinking, I guess, to put it in a word, had been compromised.

I didn't realize, as I was writing the eighth book, or trying to, I should say, that there was anything wrong. I thought it was just writer's block, being busy on multiple deadlines, but really, what had happened was, just the further and further diving into the world of digital distractions. They had finally caught up with me.

After really doing a good year of soul searching, had realized that I had been rewired. That the way that I had used technology was basically pushing me in a direction to constantly multitask, to constantly address every

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notification as they're coming in, constantly check to see new updates, or to publish, to stoke those new updates.

What had ended up happening was, I couldn't get past the proposal stage, and that's when I realized that something was wrong. I had noticed constant challenges across all fronts, including my research, and really needed to spend time, not only understanding the problem, but also trying to find a solution to the problem, and just enclosing the stuff that I was undergoing, trying to fix this, so that I could finish that eighth book. Because, as you and I know, books are incredibly valuable to our business.

I couldn't solve the problem. Trying out all kinds of things, like meditation and practicing mindfulness, trying all kinds of productivity apps, trying turn off notifications, deleting apps, trying digital detox, trying calm or head space, those things just work for the short term, but they weren't addressing the problem. They were treating the symptoms. That's when I realized that I needed to go and find a real solution, so I could fix my life, and that solution turned out to be Life Scale.

When I realized that I had gone through all of this stuff that didn't work, all of this stuff that seemed to be working, I asked Wiley if they would consider publishing a book on the Life Scale journey that I had undergone, because I couldn't be the only person in the world that was going through this.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Well, I doubt if you are Brian, because well, we've had Cal Newport on the show talking about digital

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minimalism, which is a somewhat similar theme, not exactly the same. Our friend Nir Eyal, who's been on the show a couple of times, to talk about how to create habit-forming products, now has the antidote for those products. He's got a book titled Indistractable, coming out in December.

So, I think that all of this attention from well-known authors, really indicates that there is a substantial problem facing just about everybody who's involved with digital products, which of course, these days, is everybody.

Brian Solis: Yeah, absolutely. The challenge with that, is that there are a million ways to address this, but not all of them are as effective, and this is coming from someone who tried and failed, through multiple programs.

The thing about it too, is that it's going to become a more and more important, and pervasive topic, which I'm thankful for, because you have folks like Cal or Nir, who are also raising awareness around the subject. You also have folks like Tristan Harris, who is probably the original whistle blower, who exposed a lot of the techniques and tricks that developers were using to make their apps and devices more addictive.

Essentially, they're all competing for attention, and attention is how all of these things are monetized, so the more of your attention that they have, the more money they can make, and in order to get your attention, they have to create new new habits. Essentially, in our case, where we're checking our phones, and we're sharing

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more of our life than we used to, and it becomes more and more the cases, as time goes on.

The one thing that I found that didn't work, just basically pulling away from the devices. I think that, as you can appreciate, in our world, letting go of my devices, and pulling back my online presence, was not an option. It was probably a quick and sure path to irrelevance, which would also impact my business.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. No, no, it'd have its own bad effects, for sure. Well, I think there are a few people who can pull that off. Seth Godin has a pretty minimal presence, other than his blog posts. Cal Newport is a minimalist, but I think that for most of us, that's really pretty tough to pull off. We've got to interact with our audience. They're looking to both get ideas, see what we're sharing, and also, I think we're learning from that experience. We're seeing what's important to people, and what's on their minds. So, I agree, it's pretty darn tough to pull away and still be relevant.

Brian Solis: Yeah, exactly. So, the solution that I found, was having to get to what the real problem actually was, which was, what happens to our bodies, and our minds, and our spirit essentially, through technology, and quite clearly just persuasive design, and those tricks that are used to get us to use those devices more, and those apps more.

When you reverse engineer that, essentially, so for example, a conversation that Nir could appreciate, because he was a student and a practitioner of persuasive design. What though, a lot of developers, I

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don't think actually realized, and what they are starting to realize now, is the incredible chemical effects that happen.

Essentially, one is the neuroplasticity of it all, which you're literally rewiring your brain. The other is the chemical concoctions that happen in a variety of different scenarios. The triggers that they use, but also the effects that you realize, as you share something, and you get reactions, or as you get attention, or as you feel the pressure to continue to develop those audiences, and those communities.

A lot of that stuff also becomes addictive, not unlike say, any type of substance abuse. So, when we're talking about the problem, it isn't so much just saying, "Hey, don't use your devices." It's actually not unlike an Alcoholics Anonymous program. You have a lot of rewiring, and also chemical balances to sort out.

While you're at it, there's also a much more, let's just say a spiritual, and however you want to define that, component to it, which is trying to realize the why of your life. Why did you let yourself get this far down the road? What about it was intoxicating to you? What about it was magical? What about it was not so magical? And then, where are you really trying to go? What do you stand for? What are your values?

Really, taking this as an opportunity to reset your life. So, the book only talks about technology maybe for the first chapter or two, but the rest is really about having an operating manual for an era where digital distractions,

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and digital itself, are going to only continue to blur the lines.

Roger Dooley: If you're sitting on an airplane, and somebody familiar with the book, or at least had heard about the book, sat down next to you, Brian, and they said, "Okay, well, where do I even start with this?," what would you tell that person? Buy the book, for one, obviously.

Brian Solis: This is an interesting question, and it's something that I've learned. Basically, what I alluded to at the beginning of the conversation, which was, I've learned a lot about a personal book, which is that it's not just personal for the author, it's also personal to the reader. While there might be this catchall, whether you want to call it self-help, or inspirational, or motivational, there is actually a much more verticalized nature to a personal book, that I've learned.

For example, I would ask a lot of questions about where they are, how they're feeling, what are they struggling with, to then customize the story of the book for them, because it was literally life-changing. That's why I wrote it. I had to change my life.

What I had learned in the process, was there were different reasons to go through that process, and digital distractions, believe it or not, was not one of them. No one's buying books because they feel like they need to solve their digital distraction, because most people actually don't realize that they're distracted, or that there's a problem, because all of this is normal. Everybody multitasks, everybody shares online, everybody's on

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Facebook, everybody's constantly reaching for their phone.

So, the angles that I had to use, to come at this, and be able to hold a conversation like this, say for example, with someone on an airplane, was to realize that there are ways to back into the problem, to solve it. In my case, creativity was a big deal, because creativity is directly linked to happiness, and the two of them are directly linked to life success.

What I had learned was that, I had been trying to live my life to the standards that had been passed down from the generations before me, that didn't necessarily seem to work all that well for me in this era. So, I used Life Scale as an opportunity to rethink, or challenge those conventions, of what is happiness? What is success? What if I had to define it on my own terms? What could that be?

When you start to break it down into these different types of conversations, you can go all over the place, because essentially, what Life Scale is about, is just achieving your life goals, once you realize what those goals are, when you break free from all of the distractions that you have every day.

Roger Dooley: Now, in the book, Brian, you talk about your adoption process, and congratulations by the way. Explain how you changed your focus on that goal, and how that impacted both that process itself, as well as your thinking about Life Scale.

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Brian Solis: Thank you. The chapter about adoption is about vision. In fact, right before we went to press, we cut out a good couple of pages that detailed the pain and anguish of going through that adoption, just because I felt like it was not only TMI, but it could be another book, or at least a series of articles for adoptive parents, of what they're going to go through.

The thing about it was, visualizing what you want. Not like the Law of Attraction, where you want it, you get it. Part of a personal strategy is to be able to envision so vividly, what you want, and how that feels, and what it's like, that you then do the things in life to work towards that, and the adoption process was an example of how that came to be.

Not just envisioning that we were going to have a baby girl, but also giving us the motivation to detail in the steps, the action plan, that it would help us take to get to that goal. I use it, not just as an example of vision, but also, where do you want your life to be, and get people in the mindset to realize that, a lot of the times we're not operating against this reality, or this vision that's truly attainable.

Also, because we live a distracted life, we're not able to see what that potential vision could truly be. As you start to work towards that new vision, your life, and your eyes, and your mind, open in all kinds of new ways, to realize that you can constantly keep envisioning a new direction, and a new goal, because you're going to see things for the first time, and in new ways, as you go.

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Roger Dooley: Yeah. I think you make an important point. The process of envisioning where you want to be, whether perhaps it's a new job, or a promotion to a higher position in your company, or maybe you want to write your first book, or whatever, you want to envision that. But, that in itself is not like that Law of Attraction stuff, where, if you can imagine it, you can do it.

It's really about creating that vision, to both motivate yourself, and organize your thinking, so that you can move toward that goal in a constructive way, and look at activities too, that, "Okay, gee, I'm going to do this thing now. Is this really related to my goals? Is it going to get me closer to that goal or not?"

Brian Solis: That's exactly right. In fact, that chapter I struggled with greatly, because I didn't want to offend anyone, because obviously, things like The Secret, and every incarnation of that idea, is so super-popular. I didn't want to take away from what people believe, but what I had to do, again, was the entire Life Scale journey is stuff that actually worked, and they didn't necessarily exist as one experience. So, I took pieces from all over the place, to put together into a journey, that was going to help me get through this and, and not just ...

I should probably note that it wasn't just about getting back to where I was, it was actually realizing along the way, that it was getting to a place that I had never been. It was taking this experience, and taking this technology, to say, "Wow, we're the first generation," and by generation, I mean every generation, "to coexist at once, to have to deal with this level of digital distraction."

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While there's been technology revolutions that every generation has gone through, this is the first that is having a human physical, emotional, and psychological impact on us, in ways that we don't necessarily even understand yet. By we, I mean, that's includes the professional communities, that should, and need to start studying this more, so that they can ... I don't have to be the only one who had come in and invent solution, to get through this.

Some of the things that I learned along the way, that I think help, was understanding that anything is possible. Just picturing it was a start. The real work came in actually going after it, and in the going after it, that's where life experience, that's where experience itself, gives you your superpowers, and also the insights that help you learn, and unlearn, and actually achieve. Even if you're not even getting the whole goal at once, you're actually achieving a lot on your way there. You're growing, learning, and unlearning, along the way, and that's growth.

Roger Dooley: Right. I think, well certainly, just any envisioning process is probably somewhat helpful. Even if you don't initially have the follow-through, even subconsciously, it may be guiding you somewhat toward that goal.

I think something you mentioned in your book is incremental progress. So, if your goal is to have your first book published, and it seems like a really daunting task, and just think, "Okay, well I'm going to work on the title, and subtitle, and theme of the book." Just get something down, that's maybe an achievable goal. You say, "Okay, I may not know how to write a book, but at least I can

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figure out what it's about," and then maybe from there, progressing to the next step, and then a outline or something.

By breaking it down into bite sized components, it can make a really difficult, and actually a more physical too, because then you say, "Well, wow, I want to publish my first book." It's like, "Ooh, where do I begin?," but by breaking it down, it becomes a lot more doable.

Brian Solis: Right. Just that sound bite right there, Roger, if you're listening, just remember that, everybody, that what he just said is actually a valuable life lesson. That's what life's about. It comes down to that idea, that it's not the destination, it's the journey, because each milestone in that journey is growth and experience.

Well, I didn't envision Life Scale as being the book. I didn't set out to write it. I was trying to actually get that other book out the door. I do now live my life based on all of the lessons in Life Scale, including the vision part, where I do share in the book, some of my visions, because I wanted to show you that I wasn't ... I didn't want you to go through the exercises, and I didn't go through the exercises.

I actually share my work in those exercises, and I keep my vision handy at all times. In fact, I travel with the book at all times, so that I can continue to practice what I preach.

I have to tell you, Roger, that this has been still an eye-opening journey. It's been so eye-opening that I don't want to stop. I didn't want to stop. The writing of the book

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was such a enlivening experience, that when it was done, I went back, and then even took on the design of the book, to use the persuasive design techniques that go into manipulating behavior in bad ways, to try to use it on paper, like what I did with X, but to be more positive, and to make you feel good, and to help you retain what you're learning as you go.

I ended up writing 105,000 words, and we had to cut out 55,000 words. I just felt like the whole process was so invigorating, I wanted to keep going. So now, I'm working with some really amazing people, to turn the Life Scale journey into coaching programs for life coaches, or coaches in general, and also educators. In fact, we're beta testing one at a university in Australia, right now, to help students, and to help anyone go through the Life Scale journey, beyond just the book experience.

Roger Dooley: Oh, that really makes a huge amount of sense, Brian. Is there an app in the works, perhaps an addictive for good app?

Brian Solis: I got to tell ya, so many ideas have come from this experience, a journal, apps, store full of all kinds of incredible merchandise, that people are requesting. I just don't think I was ready for all of this stuff, but I'm having to make up for lost time.

Roger Dooley: Well, I'm going to shift gears quickly here. I know we're limited on time today, and I want to switch to the topic of bacon, which you mentioned in the book, which I was not expecting in there. You mentioned bacon, and also

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something called the Zingerman method. Can you explain that Brian?

Brian Solis: What a random encounter in life, and to have that included in the book, I'm smiling right now. Yes, it was a ... Excuse me, I'm laughing, and I'm choking. It was a birthday present I received from Zingerman's. It's the Bacon of the Month Club. The packaging, the materials that came with it, it was so, so, so witty and creative, and again, I tie creativity to the life scaling journey, because it gives you that sense of practice and purpose as you go.

I remember just looking more into the company, and found that they had this Zingerman's program of also coaching, which they have their own version of helping executives ideate, and be more creative, and help them be more effective in their businesses, whether it's small or large businesses. So, they have this program, that they run people through that, oh, it's super-fascinating, and I even borrowed a little bit of it, also in the vision chapter.

Roger Dooley: Which came first, the bacon or the coaching?

Brian Solis: I think it was the bacon. Well, the whole deli concept turned in ... I guess, just their entire approach, has grown that business into a campus of different businesses, where the coaching program is just one of, that essentially, not unlike Zappos University, where you bring that culture to life in ways, or the Disney Institute, that you can teach other people that ideology.

Roger Dooley: I can picture these guys sitting around ideating, and saying, "Hey, I wonder if people would want bacon every

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month? Let's do it." That's great. So, what is the Zingerman method?

Brian Solis: It's a whole program.

Roger Dooley: Okay. Yeah, that is really, I think ... I'd like to say it's random, but it's so cool to find out that a small-ish ... not that small, actually, they have hundreds of employees ... but a place that you've probably never heard of, has developed a whole technique for helping other companies, and individuals, be more creative and productive. Pretty amazing.

Let me remind our listeners that, today, we are speaking with Brian Solis, author of the new book *Life Scale: How to Live a More Creative, Productive, and Happy Life*. If you feel like you're stuck, you're not making progress, or wasting too much time, *Life Scale's* a great and easy to follow guide, to fixing all that. It's got plenty of illustrations, and graphics to underscore the text.

Brian, how can people find you online?

Brian Solis: Well, my main site is briansolis.com, and I'm at Brian Solis across the board. The book URL is lifescaling.me, and there you could learn more about the book. You could also register for the coaching program. You could also register for more general information, and ongoing coaching for all of us, to continue our growth strategy, and just growth in general.

Other than that, I look forward to hearing from you. If you do go through the journey, please, please share your

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story with me. I'm sharing everybody's stories, if they give me permission, to inspire others, so that we're not alone in this.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link to those places, to the book, and to any other resources we spoke about, on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. We'll have a transcript of our conversation there too.

Brian, I know I'm going to work on adopting some of your ideas in my own life. Thanks for being on the show.

Brian Solis: Roger, thank you, and thanks for reading the book, and thanks for having me on the show. I really appreciate it.

Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is RogerDooley.com.

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

For more information or for links to Amazon and other sellers, go to RogerDooley.com/Friction.

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