

Hi, I'm Mauro Porcini, PepsiCo's Chief Design Officer.

Join me for our new series where we dive into the minds of the greatest innovators of our time.

With the goal of finding what drives them in their professional journey and in their personal life, trying to uncover the universal truths that unite anyone attempting to have a meaningful impact in the world.

This is In Your Shoes.

People often say, I can't do this, I can't do that.

And what I can say back to them is, tell me what you do in your free time.

Where you spend your time is what you become.

I'm quoting our guest of today, who is an Emmy-award winning designer, director, CEO, and Chief Strategist of Blind and the Founder of The Futur, an online education platform with a mission of teaching one billion people how to make a living doing what they love.

He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of the SPJA, and is an advisor to Saleshood.

He's also served as an Advisory Board Member for AIGA, Emmy's Motion and Title Design Peer Group,

Otis Board of Governors, Santa Monica College and Woodbury University.

He's taught sequential design for over 15 years Art College of Design, as well as Otis College of Art and Design.

And, additionally, he's lectured all over the world at leading design conferences.

His firm's work has been recognized by national and international organizations such as The Emmys, CLEO, Effie Gold, Huffington Post, Lynda.com, Webbie Communication Arts, and London International Awards.

Chris Do, welcome to In Your Shoes.

Thank you very much for having me. Thank you.

It is such a pleasure to have you with us today.

I've been following your content in so many different platforms, online and then I remember your inspiring, amazing speech at the AIGA Conference a few months ago.

I think, actually, it's more than one year ago right now.

Yeah, it is.

But, yes, because you are a designer, and you have the craft of a designer.

You have the skills of a designer, you work as a designer, but you're so much more.

You apply design and the way of thinking about designers to life, and to anything else, that we have in life.

How did you get where you are today?
you come from Vietnam.

You are an immigrant with your family, and you came to the United States,

and today you have this success and you're really changing the perception of design in the United States and beyond.

How did you get here?

Well, first of all, thank you very much.

That was an honor that you even say you follow some of our content, which I'm a little shocked at because of your stature within the design industry.

So, thank you very much for that. I'm humbled.

My path to design did not take a linear approach.

Because as refugees from Vietnam fleeing communism, the last thing my parents had envisioned for their son was to do something in the creative space, because in our culture, we don't even understand that.

That didn't fit in that very traditional mold of doing something respectable, like being an attorney or a doctor.

And so, for a long time,

I denied this creative urge inside my body and my heart and my soul.

I would draw and sketch,

but I always put that into that category of this is play.

This is not professional.

So, I thought I was going to be a computer scientist.

I thought I was going to do maybe investment banking or analytical things, 'cause that's how I was kind of thinking of myself.

And, I was very fortunate to meet a real life graphic designer, his name is Dean Walker.

And, Dean was using one of the early beige Macintoshes back when desktop publishing was just beginning.

And, I saw this, and I thought, I like computers and he's doing what I like.

And he's being very precise using all this freehand in Illustrator to make very cool drawings.

And, that's when I knew this is going to be my life, and I'm going to pursue this thing.

Now, it's taken many diverging paths in the woods, if you will, from being a practitioner to one who teaches and then to, hopefully, to help educate a lot of people in scale.

There's the whole journey to that.

It's incredible,

yours is a positive story and a beautiful one.

But there are so many people at that age, they don't bump into design.

Right.

They don't know what design is.

Today, especially in these days with everything that's happening right now in our society,

in PepsiCo, for instance, we're having many conversations about how to increase the diversity of our teams across the board.

And, I was looking at the statistics of AIGA.

Just three percent of the designers

in the United States are BLACK designers, for instance.

And it's not just, for BLACK designers.

There is a problem of exposure of the design profession to people.
So, for instance, in our case, we realize that we need to go to the schools,
and we need to explain people what design is about.
And, we really need to make sure that they understand how beautiful it is,
and the fact that it's a real profession, and your family can bet into this.
they can sponsor your education,
because at the end, you can find a job.

You can find a very successful job as well.

Is that somehow also the reason why you are so invested in lecturing,
in creating awareness about what design is?

It comes from your history.

Yeah, 100 percent.

A part of my history, but also, there's a lot of ways
that you can increase diversity and be more inclusive.

One thing is to say that this is the school,
and it's very expensive to go to a private art school.

You know this. Especially in America, where education is not free.

And so, we can say, we can reach out into the community, bring them into the school.

And that's one approach, and I think the institutions are doing okay.

They can do better, as you pointed out.

But I think you should take the school to the student,
not the other way around.

There's the expression, you can bring Moses to the mountain,
or the mountain can come to Moses.

But it's much easier for Moses to go to the mountain.

So, we have people from, not just in America, but all over the world,
people from Egypt and from Africa, and parts of Asia and the Philippines.

When we can broadcast and teach them where they're at,
meet them where they are, the dynamic changes.

First of all, we get rid of all the barriers
of geography and time displacement,
and we just stream into their homes, on their phones,
or wherever else they can get a message.

We're gonna change the education landscape
if we can do this collectively.

I'm gonna use this line that you used in the AIGA Conference,
a quote from this line that was saying,
why do some people succeed while other fail.

So, in your mission of educating people from all around the world
with having that kind of background,
part of your mission is the one of also helping people understand
how to succeed in life.

So, what do you tell them with the key messages?

Yeah, so, we understand this that there's two parts to it.

There's the message that's being delivered,
and there's plenty of tools and resources, especially today.

You can jump online, you can watch a video,
you can take a course for free or very little money, or you can go to school.
But, as I found out, it's not a question of the tools.
I can show you all the tools in the world,
but if you're not ready to pick up the tool and use it,
then what good is that.

And what I care a lot about, and am very passionate about
are the results and how we change the process.

So, when I talk about this mindset and this belief
about why people are successful is because I think
part of their history, their DNA,
their upbringing allows them to be successful.

And, for a lot of people, if you say design is a wonderful thing
that you can do and humanity benefits from more creative people,
but if they don't allow or permit themselves to think these ideas,
it's not going to go anywhere.

So, I've discovered in the last several years
as I'm working with people, designers,
there's always a mental roadblock.

So, now we have to kind of play a little psychotherapy, therapist,
kind of get in there to understand why won't you try this thing.
I'll give you an example.

Like, people tend to be very skeptical or cynical when it comes to new ideas,
and their automatic default reaction is to push back and say,
that can never be done.

Mauro, you can't make design as inclusive as you want it to be.
That's some kind of utopian dream, and you can't do that.

And they say, well, what if this happens, what if that happens?

And they almost always assume the what if is a negative outcome.

So, that's kind of a dangerous way of thinking.

I think, what if it does work?

What if you are successful?

What if I'm successful?

So, that's the difference, I think,
is that people who are successful in life and in business,
and in personal and professional pursuits,
they have a mindset of possibilities versus challenges and barriers.

They find the opportunity in what is difficult.

It's a sort of optimism,

- you would call it that way. - I think so.

Yeah, optimism with a little pragmatism.

Yeah.

'Cause I'm not just talking about dreaming.

Like, oh, everything's possible.

You can be President of the United States.

You can do this.

Well, apparently you can, but, you can be anything you want.

But, you also have to put in the work and the discipline, and the rigor, and to make that commitment.

So, it's not just passion.

It's also working through something many, many times and failing many times before you can get that reward.

Well, I'm going to use another quote from you.

I mean, you have so many.

Usually I don't quote the guest, but you have so many powerful ones.

You talk about failure.

Failure is tuition you pay for future success.

I really, really love this one.

And, anybody does innovation.

Innovation in product, in branding, but innovation in your own life, changing your life, knows that sooner or later, it's for sure you're gonna fail in one way or the other.

Yeah.

So, how do you manage failure?

What's failure for you?

Okay. Great.

I love talking about failure, because failure has a bad wrap in the world.

So, we put people into categories: successful and failure.

Obviously, we don't want to be in the failure category.

And so, it has a really bad connotation to it.

But, I'd like to change the way that we understand and reframe it.

And I learned this particular acronym from Garrison, and he talks about failure as a first attempt in learning.

So, we know that if you want to do something innovative, if you want to do something fresh and new, you have to go outside of your comfort zone.

You have to step into the unknown where the outcome is unpredictable.

And that's scary for a lot of people.

Not just a few people, but for the majority of people.

And, it's because-

Why do you think so? Why scary?

It's scary because I don't know how it's going to turn out.

And, if I discover something that I'm not good at, or my idea isn't product or market ready, and then it says something bad about me.

So, we have to divorce the action from the person.

If I do something, then that is what is done, but it's not a reflection of me as a human being.

So, I try something, and if I don't succeed,

I have to say, that's necessary now.

If you want to do something new and innovative, you have to go out into the unknown.

You have to try new ideas, and you're going to discover 10, 100, or 1,000 ways that it doesn't work to find the one way it does work.

And that's the problem.

Too many people are stuck in dogma, in tradition.

This is the way it was done.

This is the way it will always be done, and then the door to innovation and new thinking is just very, very small.

In connection to failure, the opposite of failure, you mentioned it earlier, is success, somehow.

Yeah.

You mention that sometimes even success, especially early success, could be in some form or way dangerous, right.

I mean, usually success is what everybody search.

What do you want is the positive.

Failure is the negative.

But, you say it, well, wait a second, I mean, especially early success, could be dangerous.

What do you mean with that?

Well, if you're successful early, then you start to fall into this belief that this is it, and you don't want to take any more chances.

I think that's something that's very true of a lot of immigrants and people who come to America, especially, is they kind of know what failure looks like.

They know what hardship looks like, and they become really resilient.

The ones that make it, obviously.

And they say, well, if that can't break me, what can break me?

Robert Kiyosaki talks about this, and he's like, he was flying helicopters in Vietnam

and people were shooting, trying to shoot him down.

And he's like, if bullets can't kill me, what can your words do?

What can your opinion, what can your criticism do for me?

If literally bullets can't kill me, then I'm going to be really, really tough and resilient.

So, success starts to fool you that you're the expert, that you know a lot, and you start to close all these doors.

But, plus, I think you're scared to find out one day that you're not good at everything.

So, you don't try new things.

So, essentially, you need to become self-aware of your strengths, but also aware of your weaknesses as well.

Sometimes somebody then become too aware of their weaknesses, or they're too humble. Or...

I met so many unbelievable talents that are also very nice people.

Yes.

But they're so humble in the way they interact with others, with the clients.

And, in many of your speeches, you have been talking about the fact

that you need to be careful with that.

Yeah.

If you treat the client as a star, they will treat you as a fan.

- Right? - Mm-hmm, yeah.

I really love that because,

unfortunately, there are so many arrogance people, out there.

And we need to really stop that, and it's a weakness for them, I think.

But, in the meantime, you need to be careful

to be eventually, even, too humble.

You need to find the right balance.

So, can you tell us more about that?

It was connection on the negotiation with your clients and

Yeah.

how you can get paid in the right way?

Mm-hmm.

I think in many societies and cultures

if people start to carry themselves a certain way,

they start to believe in what they do, they get knocked down.

In Australia, I think they call it top hoppy syndrome.

And, in Ireland they say you're getting too big for your boots.

So, there's all these expressions and ways of thinking.

And so, we think that being humble is a virtue, and to a degree it is.

But, it's a really close cousin to imposter syndrome, if you think about it.

So, to be humble is not to acknowledge or

to talk about one's gifts and what you're good at.

And, what is imposter syndrome, is I'm not good at anything.

I have no talent.

And it's a dangerous line to cross over.

Conversely, on the opposite side of that spectrum is self-confidence.

Now, people think and mistakenly associate

arrogant people with self-confident people.

They could not be more dissimilar.

Arrogant people are actually, have low self-confidence, and low self-esteem.

So, what they try to do is they try to mask that hurt inside

and pretend like they are more than they are.

So, they literally puff out their chest, they walk around a certain way,

they carry themselves, they put down other people

and they try to suck up all the oxygen and attention in a room.

Those people are arrogant.

All they do is brag about themselves over and over again.

That is not a confident person.

That is an arrogant person masking an insecure person inside.

So, I would encourage creative people, especially,

to become hyper-aware of what you're good at,

to embrace that, and to learn to love that,

and to dream for yourself something bigger than you are,

and to be proud of that.

And, what about kindness?

I don't know you very well.

I interact with you just a few times, but you look like a kind person.

I really believe in the power of being a good person,
being kind, being trustworthy.

What do you think about this?

Well, I think, unfortunately,

I think we are also becoming very suspicious of other people,
and we think that kindness is a sign of weakness, to be vulnerable is weak.

And, again, I think that's the opposite,

meaning if you're confident enough in yourself

that you don't really care so much about the opinions of people
who are going to cast stones at you,

you're okay to reveal that something about you isn't great.

That you can be vulnerable, and you can also show
compassion, empathy, and kindness to others.

But, I think there's also a business component to being kind.

My entire business right now, The Futur, is built on kindness and reciprocity.

And, so, reciprocity is a simple principle, is the more you give,
the more people feel compelled to give back.

So, it's a give get thing.

So, we create videos and courses, and we release most of them for free.

And, what we have are people who show up who say,

I like this, that you are giving.

What can I do to support you?

So, from humans who donate one dollar to us,
to many more hundreds of dollars for companies
who say we want to get behind what you're doing,
we just think it's really good and it's a generous act.

And, I think there's also a business component.

I don't mean to be kind because you expect something in return.

I want people to be more generous in their heart,
to give without expectations.

And from that, some pretty cool things do wind up happening.

I love what you just said. It's so important today.

So many times we put interest, financial revenue,
before anything else to then find out that
it doesn't give you happiness.

Instead, the ability to really connect with others,
with what we call kindness,

and then finding your purpose in doing that as well
is so powerful, to make you happy

and to share happiness and build happiness in the society.

You mention Futur.

Can you tell us more about what Futur is,

how you decided to create something like this?

Yes.

Now, I started out my life as a practicing designer doing commercials and music videos, and I ran a design studio for 20 plus years.

In 2014, a friend of mine, Jose Caballer, he said, let's start a YouTube channel.

Let's try to make a product to teach people something.

And, initially, the YouTube channel was a vehicle, a marketing vehicle, to sell our course together.

And, the problem was two-fold.

One, it didn't sell many courses, and two, nobody tuned in to watch a commercial.

It was just not great.

And, when I realized that this was an amazing platform to teach and to give in generous ways, and started to create content around that.

So I said, no more selling, no more talking about our products.

Just give value all the way.

Let's see what happens.

Slowly over time, it was not an overnight thing, people would show up and start to watch our content.

And, ultimately, I split off from Jose and started this company called The Futur, which is now the only thing that I do.

And, what we try to do is we try to teach people how to make a living doing what they love.

And, the problem is, there are many sources for you to learn how to be a creative human being.

There are few sources that teach you how to be successful, so that the linking between business and design needs to happen.

It should not be one language; it should be bilingual.

We should be talking and speaking both languages together.

Yes, that's so powerful, and it's so necessary to give a seat at the table to the design community.

And at the end of the day,

this is gonna create value for the business community and, at most, it's going to create value for the world, for the society we live in.

When you talk about that connection,

you also talk about the importance of tools and processes.

It's not just about creativity,

but you also need tools and processes were to explode, make explode that creativity.

Yes.

Can you tell us more about that?

What is the role of processes in the creative process?

Yeah, so you have tools and tools amplify and scale your ability.
So, if you can't draw a straight line,
you use Adobe Illustrator, you could draw a straight line now.
But the process is helping you to understand
and to be able to articulate to team members,
to people above you and below you, we have a recipe.
We have a formula on how to approach a problem,
so that we can have repeatable success.
And this is really important.
So, I think a lot of artists, and I say artists and not designers,
they do things out of intuition.
You'll notice, say, a famous songwriter might say, well, I channeled God,
and this is how the song came out.
And the ones that are very successful, for some reason,
they have a really great conversation with God, 'cause
they keep being able to make hit after hit.
But, that's not something you can bet on.
I prefer process, to understand, okay, how did we come to this conclusion.
If this worked, I want to go back into my mind
to reverse engineer the decisions and
the things that I made to get to this spot again,
so that I can see if I can have similar success.
And so, if you have that kind of self-awareness
and the analytical ability to look at your own brain,
then you might develop something.
And we know this is true because for UX design, you might do a sprint.
Or, you might run a scrum session,
or you might manage a project a certain way.
So, people who are smart enough start to figure out
there are certain structures that work.
So, here's an example.
Hollywood is considered one of the most formulaic industries in the world.
Yet, we love films, they move us, they make us happy,
they make us change our mind about something.
But, it follows a very specific and repeatable formula.
When they don't, it becomes one of those arthouse films
that is appreciated by a small group of people,
but it doesn't really have the power to influence
and spread that message to a whole lot of people.
So, filmmakers have learned the formula.
I think designers need to learn their formula, or a formula,
so that they can have similar repeatable success.
I love it. It's somehow an enabler
and an amplifier then of whatever you do.
You've been talking also about the fact that
creativity somehow comes from conflict.

And, that's another very interesting idea.

Can you tell us more about that?

Sure. I think what we're doing is we're looking for problems to solve, right.

And so, when somebody has this gap between where they are and where they want to be, the conflict exists.

And it's also the same as the story formula.

Stories are boring if there's no conflict.

If the boy falls in love with the girl and the parents support it and they're both rich, that's kind of a boring story.

So, then they change the variables, and they say, well, boy falls in love with girl, but their families hate each other.

Boy falls in love with girl, but girl is gay.

Boy falls in love with girl, and she's poor and he's rich.

And so, there's that conflict.

So, designers, we look for the problem.

And we're looking for small problems, we're looking for big problems.

An example of a small problem is the letter spacing isn't quite right.

Or, the ligature here, it's not complete.

It's still feeling off-balance, and so we'll work on that.

A big problem is, how do we get society to be kinder to each other.

And a designer can work on that problem as well, if you allow yourself to think of non-traditional visual things and look at just bigger problems.

So, that's what we're trying to do.

We're trying to find the conflicts, internal and external, so that we can start to solve those things.

Yeah, I love it.

What's ikigai?

I don't know if I pronounced it in the right way. I tried.

Yes-yes. Ikigai.

I think it's Japanese for way of being, and I love the concept.

So, there's a little story here.

I'm in Las Vegas, and I'm hanging out with one of my former students who now runs his own design company.

He's quite successful.

And he was asking me some questions about something, and I mean, this is the joke, right?

Like, I literally said, give me a pen.

We unfolded a napkin.

I know, it's cliché.

I started drawing these circles and I said, well, I'm happy right now because I've been able to find that sweet spot in between all these different things.

And I was explaining it to him.

And that was the genesis of this framework or process I developed to help people find similar joy and success in their life.
And when I was sharing this with a friend, he said, Chris, that's ikigai.
I'm like, what did you just say?
Like, what do you mean ikigai?
He's like, well, this Japanese concept.
And I went to look it up, and it was almost exactly the same.
So, ikigai is something about doing something that you love, something that makes money, something that the world needs, and something that you have skill at, or something like that.
You kind of caught me off-guard here.
But there are this kind of four circles, and you're trying to identify all these things.
And in the center, when there's this massive amount of overlap.
So, I love it, I'm good at it, it pays well, and the world needs this.
You're going to find your ikigai, your reason for being.
And you're going to be happy, you're going to be healthier, and you're going to be wealthier than you would if you just tried to pursue one of the categories.
It's interesting because I have a friend that is writing a book and he's based in Japan.
I'm not going to say more because the book is a secret, but he's a designer and he's writing about ikigai.
And then I bump into this idea with you, and exactly today I received an email with the final book.
I wrote a little piece for him in this book, and there was that concept.
And, I was talking with you, so I was like, oh, I need to ask him because you have a very similar view of life in general, and then the role of design into this idea, into this concept.
We're living in a moment with this pandemic, this virus, this crisis that is changing our lives in so many different ways.
How did COVID-19 change your view of life, first?
If it did change. Maybe it didn't.
And, your way of working.
And do you think that change today is going to be permanent, or you will go back to where you were before, after it's gone?
Yeah, I think in modern life, we're caught up in the rat race and the hustle and the bustle.
We're on this fast-moving train, and we stop to kind of appreciate the people around us, and that we're on a train, and that we're going from place to place.
And COVID just hit the emergency break on this train, and everybody was jolted awake.
It's like if you were sleeping, not paying attention.
You cannot escape COVID 'cause it's a global thing.
And, I think there's some positive, believe it or not, out of this,

and some obviously negatives.

So, the positive part is, I feel this, and I felt this for awhile in that it made me aware of the fragility of life, and how we're all really super interconnected.

It doesn't matter what shape or size, what gender you are, how old or young you are.

We're all going through this in different ways, depending on our country and the cities that we live in.

So, I think it's an opportunity for humanity, as the human race, to kind of come together and say, look, we can get through this together.

I think that's wonderful, and that's beautiful.

The other thing it's done is it's made all of us stop and question, why are doing what we're doing.

Do we need to go to the office?

Do we need the size of this building, or do we need to have this many cars on the road?

Or, do we need to consume as much as we do?

Because it's changing everything.

Do we need to go eat out at a restaurant as often as we did?

And so, I just think that there's a lot of pain.

I want to acknowledge that a lot of people lost loved ones and the suffering.

But, there is this opportunity for us to wake up from our sleepwalking, 'cause that's what we're doing, and pay attention to what's going on.

And I love some of the effects that it's had.

Now, a lot of businesses are suffering.

But, I don't think COVID made them go out of business.

I think COVID just accelerated them going out of business.

So, there's a lot of old school, brick and mortar retail stores that, every day I read the news it's like,

there's another one that's going to close more stores,

and I feel bad for them and for the people

that work for them who depend on that.

But, there should have been some vision, some leadership.

So, when COVID hit us, many of my team were already working remotely, hyper flexible hours because the way we measure our humans

isn't whether you're physically there

or how many hours you work on something.

It's just measured in outcome.

Yeah.

So, if it takes you two hours or 300 hours, that's entirely up to you.

You manage your own time,

because we want our people to have a high degree of autonomy and ownership over the things that they do.

So, we flipped the switch.

We said, everybody work from home, and then we flipped another switch and said, we're not gonna return to this again.

That we're going to get rid of our space and the way that we're using it, and you guys all need to set up how you want to work and live for now moving forward.

So, we're not going to return back to the way it was.

This is an opportunity to design better systems and ways of living and working.

You say something so invaluable.

If you take three hours or 300 hours, I'm interested in the output.

And this is so true.

if you think about the balance between work and life.

We are in this world to enjoy our life and to give a meaning to our life.

And, work is an important part of it, but there is also another component.

And, the more we can refine the imbalance,

and the more we can have companies working by objective,

and obviously, you want to be efficient and productive.

If somebody can do something in three hours,

maybe you want to have that person,

using other hours to do other things that are amazing.

I understand also that part of the model.

But, what is the right balance to give the possibility to people

to be efficient and then find back time for themselves.

I think it's one of the biggest learnings hopefully

of this tragedy we are witnessing right now.

We've been talking a lot about life and purpose, and way of thinking.

But you are also a real designer.

I mean, you design, you did many in the past as well.

What is the project that you liked the most?

The more traditional, brand design, graphic design,

or any kind of design project that you liked the most.

I like to share with you two projects,

and I kind of explained how weird my brain is.

One of my favorite projects I've ever done was a music video for a small,

I think they're Danish, band called The Raveonettes.

And, when you work with artists and not corporate clients,

there's a trust and there's a shared language and understanding.

We'll stay out of your way, you stay out of our way kind of thing.

There's that respect, like...

So they said, basically, our song is about black and white.

Go make something.

And this was in collaboration with Gap, The Sound of Color.

And, we got to have so much fun making this thing

that it didn't feel like work anymore.

And I literally had to tell my team, you guys have to go home.

It's two in the morning, everybody go home,

and we can't keep working like this.

And they didn't want to leave because they were having so much fun.

And so, the product of this love and this joy is reflected.

It's like there's an expression, like the California cheese campaign, happy cows come from California and happy cheese comes from happy cows, or something like that. So, if you create a place and a culture for people to be happy, that they get to love and believe in the things that they do, the end product cannot be anything but amazing.

That's project number one.

Project number two is totally different.

I got to work with a small business owner operator.

A really boring category, self storage, like Public Storage.

And, I got into the brand, I started to understand this and I'm working directly with the decision makers, the founders of the company.

And we start doing design, and then he with a level of trust with me said, can you help us design the building?

And I thought this was really a great opportunity, but I felt a little uncomfortable. I said, I'm not a trained architect.

He goes, and his name is Brett, Brett said, I know you're not.

You design it, show us some drawings and elevations, and I'll get an architect to do all the technical stuff.

So I was like, this is incredible.

I wish all my relationships with my clients were like this, where we go in for one thing,

trust is established, and we generate ideas that they're thinking, you need to be the person to craft our entire experience.

So I got to design the interior of the store, the furniture and the exterior for several of his buildings.

And it was just really a wonderful collaboration.

Wonderful stories.

You're often seen with a hat that I you know, that says, God is a designer.

- Yeah. - You gave me that hat.

Every time I wear it, everybody's asking me, where can I find it?

thousands of people where to find it.

Can you tell us more about that project?

Yes. So, the God is a Designer project was an idea from a friend of mine.

His name is Angel Acevedo, and he's a born-again Christian.

And, he said Chris, I'm a fan, I'm a friend.

I'd like to send you this hat.

And I said, look Angel, I can't promise you I'm gonna do anything with it, because if I don't like it, I'm not going to wear it.

I'm not going to promote it,

okay. He all, that's fine.

So, he sends me the hat and I open it up.

It's Helvetica, it's white on black, it's justified, or flesh left.

And it says, God is a designer.

So, it already has so many beautiful things working for it.

So, I decided just to put it on.
I was raised Catholic, but I'm not generally wearing Christian ideas all over me.
I'm trying to be as neutral as possible.
But, I really like this and if I can support my friend in what he's doing,
and he's been doing this idea for years, I'm like, let me just wear it.
And I get the same reaction that you get,
is you cannot not have a conversation with somebody when you put that on.
They'll either say, or is he?
Or, what do you mean? Tell me more.
Or, he is thee designer, not just a designer.
So, it's wonderful, and I actually like wearing things
that inspire or provoke conversation,
so we can have meaningful dialogue.
So, I've had young people, middle-aged people,
and old people come up to me, and we'll have a dialogue about it.
And I love it.
Yeah, by the way, in this specific case, it's like poetry, right?
There is a poet behind with an idea but ground in history.
So, in this case, you talk about the Christian or Catholic heritage.
But then, poetry is something you gift to the world,
and anybody can interpret that gift, that content, in the way they want.
And, I saw so many people that are not Christian, or any kind of religion.
Even people that don't believe in anything,
but they associate that God to Mother Nature, for instance. So,
Yes.
to an entity that is up there.
I fell in love with this idea.
It's so powerful because it talks about something
that transcends us, as human beings.
Yeah.
And, the design, the beauty that surrounds us,
that which we tend to, but it's so difficult to emulate.
I think as designers, we always try to emulate the perfection of call it God,
call it Mother Nature, or call it whatever you want.
But whether Mother Nature or God didn't know ugliness,
we invented ugliness somehow.
Yeah
We are trying to fix, what we've been creating over the years.
It's so, so powerful.
Mm-hmm.
And I also love how you are supporting a designer
and his ideas with his products through your platform.
It's beautiful.
You met mentors in your life and people
that somehow help you, or build awareness for you,
or have been important in your journey.

It happened, the same to me.

And I think once then we have a platform,
it's so important for us then to give back also in this way.

And so, congratulations also for what you're doing.

Thank you.

Well, I could go on and on and on talking about so many topics with you.

We have been talking about the more traditional field of design and brand design,
all the way to how to design the life of people in your career
and your journey in this world.

And so, I just want to thank you for all these precious gems
that you have been sharing with all of us today.

And, I wish you all the best in your journey,
and especially in this journey of lecturing
and sharing understanding about design, awareness, knowledge.

Because it's so, so important in the society we live in today.

It's my pleasure, Mauro. Thank you.

Thank you.