Tristan Harris:

> Inventor and engineer, Charles Kettering once said, "A problem well-stated is a problem half-solved, while a problem not well-stated is unsolvable." Here on Your Undivided Attention, we explore various different problems: addiction, disinformation, polarization, climate change, and more. But what if many of these problems are actually symptoms of the same meta-problem, or meta-crisis? And what if a key leverage point for intervening in this meta-crisis is evolving our collective capacity to solve problems? What if stating the problem in this way as a problem with our problem solving makes it, as Charles Kettering said, half-solved? Your Undivided Attention is back. And we just turned two years old. And here with us to explore how we might, let's say, solve the problem with problem solving is my dear friend and mentor Daniel Schmachtenberger.

Tristan Harris:

> Daniel is focused on the ways of improving the health and development of individuals and society for the purpose of creating more virtuous relationship between the two. He's a founding member of The Consilience Project, aimed at improving public sense-making and dialogue. And with Daniel's episode, we're going to be doing something a little different. We're releasing two versions of the episode, an edited version along with an unedited version. And I highly encourage you to listen to both so that you can learn some new frames that we're going to start using on this show. And then, come to our Podcast Club. Daniel and I will actually be in dialogue with each other and with you. The Podcast Club will be on Friday, July 9th. Details are in the show notes. And with that, here we go.

Tristan Harris:

> So Daniel, welcome to Your Undivided Attention.

Daniel Schmachtenberger:

> Thank you, Tristan. I've been looking for this dialogue and about these things publicly for a while.

Tristan Harris:

> So Daniel, maybe we should just start with, what is the meta-crisis? And why are these problems seemingly not getting solved, whether it's climate change or anything that we really care about right now?

Daniel Schmachtenberger:

> I think a lot of people have the general sense that there is an increasing number of possibly-catastrophic issues, whether we're talking about future pandemic related issues or whether we're talking about climate change or climate change as a forcing function for human migration, that then causes resource wars and political instability or the fragility of the highly interconnected globalized world, where a problem in one part of the world can create supply chain issues that create problems all around the world. There's a sense that there's an increasing number of catastrophic risks and that they are increasing faster than we are solving them. And like with the UN, while progress has been made in certain defined areas of the Sustainable Development Goals and progress was made back when they were called the Millennium Development Goals. We're very far from

anything like a comprehensive solution to any of them. We're not even on track for something that is converging towards a comprehensive solution.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: We still haven't succeeded at nuclear disarmament. We did some very limited nuclear disarmament success while doing nuclear arms races at the same time. And we went from two countries with nukes to more countries with better nukes. The major tragedy of the commons issues — like climate change, and overfishing, and dead zones in the oceans, and microplastics in the oceans, and biodiversity loss. We haven't been able to solve those either. And so rather than just think about this as like an overwhelming number of totally separate issues, the question of why are the patterns of human behavior as we increase our total technological capacity, why are they increasing catastrophic risk? And why are we not solving them well? Are there underlying patterns that we could think of as "generator functions" of the catastrophic risk, generator functions of our inability to solve them? That, if we were to identify those, and work at that level, we could solve all of the expressions or symptoms. And if we don't work at that level, we might not be able to solve any of them.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: The first one I noticed when I was a kid was trying to solve an elephant poaching issue in one particular region of Africa that didn't address the poverty of the people, that had no mechanism other than black market on poaching, didn't address people's mindset towards animals, didn't address the macro-economy that created poverty at scale. So when the laws were put in place and the fences were put in place to protect those elephants in that area better, the poachers moved to poaching other animals, particularly in that situation, rhinos and gorillas that were both more endangered than the elephants had been.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: So, you moved a problem from one area to another and actually a more sensitive area. And we see this with, well, can we solve hunger by bringing commercial agriculture to parts of the world that don't have it so that the people don't either not have food or we have to ship them food. But if its commercial agriculture based on the kind of unsustainable, environmentally unsustainable agricultural processes that lead to huge amounts of nitrogen runoff going into river deltas that are causing dead zones in the ocean, that can actually collapse the biosphere's capacity to support life faster than we're solving for a short-term issue that's important and driving even worse long-term issues.

Tristan Harris: You get the idea. Over and over again, the way that we solve short-term problems may create other problems on balance sheets that we don't discover until later. This is similar to the problem of Facebook's fact checking program. Fact checking seems like a solution to the problem of fake news, but it actually can cause more polarization. Because in a world that's already been divided by Facebook's personalization rabbit holes, showing people fact checks can actually just drive up more polarization and disagreement.

Daniel Schmachtenberger:	In the case that you and Center for Humane Technology brought so much attention to with regard to the attention harvesting and directing economy, it's fair to say that it probably was not Facebook or Google's goal to create the type of effects that they had. Those were unintended externalities. They were second order effects. But they were trying to solve problems, right? Like, let's solve the problem from where Google of organizing the world's information and making better search. That seems like a pretty good thing to do. And let's recognize that only if we get a lot of data will our machine learning get better. And so, we need to actually get everybody on this thing. So, we definitely have to make it free. Well, then the nature of the ad model doing time-on-site optimization ends up appealing to people's existing biases rather than correcting their bias, appealing to their tribal ingroup identities rather than correcting them, and appealing to limbic hijacks rather than helping people transcend them. And as a result, you end up actually breaking the social solidarity and epistemic capacity necessary for democracy. So-
Tristan Harris:	Let's define a few terms here. When Daniel talks about "limbic hijack," he's referring to the way technology is hijacking our limbic system or our paleolithic emotions and brains in order to drive clicks and behavior. And when he says epistemic capacity, he's referring to — and this is something that's really important that we're going to keep using on Your Undivided Attention — he's referring to epistemology, which means how we know what we know. So instead of talking just about fighting fake news, we can talk about better epistemology, better sense-making for how we know what we know. And Daniel is concerned about how the social media platforms are breaking the epistemic capacity necessary for democracy.
Daniel Schmachtenberger:	It's like, oh, let's solve the search problem. That seems like a nice thing. The side effect is we're going to destroy democracy and open societies in the process. And all those other things, those are examples of solving a problem in a way that is externalizing harm, causing other problems that are oftentimes worse. So, I would say that the way we're trying to solve the problems is actually mostly impossible. It either solves it in a very narrow way while externalizing harm and causing worse problems, or it makes it impossible to solve it all because it drives polarization. And so going to the level at which the problems interconnect, where that which everybody cares about is being factored, and where you're not externalizing other problems while it seems more complex is actually possible.
Tristan Harris:	And what makes it possible is understanding the underlying drivers. The generator functions of existential risk of which Daniel says there are three. The first generator function of existential risk is rivalrous dynamics. And it expresses itself in two primary ways.
Daniel Schmachtenberger:	And the two primary ways it expresses itself is arms races and tragedy of the commons. And the tragedy of the common scenario is, if we don't over fish that area of virgin ocean, but we can't control that someone else doesn't, because how do we do enforcement if they're also a nuclear

country. That's a tricky thing, right? How do you do enforcement on nuclear countries, equipped countries? So, us not doing it doesn't mean that the fish don't all get taken. It just means that they grow their populations and their GDP faster, which they will use rivalrously. So, we might as well do it. In fact, we might as well race to do it faster than they do. Those are the tragedy of the commons type issues.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: The arms race version is, if we can't ensure that they don't build AI weapons or they don't build surveillance tech and they get increased near term power from doing so, we just have to race to get there before them. That's the arms race type thing. It just happens to be that while that makes sense for each agent on their own in the short term, it creates global dynamics for the whole in the long-term that's self-determining, because you can't run exponential externality on a finite planet. That's the tragedy of the commons one. And you can't run exponential arms races and exponential conflict on a finite planet.

Tristan Harris: So that's the first generator function of existential risk, which is rivalrous dynamics. And we see rivalrous dynamics everywhere over and over again on Your Undivided Attention. If I don't go after the attention of those preteen social media users and you do, then you'll win and I'll lose. If I don't seize the dopamine reward system to build that addiction into my app and you do, then you'll win and I'll lose. And if I don't use negative campaign ads to win an election to make you hate the other side, then you'll win and I'll lose. These rivalrous dynamics bring us to the second generator function of existential risk, which is the subsuming of our substrate. These are the substrates or the environments that make human civilization possible in the first place. Environmental degradation from overfishing, attention degradation from apps that are competing for our attention, or social trust degradation from politicians competing to make us outraged, and the rivalrous dynamics of runaway capitalism erode the substrate that all of our civilization depends on.

Tristan Harris: And the third generator function of existential risk is exponential technology or technology that grows and improves exponentially. So, you can think of that like the rivalry between two people with stone clubs to the rivalry between two people with semi-automated weapons to two actors with nuclear bombs that can blow up the whole world instantaneously. Think about a rivalry between two advertisers who are putting up a single billboard in the city that can influence about a hundred people to a rivalry between two agents using Facebook's global ability to influence three billion people with millions of A/B tests and precision guided micro-targeting. The greater the exponential power and technology, the more exponential risk is created. So these are the three generator functions of existential risk, rivalrous dynamics, the subsuming of the substrate or playing field, and exponentially growing power in technology. Daniel says that any civilization that doesn't address these three generator functions will inexorably self-terminate. Not great news. So, let's take a step back. How did we get here? How did we get to this level of unmanaged global existential risk?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Before for World War II, catastrophic risk was actually a real part of people's experience, it was just always local. But an individual kingdom might face existential risk in a war where they would lose. So catastrophic risk has been a real thing, it's just been local. And it wasn't until World War II that we had enough technological power that catastrophic risk became a global possibility for the first time ever. And this is a really important thing to get because, the world before World War II and the world after was different in kind so fundamentally because the wars were fundamentally winnable, at least for some, right? They weren't winnable for all the people who died, but at least for some. And with World War II and the development of the bomb became the beginning of wars that were no longer winnable. And that if we employed our full tech and continued the arms race even beyond the existing tech, it's a war that where win-lose becomes only lose-lose at that particular level of power.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: And so that created the need to do something that humanity had never done, which was that the major superpowers didn't war. The whole history of the world and the history of the thing we call civilization, they always did. And so we made an entire world system, a globalized world system, with the aim of preventing World War III. So, the post World War II Bretton Woods, mutually- assured-destruction, United Nations World was a solution to be able to steward that level of tech without destroying ourselves. And it really was a reorganization of the world. And it was predicate on a few things. Mutually assured destruction was critical. Globalization and economic trade was critical that ... If the computer that we're talking on and the phone that we talk on is made over six continents and no countries can make them on their own. We don't want to blow them up and ruin their infrastructure because we depend upon it.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: So let's create radical economic interdependence, so we have more economic incentive to cooperate. That was kind of like the basis of that whole world system. And we can see that we've had wars, but they've been proxy wars and cold wars. They haven't been major superpower wars. And they've been unconventional ones. But we haven't had a kinetic World War III. Now, we're at a point where that radically positive sum economy that required an exponential growth of the economy, which means of the materials economy, and it's a linear materials economy that un-renewably takes resources from the earth faster than they can reproduce themselves and turns them into waste faster than they can process themselves has led to the planetary boundaries issue, where it's not just climate change or overfishing or dead zones in the ocean or microplastics or species extinction or peak phosphorus. It's a hundred things, right?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: There's all these planetary boundaries, so we can't keep doing exponential linear materials economy. And then, the mutually assured destruction thing doesn't work anymore because we don't have two countries with one catastrophe weapon that's really really hard to make and easy to monitor because there's not that many places that have uranium, it's hard to enrich it and you can monitor it by satellites. We have lots of countries

with nukes, but we also have lots of new catastrophe weapons that are not hard to make, that are not easy to monitor, that don't even take nation states to make them. So if you have many actors of different kinds with many different types of catastrophe weapons, how do you do mutually assured destruction? You can't do it the same way. And so what we find is that the set of solutions post World War II that kept us from blowing ourselves up with our new power lasted for a while, but those set of solutions have ended. And they have now created their own set of new problems.

Tristan Harris: So there is catastrophic risk before World War II, which was locally existential. And then there was catastrophic risk from World War II to now, which was globally existential, but managed by what Daniel might call the Bretton Woods order, which includes the Bretton Woods Agreements, the United Nations, and mutually assured destruction. But in Daniel's eyes, the Bretton Woods order is no longer up to the task.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: The UN has 17 Sustainable Development Goals. There's really one that must supersede them all, which is developed the capacity for global coordination that can solve global problems. If you get that one, you get all the other ones. If you don't get that one, you don't get any of the other ones. That becomes the central imperative for the world at this time.

Tristan Harris: So in the vacuum of what Daniel sees as a failure of our institutions to do global coordination well, what are we left with? How are we responding to these unmanaged existential risks caused by exponential technology? Daniel sees two bad attractors that we're currently getting pulled towards. And those attractors are oppression and chaos. Oppression looks like China's digital authoritarianism model, ruled by the state from above. So we're going to have quantum computing, AI, God-like technology that psychologically influences billions of people, but it's managed by the state and limits the freedom of citizens. Or we can have chaos. Instantiated by the West, democratic dysfunction, where exponential technologies aren't really managed at all because social media has deranged our society to be maximally addicted, distracted, outraged, polarized, and misinformed until people don't know what's true at all. So, how do we manage global existential risk without devolving into oppression or chaos? What could a new attractor be?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: I think it was a Jefferson quote of, the ultimate depository of the power must be the people. And if we think that people too uneducated, not enlightened to be able to hold that power, we must do everything we can to seek to educate, and enlighten them not to think that there's any other safe depository. One of the core things is the relationship between rights and responsibilities. So if I have rights and I don't have responsibilities, there ends up being like tyranny and entitlement. If I have responsibilities and I don't have any attendant rights, it's servitude. Neither of those involve a healthy just society. So if I want the right to drive a car, the responsibility to do the driver's education and actually learn how to drive

a car safely is important. And we can see that some countries have less car accidents than others associated with better driver's education.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: And so, increasing the responsibility is a good thing. We can see that some countries have way less gun violence than others, even factoring a similar per capita amount of guns based on more training associated with guns and mental health and things like that. So if I have a right to bear arms, do I also have a responsibility to be part of a well-organized militia, train with them, and be willing to actually sacrifice myself to protect the whole, or sign up for a thing to do that? Do I have to be a reservist of some kind? Those are the right responsibility. If I want the right to vote, is there a responsibility to be educated about the issue? Yes. Now, does that make it very unequal? No, because the capacity to get educated has to be something that the society invests in making possible for everyone. And of course, we would all be silly to not be dubious factoring the previous history of these things.

Tristan Harris: We should be very dubious given the historical use of education to suppress the black vote. But Daniel's saying we should design systems to enable people to be maximally informed and maximally participate in their own governance.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: So, how do we make the on-ramps to learning available for everyone? Not enforced, but we're actually incentivizing. Can we use those same kinds of social media behavior incenting technologies to increase everyone's desire for more rights and attendant responsibilities so that there's actually a gradient of civic virtue and civic engagement. Yeah, we can totally do that.

Tristan Harris: So this new attractor is nothing short of a kind of new cultural enlightenment, which sounds ambitious, I know. Our last enlightenment was a shift from superstition, myth, and irrationality to logic, science, and rationality. And in pursuit of new ideals like liberty, tolerance, and representative government. The new cultural enlightenment would be a shift from a culture that manages risk through oppression or that doesn't manage risk at all because it's fallen into chaos, to a culture that has the emergent wisdom to manage exponential technologies. A cultural enlightenment that is supported by humane technology.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: How do we utilize the new exponential technologies, the whole suite of them, to build new systems of collective intelligence, new better systems of social technology? How do you make a fourth estate that can really adequately educate everyone in a post-Facebook world? So, let's say we take the attention tech that you've looked at so much that when it is applied for a commercial application is seeking to gather data to both maximize time onsite and maximize engagement with certain kinds of ads and whatever. That's obviously the ability to direct human behavior and direct human feeling and thought. Could that same tech be used educationally, to be able to personalize education to the learning style of a kid or to an adult to their particular areas interest and to be able to not

use the ability to control them for game theoretic purposes, but use the ability to influence them to even help them learn what makes their own center, their locus of action, more internalized right?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: We could teach people with that kind of tech, how to notice their own bias, how to notice their own emotional behaviors, how to notice group-think type dynamics, how to understand propaganda and media literacy. So, could we actually use those tools to increase people's immune system against bad actor's use of those tools totally?

Tristan Harris: Totally

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Could we use them pedagogically in general to be able to identify rather than manufacturing desires in people or appealing to the lowest angels of their nature because addiction is profitable? Can you appeal to the highest angels in people's nature, but that are aligned with intrinsic incentives and be able to create customized educational programs that are based on what each person is actually innately, intrinsically motivated by, but that are their higher innate motivators? Could we do that? Yeah, totally we could.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Could we have an education system as a result that was identifying innate aptitudes, innate interests of everyone and facilitating their development, so not only did they become good at something, but they became increasingly more intrinsically motivated, fascinated, and passionate by life, which also means continuously better at the thing? Well, in a world of increasing technological automation coming up, both robotic and AI automation, where so many of the jobs are about to be obsoleted, our economy and our education system have to radically change to deal with that, because one of the core things an economy has been trying to do forever was deal with the need that a society had for labor force.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: And there were these jobs that society needed to get done that nobody would really want to do. So either the state has to force them to do it, or you have to make it to where the people also need the jobs. So, there's asymmetry and so kind of the market forces them to do it. So, if one of the fundamental like axioms of all of our economic theories is that we need to figure out how to incent the labor force to do things that nobody wants to do, an emerging technological automation starts to debase that. That means we have to rethink economics from scratch because we don't have to do that thing anymore. So maybe if now the jobs don't need the people, can we remake a new economic system where the people don't need the jobs?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: What is the role of humans in a post-AI robotic automation world? Because that is coming very soon. And what is the future of education where you don't have to prepare people to be things that you can just program computers to be? Well, the role of education has to be based on what is the role of people in that world. That is such a deep redesign of

civilization, because the tech is changing the possibility set that deeply. So at the heart of this are kind of deep existential questions of, what is a meaningful human life? And then, what is a good civilization that increases the possibility space of that for everybody? And how do we design that thing?

Tristan Harris: So what Daniel is saying, and as previous guest Yuval Harari pointed out, is that the new technology forces us to reimagine our previous social systems within the context of personalized AI that can tune educational experiences. What is the new education within the context of automation of most tasks? What is work within the context of a post-Facebook digital age? What is the fourth estate? China is answering these questions, but for the purpose of a digital closed society. But Daniel is encouraging us to answer these questions for the purpose of a digital open society, with examples like what Audrey Tang in Taiwan and others are already doing.

Tristan Harris: But before we go on, let's take a step back and have some humility here. We don't know all the answers about how this is all going to work. But what we do know ,is that the question of what would make social media slightly less bad or less harmful is not adequate to answering the question of existential risks caused by the three generator functions that Daniel has outlined. Humane technology must be supporting the capacity of culture to have the wisdom to steward exponential tech amidst rivalrous dynamics. And in that spirit, how might we use technology in a way that enables people to meaningfully participate in their own governance, and to have that culture become the new attractor that can manage global existential risk?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: What if all government spending was on a blockchain? And it doesn't have to be a blockchain, it has to be an incorruptible ledger of some kind. Holochain is a good example that is pioneering another way of doing it. But incorruptible ledger of some kind where you actually see where all taxpayer money goes and you see how it was utilized. The entire thing can have independent auditing agencies and the public can transparently be engaged in the auditing of it. And, if the government is going to privately contract a corporation, the corporation agrees that if they want that government money, the blockchain accounting has to extend into the corporation. So, there can't be very bloated corruption. Everybody got to see that when Elon made SpaceX, all of a sudden he was making rockets for like a hundredth of the price that Lockheed or Boeing were, who had just had these almost monopolistic government contract for a long time.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Well, if the taxpayer money is going to the government, is going to an external private contractor who's making the things for a hundred to a thousand times more than it costs, we get this false dichotomy sold to us that either we have to pay more taxes to have better national security, or if we want to cut taxes, we're going to have less national security. What about just having less gruesome bloat, because you have better accounting, and we have better national security and better social services and less taxes? Everyone would vote for that, right? Who wouldn't vote

for that thing? Well, that wasn't possible before incorruptible ledgers. Now that incorruptible ledger also means you can have provenance on supply chains to make the supply chains closed loop so that you can see that all the new stuff is being made from old stuff, and you can see where all the pollution is going, and you can see who did it, which means you can now internalize the externalities rigorously. And nobody can destroy those emails or burn those files, right?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: What if the changes in law and the decision-making processes also followed a blockchain process where there was a provenance on the input of information? Well, that would also be a very meaningful thing to be able to follow. So, this is an example of, can we actually structurally remove the capacity for corruption by technology that makes corruption much much much harder, that forces types of transparency on auditability? What if also you're able to record history, you're able to record the events that are occurring in a blockchain that's uncorruptible where you can't change history later?

Daniel Schmachtenberger: So, you actually get the possibility of real justice and real history and multiple different simultaneous timelines that are happening. That's humongous in terms of what it does. What if you can have an open data platform and an open science platform where someone doesn't get to cherry pick which data they include in their peer reviewed paper? Later we get to see all of the data that was happening. We solve the Oracle issues that are associated. And then if we find out that a particular piece of science was wrong later, we can see downstream everything that used that output as an input and automatically flag what things need to change. That's so powerful.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Let's take AI. With AI, we can make super terrible deepfakes and destroy the epistemic commons using that and the other things like that. But we can see the way that the AI makes the deepfake by being able to take enough different images of the person's face and movements that it can generate new ones. We can see where it can generate totally new faces, averaging faces together. Somebody sent me some new work that they were just doing on this the other day, I found very interesting. They said, we're going to take a very similar type of tech and apply it to semantic fields where we can take everybody's sentiment on a topic and actually generate a proposition that is at the semantic center.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Then, can you have digital processes where you can't fit everybody into a town hall, but everybody who wants to can participate in a digital space that, rather than vote yes or no on a proposition that was made by a special interest group, where we didn't have a say in the proposition or even the values it was seeking to serve. And you start by identifying what are the values everybody cares about. And then, we say the first proposition that meets all these values well, becomes the thing that we vote on. These completely change the possibility space of social technology. And we could go on and on in terms of examples, but these are ways that the same type of new emergent physical tech that can

destroy the epistemic commons and create autocracies and create catastrophic risks could also be used to realize a much more protopic world.

Tristan Harris: So I love so many of those examples, and especially on the blockchain and corruption one, because I think something that the left and the right can both agree on is that our systems are not really functional and there's definitely corruption and defection going on. And just to add to your example, imagine if citizens could even earn money by spotting inefficiencies or corruption in that transparent ledger, so that we actually have a system that is actually profiting by getting more and more efficient over time and actually better serving the needs of the people and having less and less corruption. And so, there's actually more trust and faith. And that's actually a kind of digital society that when you look at, let's say the closed China digital authoritarian society and look at this open one that's actually operating more for the people, with more transparency, with more efficiencies, that's just an inspiring vision. What's also very inspiring is what Daniel is building, The Consilience Project.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Well, this conversation you and I are having is very central to the aims of The Consilience Project, which is we're wanting to inspire, inform, and help direct a innovation zeitgeist. Where the many different problems of the world start to get seen in terms of having interconnectivity and underlying drivers. And so we have a really great team of people that are doing research and writing, basically the types of things we're talking about here in more depth, explaining what is the role of the various social systems. What is the role of education to any society? Help understand fundamentally what that is, understand why there is a particularly higher educational threshold for open societies where people need to participate, not just in the market, but in governance. Understand how that has been disrupted by the emerging tech and will be disrupted further by things like technological automation, and then envision, what is the future of education adequate to an open society in a world that has the technology that's emerging. And the same thing with the fourth estate, the same thing with law, the same thing with economics.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: And so the goal is not, how do we take some small group of people to build the future. It's how do we help get what the criteria of a viable future must be. And if people disagree, awesome. Publicly disagree and have the conversation now. But if we get to put out those design constraints, someone says, no, we think its other ones. At least now, the culture starts to be thinking about the most pressing issues in fundamental ways and how to think about them appropriately and how to approach them appropriately. So fundamentally, our goal is supporting an increased cultural understanding of the nature of the problems that we face. A clearer understanding rather than just, there's lots of problems and it's overwhelming and it's a bummer and so either some very narrow action on some very narrow part of it makes sense, or just nihilism. We want to be able to say, actually, because there are underlying drivers, there is actually a possibility to resolve these things.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: It does require the fullness of our capacity applied to it. And with the fullness of our capacity — so, it's not a given — but with the fullness of our capacity applied to it, there is actually a path forward. I think what CHT did with the social dilemma took one really critical part of this meta-crisis into popular attention, maybe in a more powerful way than I have seen done otherwise. Because as big a deal as getting climate change in public attention is, it's not clear that climate change is something that is making, that is driving the underlying basis of all the problems. But a breakdown in sense-making and they control the patterns of human behavior that kind of downgrade people like, oh, wow, that really does make all these other things worse. So, I see that as a very powerful and personal on-ramp for those who are interested to be able to come into this deeper conversation. And some people say, I can actually start innovating and working with this stuff.

Tristan Harris: Yeah. I think what we've essentially been outlining here is the Charles Kettering quote, which I learned from you. And I've learned so many things from you over the years. Which is that a problem not fully understood is unsolvable and a problem that is fully understood is half-solved. And I just want to maybe leave our listeners with that, which is I think people can look at the long litany of problems and feel overwhelmed or get to despair in a hurry, I think is your phrase for it. And I think that when you understand the core generator functions for what is driving so many of these problems to happen simultaneously, there's a different and more empowering relationship to that. And you've actually offered a vision for how technology can be consciously employed, and new technologies can be consciously employed in ways that should feel inspiring and exciting.

Tristan Harris: I mean, I want that transparent blockchain on a budget for every country in the world. And we can see examples like Estonia and Taiwan moving in this direction already. And we can see Taiwan building some of the technologies you mentioned to identify propositions of shared values between citizens who want to vote collectively on something that previously would have driven up more polarization. I think we need to see this as not just an upgrade, but the kind of cultural enlightenment that you speak of, that so many different actors are in a sense already working on. We used to have this phrase that everyone is on the same team, they just don't know it yet. I'll just speak to my own experience. When I first encountered your work,

Tristan Harris: and I encountered the kind of core drivers that drive so much of the danger that we are headed towards. I immediately... I was kind of already in this direction already, but I reoriented my whole life to say, how do we be in service of this not happening and of creating a better world that actually meets and addresses these problems. And I just hope that our audience takes this as an inspiration for how can we in the face of stark and difficult realities as part of this process gains the kind of cultural strength to face these things head on and to orient our lives accordingly.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: If you take the actual risk seriously, it should reorient your life.

Tristan Harris: Yeah. That's how I genuinely feel.

Daniel Schmachtenberger: Me too.

Tristan Harris: Daniel Schmachtenberger is a founding member of The Consilience Project, online at consilienceproject.org. You can find that link in the show notes, along with more information about our Podcast Club with Daniel on July 9th. Your Undivided Attention is produced by the Center for Humane Technology. Our executive producer is Stephanie Lepp. Our senior producer is Natalie Jones. And our associate producer is Noor Al-Samarrai. Dan Kedmey is our editor-at-large. Original music and sound designed by Ryan and Hays Holladay along with David Szesztay. And a very special thanks to the whole Center for Humane Technology team for making this podcast possible. A very special thanks goes to our generous lead supporters, including the Omidyar Network, Craig Newmark Philanthropies, the Evolve Foundation, and the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation among many others. I'm Tristan Harris. And if you made it all the way here, let me just give one more thank you to you, for giving us Your Undivided Attention.