

Transcription details:

Host: Bill Coppel, First Clearing Chief Client Growth Officer
Guest: Julian Treasure, founder of The Sound Agency

Transcription results:

Intro [music] Welcome to The Next Frontier, where we examine what the role of the financial advisor will be in a world that's being disrupted by artificial intelligence and algorithms. Our mission is to spark new conversations that create stronger connections and build greater client confidence. Join us as we look at our industry and others through a new lens and explore the opportunities emerging at the intersection of high-tech and high-touch. It's time for a new conversation. Are you ready?

BILL COPPEL Hi. This is Bill Coppel, and welcome to The Next Frontier. For this episode, I'm really pleased to be joined by our guest, Julian Treasure. I had the pleasure of first meeting Julian when he joined us as speaker for one of our forms back in 2016. There, he shared his insight into the world of sound, conscious speaking, and listening, and the critical implications they have in cultivating relationships and well-being. I'm talking to Julian today from where he sits in his home in Orkney, which is an island or a cluster of islands off the north coast of Scotland. It's pretty exciting to be able to have this kind of connection all the way from St. Louis. But before we get into our conversation, let me take a few moments to share a little bit about Julian's background. He has over 30 years of experience in sound, marketing, and business. And from his early childhood growing up in Southwest London surrounded by different natural sounds, he really developed a passion for this. And this passion for sound led him to becoming a musician, but his passion also for business and marketing led him found a custom publishing magazine business which evolved into a rather global successful publishing business covering a variety of different top brands across the world.

JULIAN TREASURE In 2003, after selling that business, Julian started the Sound Agency and he leads its teams and partners in consulting with clients around the globe to leverage audio branding and create award-winning strategies and tailored solution for the likes of Google, Honda, Ikea, Walmart, Harrods, Nokia, just to name a few. Julian's also the author of Sound Business and his latest title, How to Be Heard. He is regularly featured as a sound expert in world's media, including Time Magazine, The Economist. Julian has five TED Talks about sonic communications, which have, to date, attracted more than 70 million views. In fact, one of Julian's TED Talks is rated the sixth most-viewed TED Talk in the history of TED Talks. I kind of like to refer to him as the master of sound. Please join me in welcoming Julian to The Next Frontier. It's great to have you with us today.

JULIAN TREASURE Oh, it's great to be here, Bill. Thank you so much for inviting me.

BILL COPPEL Let me sort of set the context for our conversation. As a sound expert and one in, I would say, even in terms of communication and listening, if you think about the financial services business in the world we live in today, we're really anchored by two realities. Perpetual uncertainty and accelerating change. And our industry, which is a service-based industry, is continuing to compete with the new digital offerings that are replacing a lot of those services we once relied on to be delivered by intermediaries. So that is a backdrop. I'd like to start off with this. And this kind of goes back to where we were and where we started our conversation when you were at our forum a couple of years ago. There, you reminded us that success today, in this

world of constant change, calls on us to be agile, strong, fast, but also alert. And being alert relies on listening. Those businesses that are good listeners will be the ones that are able to adapt and be successful over those that are focused on what they think, as you called it, the sending part of the equation. Could you put conscious listening and speaking in a broader context of sound and why an appreciation for these critical elements are important for the success of a business today?

JULIAN TREASURE

Absolutely. We'll work down those things from the big picture to the smaller, if that's okay. The big picture is that sound is around all of us all the time, and it affects all of us all the time. It affects individuals and it affects organizations as well. Sound changes people's bodies. A certain sound will change your heart rate or your breathing. It changes our feelings, our moods. Music can do that, we know, but other sounds like birdsong can make us feel calm and safe because we've learned, over hundreds of thousands of years, that when the birds are happily singing, things are normally okay. So [the sort of?] association in sound. Sound changes how well we can think and how well we can work, and that is a major issue in many of the open-plan offices today around the world. There are millions of people trying to do individual working in an environment that's being designed purely for collaborative working, and those two things don't go very well together. Sound changes what we do. It changes our behavior as well, and that's critical for businesses. I talk these days about the circle of listening and speaking. Many people think there's a straight line of communication from I speak to you listen. Well, actually, they're a circle. They're a circular relationship those two things because the way I speak affects the way you listen, and the way you listen affects the way I speak, and there are many, many complex aspects to that, as I cover in the book. And those two things are happening. That circle is happening inside of a context all the time, a context, which is very important. It shapes how successful a communication may be.

JULIAN TREASURE

The telephone is a context which we used a great deal, and it's got pretty limited bandwidth. It's not so easy to determine the subtle shifts in somebody's reactions. You can't see them, apart from anything else, and a lot of listening is also looking at somebody. And there's micro changes in timbre and tonality, which might give you hints as to how they're receiving you if you were face-to-face with them. Of the context, so even more destructive or problematic, you wouldn't want to make a complex business proposal in a noisy Starbucks, for example. Well, at least I don't think you would. Not if you could do anything else. Sound changes our bodies, feelings, minds, and behavior, and it's very important to realize that because most of us have gone pretty unconscious about that process, and as a result, there's very often negative impact from the noise around us, the sound around us, on three very important aspects of our lives: our happiness, our effectiveness, and our well-being as well. All three of those things are fundamentally changed by how good or how bad is the sound around us. So really, the conversation I'm in a lot of the time with organizations and with individuals is about becoming conscious about sound, about our listening, because if we listen consciously, we can take responsibility for the sound we make, which is critical for many organizations, and we can talk in detail about many aspects of that.

JULIAN TREASURE

And it's also possible for us to take responsibility for the sound we consume. And as individuals, that's where we can really start to make dramatic changes in how effective we are, how happy we feel, and how productive we are in anything that we're trying to do, soon as we start asking, "Is this the best sound context for me to be doing this thing in?" I have to say, over the years, certainly the last 30 or 40 years, listening has become a very challenged skill. It is a skill. It's different from hearing. You hear everything. Your ears are amazing organs. They hear everything around you. And they're working even when you sleep. However, listening is different. It's a mental

process that involves two things. One is selecting what you're going to pay attention to. So there's a process of selection. And then after that, you make it mean something. So my definition of listening is making meaning from sound.

BILL COPPEL

You've said that less listening is about making meaning of the sound. Could you speak a bit more about that and perhaps the three kinds of listening you discuss in the book, this notion of inner, outer, and creative?

JULIAN TREASURE

Yes. Absolutely. Well, making meaning from sound is all about outer listening, which is the one we always think about, using our ears to listen to sound waves that hit our eardrums and then decoding that in our brains. So that's outer listening. And that is, as I said, a process of selection and meaning-making. It's important to realize with outer listening that everybody's listening is unique. Now, this is critical for financial advisors, for example, who are in a conversation with somebody. It is a common mistake that people make, and it's a pretty destructive one to assume everyone listens like I do. That's not true. We all listen differently because we listen through a set of filters. And the making meaning from sound happens after those filters have been in place. They may be values, and attitudes, and beliefs that we've accreted along the way from parents, and role models, and friends, and whoever. We're born into a culture. We speak a language. We may have intentions or expectations in this conversation. We might have emotions going on. We might have assumptions about the way the world works and what people are thinking all the time. All of these things change the way we listen to somebody. And if you're selling to somebody or you're trying to help somebody with service or solve a problem for them, it's critical to ask yourself this question, "What's the listening I'm speaking into? What's the listening?" And that is what I call a created listening.

JULIAN TREASURE

The created listening exists. It's what you speak into all the time. It might be a group of people. I mean, I speak on stages a lot, and it might be a room of 100, 1,000, 5,000 people. There's a created listening in there, which is everybody in the audience bringing their own personal, individual listenings, and it's also possibly something that I've made by my behavior or the stuff they know about me that I bring into the room as well. So if you're in a conversation one-to-one, there's a created listening there, which is that person bringing their listening and then anything they know about you from previous conversations, from your reputation, from anything you've done or said in the past. Have you been true to your word? Have you let them down? Have you always delivered? Have you given great service? Is your company reputable? This kind of considerations alter the way somebody will listen to you. And I'm sure all the guys and everybody listening to this knows that if you're calling somebody from a reputable brand and it's a company with a great pedigree and a great track record, that it's easier to get somebody to pick up the phone, and be civil, and listen to you. All of that stuff is there, and you need to know your speaking into and listening, and ask yourself, "What's the listening?"

JULIAN TREASURE

So here we're talking about two different listenings. I'm talking about the created listening that exists that you speak into, and there's also my outer listening to the sound, which I need to be deploying all the time when I'm thinking about context. I need to be asking myself, "All right. I'm going to have this conversation with somebody. What's the most effective or appropriate congruent context for that conversation going to be? Is a phone call the best, or could I use some sort of VoIP and get better quality? Or could I use a video call and get closer to them that way? Should I go and see them? Should we really do this thing face-to-face? Is it worth the travel time in order to have this very important conversation?" So context is very important, and that requires us listening, imagining the context and how it's going to affect us. And then the third kind of listening, you just mentioned Bill, the inner

listening. That also comes into play. That's the listening to the little voice in our head. The one that for many people can be quite negative, "You idiot, you did that again." The voice that can be quite critical of us, that probably has learned lessons from pain in the past, from things that have happened where we've got hurt and it's trying to stop us from getting hurt. It's very important with that little voice to realize that you are not that voice. That voice is not you. It might be a part of you. It's probably trying to help, but it is not you. And if you're not the voice, who are you? You're the one who's listening. Now, once you get that, it changes your relationship with that little voice because you can say to it, "Thanks for sharing. Now, be on your way. I'm going to do this anyway." There we have the three listenings, and they're all in play in that sales conversation or that customer service conversation. The little voice is talking to me. I am talking into a listening, which I need to be aware of and I need to be listening as well for the context and for what's coming back to me from the other person. So all three listenings mesh, interrelate, and are critical.

BILL COPPEL

There is a lot going on in that--

JULIAN TREASURE

Certainly is.

BILL COPPEL

--process. I wanted to dive a little deeper and talk a little bit about the created aspect of it. And this is the one, as you explained, we experience, and that is how that person we're communicating with is receiving. How do you navigate that? Are there some tips that you can share with us or skills that you can share with us as we approach engaging another person or an audience, for example? How do we process and how do we adjust relative to this notion of created listening, or the created concept of listening that you've just explained?

JULIAN TREASURE

Well, I think realizing that it exists is the first and biggest step. It often is, with everything. Being conscious about listening, that listening is a skill, that you can improve it, that it's a thing you're doing. It's not just happening. You're doing something. That is the first huge realization. And once you start listening consciously, so much becomes possible. And then realizing when you're speaking, you're speaking into this listening. Well, just realizing that helps a great deal. I can tell you that from my experience of decades of doing this, that the key thing to do is to ask yourself the question, "What's the listening?" Just get into the habit of asking that question when you walk into a room. I mean, I'm not saying out loud, and I'm not saying it's necessarily about the actual way people are listening to you, but for years I was doing business presentations, and I realized that I could walk into a room full of 8 or 10 people sitting around the table, and I would know intuitively, that guy's going to be a problem. These three are all on my side. They'll be fine. That kind of nonverbal communication really exists. I don't know how. It's probably microexpressions, pheromones, tiny body movements, who knows? There's all sorts of little tells that happen with people in communication.

JULIAN TREASURE

And there are many books about body language. I'm not talking about the more unsettled forms of body language. I think a lot of this happens at almost imperceptible level. What I do know is that if I ask myself the question, as I enter the room, "What's the listening," and just look around, I'm in a kind of receive mode. I'm sensitive to it. And it's amazing how you can pick it up. Just by asking that question over and over again, you will get good at intuitively spotting the listening you're speaking into from 1 person to 10,000. It's really important to do that because it will affect the way you deliver. If sometimes the listening is sleepy, or dozy, or not very involved, then you need to be much more dynamic and on the ball and expressive. Or other times, the listening is incredibly intent and it's kind of functional. It wants to know the nuts and bolt, and you can get into that. If you can spot these things, you

can tailor your delivery and your content, and really hit the bullseye every time. So the question is, what's the listening?

BILL COPPEL

I got it. So to go into a situation, often times, as I think about it, we're on a mission to deliver a message and that's where our focus is. And what you're saying is before you even get to that mindset, try to gauge the mindset that the audience is in and get a sense of how they're listening because otherwise, it's quite possible that your message is not received.

JULIAN TREASURE

Definitely. And then, of course, there is our own listening. So as I keep saying, the speak and listening, they're interrelated. They're entwined. It's really difficult to consider one without considering the other one. If you come into a meeting and you start talking and you don't engage with people, you don't ask the questions at the beginning and find out what's important to them, what's the big picture, what are your goals, what are you really aspiring to and about what we're talking about today, what would success look like, what would be great for you, those kinds of questions, and you listen carefully to the answers, then you have the angle. You have the pitch that you need to take in order to meet and match exactly what it is that they're interested in. I talk about RASA as one of the key exercises in good listening in conversation, which is to receive. That is to pay attention. RASA is R-A-S-A, the Sanskrit word for dukes, but here it means receive, appreciate, summarize, ask. So receive is pay attention. Scott Peck said, "You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time." And yet, so many have spent so much time in that kind of partial listening. "I am listening to you." No, no. You're sending a text. And you're giving a little bit of your brain to the person that you're speaking. Anybody listening to this knows the frustration that builds up if you're speaking to somebody who's not looking at you, who's doing something else, "Come on. Listen to me. I'm trying to talk to you here." So receive means look at the person continuously. It means pay attention with your body. Face them, and if you're sitting, probably leaning forward rather than back, giving every sign of being attentive and engaged.

JULIAN TREASURE

The first A is appreciate, which is the little noises or gestures that, again, show that we're engaged when somebody's speaking, "Oh, really?" I mean, we don't do this in this kind of a podcast environment because it gets messy if you can't see each other sometimes. And I'm pretty bad at this on the phone. People sometimes say, "Are you still there?" Because I've been listening intently but not saying anything. In face-to-face, you can absolutely do this. And with gestures, as well, in mirroring, nods and smiles, and hand gestures, and so forth. That really indicate that you're engaged in the conversation. So that's appreciate. Summarize is the word so, which is a very, very important word. It kind of shuts the doors in the long corridor of your conversation, making sure that something's been dealt with and is behind you, and is agreed to have been done, "So what we've just agreed is this. Now we can move on to that." So what you're saying it's also a confirmation, a check that's very important. "So what you're saying, if I may summarize, is this. No? Oh, okay, I'm sorry. I misunderstood that." That's where you check in and make sure you got them properly. And those doors get shut and you move on down the conversation. And then the final A. That's to ask. Asking questions all the way through and at the end, which is how you indicate that you're alert and thinking about what they're saying, and really receiving it and turning it around, and looking at the angles and making your own value judgements on it, and coming back to them with interesting, possibly new ideas about what they're saying. So RASA, very, very effective way of listening. And that's where you can see how speaking and listening really start to entwine and interact in any conversation.

BILL COPPEL

So that makes a lot of sense, and it almost seems relatively obvious, however, I'm challenged because what I observe is this, that so many times when I see an advisor interact with a client, they are distracted. And I think part of that starts with the assumption that the client's actually interested in what they've got to say. And oftentimes I find that when we're engaging with another person, our mission is to get our point of view across, and we believe that that person is actually interested in what we're saying. What have you found in terms of your research, in your practical work, in the audiences that you've spoken in front of, the interactions you've had, both as an entertainer as well as a marketer and a business person, training yourself to release all of the distractions so that you can actually receive the first part of RASA? What are some of the things you've done to train yourself to become better at that?

JULIAN TREASURE

I think becoming aware of the common mistakes, again, is very important. If one is aware, one can do something about it. Lack of awareness, there's nothing you can do to something that you're completely oblivious to. Some of the biggest mistakes that we, human beings, make come from a couple of very, very common afflictions or perhaps habits, or desires. The first is looking good. We all like to look good, but if we are making calls in order to look good or we're having a conversation to look good, it tends to bring out things like competitive speaking where we have to trump what the other person said every time. Or the I know phenomenon where the person is professionally unimpressed and knows everything. And of course, if you know everything, what are you going to learn? Absolutely nothing. So looking good can be quite destructive in a conversation. Anybody who's had a conversation with somebody who simply wants to appear to be the winner in a kind of zero-sum game, well, that's not a very productive conversation to have. And if there's one thing that we like more than looking good as human beings, it's being right. Being right is potentially extremely destructive in conversation. And if we get conscious about these basic human proclivities-- we all do them. But if they drive communication, they can get very destructive. And it makes people very hard to listen too. I talk about some other stumbling blocks, which are important to recognize. And I think, again, consciousness, just shining a light on these things, means that it's easier to avoid them. And they spell the word AGENTS, which is nice and easy to remember. The A is assumptions about the world, about how people are taking me, about what people think of me, about how people respond, about what people are like, all sorts of assumptions we have, which can color the way that we speak and the way that we listen to others. The G is generalizations can be quite dangerous things, especially when you get into the most common argumentative generalizations like never, always, nobody, everybody. "You never listen to me." What? Really? Never? Not in the history of this relationship [laughter]? And so--

BILL COPPEL

I've heard that before.

JULIAN TREASURE

Oh, yes. Yes. We've all heard that, "Nobody does that. Everybody thinks this," this kind of generalizations. Best avoided in the main. Then the E of AGENTS is emotions. Negative emotion and listening, I think, are inversely related. The best way to calm somebody down who is upset is to listen to them, and even reflect back what they're saying. And again, any of the people out here who have conversations-- maybe somebody's upset and you have to phone them up. The best way to deal with that call is to reflect back. "So what I hear you say is that you're extremely upset that I did this and I promised that, and I didn't deliver this on that date. Did I get you?" And if you just reflect back, and reflect back, and reflect back, it's amazing how the steam stops coming out of the person's ears. And they calm down and say, "Okay. Well, at least, you understand why I'm upset." They may even apologize for being upset, so. And the

other way around, if you are extremely upset yourself, it's pretty hard to listen to somebody properly or effectively. So I think there's an inverse relationship there.

JULIAN TREASURE

The N of AGENTS is noise, and it is difficult to converse, to communicate, or to work. And then we move on to the T of AGENTS. That's time. It takes time to listen to somebody, and it's a great gift to give them that time. I mean, I don't know when the last time anybody listening to this-- when is the last time you guys actually sat down and gave somebody your full, undivided attention? Like Scott Peck says, "100% of your attention to listen somebody in your family or somebody in your work." We don't do it that often. Most of the time, it's a bit of our attention, and it's a great gift to give somebody, especially somebody you love. Try it tonight, and you might get this, "Hey, what happened to you [laughter]," this kind of surprised reaction when you're actually, totally paying attention to somebody and hearing them. Time is important, and I know we're in a [time-important?] environment. We got multiple streams coming in. We're always on. We're doing email just before going to sleep. Don't do that, by the way. And there's all this buzz going the whole time, and it gets very hard to make the time to put everything down and listen. But it does take that.

BILL COPPEL

What's interesting--

JULIAN TREASURE

And then--

BILL COPPEL

Yeah. What's interesting--

JULIAN TREASURE

Yeah. Go on.

BILL COPPEL

--about that-- yeah. What's interesting about that, Julian, is that notion of time. We actually make conscious decisions every moment to squander our time, and there's no reason why we have to respond to every single thing that comes in. And I see this parallel between making conscious decisions and pairing back certain activities to spend more time in what you're describing here, is this notion of agent, but this consciousness, this consciousness of listening. And for a lot of us it is a trade-off that we don't recognize the true return, if you will, the ROI, the return on the investment of time in this context, where what I'm hearing you say is that if you purposely stop and listen, and make it a very clear point to whomever you're with, that that's what you're doing. It changes the entire context of what that relationship could be like, whether it's with a spouse, or a friend, or a client.

JULIAN TREASURE

Absolutely. It totally does, and that's to where speaking and listening are so related. Their speaking will change, and you are indeed changing the whole context for the conversation. So yes, the T is time, and time is so important. And as you write, you say with things like FOMO, the fear of missing out, social media, "Oh, my goodness. Somebody might've tweeted about me. I'd better check." And all that stuff is going on the whole time. And our time gets sucked into all of these things, which really actually don't add a great deal of value in our lives. And the final bit of AGENTS, the S, is semantics, which is important to understand as well, that we have different understandings. Even when we speak the same language we have different understandings of words, potentially. And it's very important to check in and make sure that the words we're using aren't jargon-laden, or difficult, or formulaic, or ritualistic, but we're speaking from the heart. Which brings me, actually, to another-- your listeners will discern by now the title of acronyms. I do love acronyms. So I have a very poor memory and this is how I remember things [laughter]. It's very important to me.

JULIAN TREASURE

Another little acronym which is-- we've talked about a lot of the problems of listening and speaking. Well, the solution to powerful speaking, to me, is to stand on four very important cornerstones which spell the word HAIL, fortunately, which is to greet or

acclaim enthusiastically. H-A-I-L. And these, I think, if you stand in these, you can stand in these with speaking and with listening. I think they really are the foundation of powerful communication. So the H is honesty. That's just to say being clear and being straight in your communication with people, which really does short-circuit all of that jargon, and complexity, and beating around the bush and anything that we hear politicians doing a lot of the time. They're not giving clear, straight answers very much of the time. Then, that is very important. It makes your speaking much more powerful. The A is authenticity, is being yourself. When I speak on stage in front of lots of people, I'm not performing. I'm not trying to be somebody else. I'm being a clear version of myself. It's so much easier to do that. I know a lot of people feel they have to change themselves in work situations, and there's been a great deal of talk about that in terms of gender, in terms of age, in terms of race. There's been all sorts of conversations about this over the years about people feeling they have to conform to some sort of norm. There's a great TED Talk by Susan Cain about the power of introverts and how introverts have been, to a degree, marginalized by this assumption that everybody successful has to be out there, and dominating, and powerful, and so forth, where in fact in history some of the greatest leaders have been very quiet people. Gandhi, and so forth, and so forth. So I think it's the dangerous thing to think that you've got to be different other than yourself. It's great to be yourself. It's a release to do that.

JULIAN TREASURE

So honesty, authenticity. Integrity is the I. And that means being your word. That's very powerful. If when you say it it happens and people learn that, that creates a listening for you around you that you're somebody who does what they say. And that means next time you say, "I'll do that," people take you [that it's done?], that's powerful. The inverse of that-- the opposite of that is not so powerful. If you don't do it, if it gets forgotten, your promises evaporate like puddles in the sun. People start not listening to you. "Oh, yeah. Okay. [inaudible]. Whatever." You'll get that kind of reaction because people have learned that you don't deliver. So integrity, very important. Be your word. And the L of HAIL, love. Now that's an important one. And I don't mean romantic love, obviously here. What I'm talking about is wishing people well and giving them the gifts you can give them. We're out of kindness, really. It's a little bit like the Buddhist version of-- it's called loving kindness. It's the emotion that is positive to give out to people. And people can feel it when you're coming from loving kindness. So again, if you think about this in terms of platform speaking, if any of the people listening to this have to stand on stages or have to speak in front of groups, it's not about you. It's not about you looking good. It's not about you being right. It's not about you getting affirmation or anything like that. It's about them. You're giving a gift. And if you're giving the gift wholeheartedly to the people and you ask yourself, "What's the listening I was speaking into? I've got something to say here that's actually valuable to these people and I'm giving it to them wholeheartedly and I wish them well with it," that is a very, very powerful way to communicate because people can feel that. They really can feel it. They can also feel it if you're being manipulative, or stagy, or giving a performance. And I know this is something that's concerned, for example, Chris Anderson, the curator of TED, over the years that as TED has gotten bigger and bigger people have started to rehearse stuff and get all performy about TED, almost acting a talk. And he's very against that. He wants the talk to be the thing.

BILL COPPEL

Well, I--

JULIAN TREASURE

[Speaking?]-

BILL COPPEL

Yeah. And it hits on your word, authenticity, right? At the end of the day-- not that the other components of HAIL aren't important, but so often we find ourselves-- and I

think social media is a wonderful example of it. You could be anything you think you should be, and oftentimes it's never who you are. And we're moving in a direction that suggests that. Because, I think, as you pointed out earlier, we carry these filters with us. And the filters, in many ways, will actually force us or cause us to change who we are because we think that's what that person we're engaging with expects. And I couldn't agree with you more that at the end of the day, that's what really disrupts this whole process of two individuals or, in any engagement, regardless of the size, where we lose so much of the quality or value that could be created. One of the things I wanted to ask you is that in a world today that's dominated by texting, and email, and tweeting, and Instagram, and every one of these other modalities which we think we're communicating with one another, I continue to be amazed at what people who want to share a piece of information or a point of view, how they select that particular platform, and how often that is misunderstood. Talk a--

JULIAN TREASURE

[crosstalk].

BILL COPPEL

--little bit about that.

JULIAN TREASURE

Well, it's interesting, isn't it? Most of the new communication mechanisms we've invented in the last 30 or 40 years have been text-based. So they use our fingers and our eyes. Email, instant messaging, social media, and as you say, mainly visual. We have this kind of visual tyranny that's been going on for a long time. I do think that's going to change. And let's come back to that in a moment. But for now, the research does show that not only do we have a kind of generation gap in terms of what people understand and how they speak, but also the channels they use. So email tends to be for 30-plus, then below that, you have social media, and then younger than that, Facebook is old hat to a lot of teens. They're using the latest form of some platform where they can swap information, instant messaging of some kind. So not only do we have different ways of speaking, we're speaking in different channels altogether. And that's going to make some big disconnects in families, I would've thought. Certainly, we're seeing that kind of disconnection happening, I think, in many societies where there's a feeling of disenfranchisement, of lack of involvement. There are ghettos of communication happening. And this is not particularly positive, I think. Now, it is going to change. The tech space communication that we've been inventing has happened for a reason. We've invented computers, and telephones, and now smartphones which use screens and keyboards a great deal, and that's been the norm. It's changing.

JULIAN TREASURE

Right now, in America, there's a revolution happening, a thing called smart speaker. And the penetration of smart speakers is extraordinary. These are devices we talk to. So suddenly, people are starting to talk to the Internet of Things through a device which can play the music, or order plane tickets, or do the shopping, or whatever they want it to do. And these devices will get smarter and smarter over the next few years, as artificial intelligence gets more and more effective and deployable in domestic or industrial situations. We'll start finding ourselves talking to something that feels pretty human and can actually deliver a huge amount of functionality. Now, speaking and listening are the most powerful, rich, fast, and natural ways that we communicate. We've been speaking with complex language for something like 200,000 years. Writing and reading only came along 4,000 years ago. So they're very recent things, actually. So it's great to see the power of speaking and listening coming back into technology and the way that we relate to it. I think this will end up, incidentally, in kind of sci-fi. Not that long. I mean, I think I'll see it in my lifetime where we have devices embedded in our skulls and we are able to speak and listen through bone conduction to something that's connected to everything. And it will be a little bit like J.A.R.V.I.S. in Iron Man, our own personal avatar which will come

between us and all of the apps that we have to interface with right now, whether we're booking a hotel room or a rental car, or ordering a pizza, or whatever it may be. There's another blooming app I've got to open. Not anymore. You just say, "Fred, I want a pizza. And can you book me a flight for tomorrow?" And the same avatar will go off and do all these different things and interface with all the systems out there. So we'll be talking a lot, and I think there's great scope there for combating loneliness, for example, for regaining the lost art of conversation, to a degree, for getting out of the habit of texting everybody and emailing everybody and back into the habit of speaking to people, which is, to me, so much more powerful. So I think the lost art of conversation may not be lost for long. And that's a positive sign, I think.

BILL COPPEL

So I guess what we're afraid of is when you ask Fred to order you a pizza or get you plane tickets, he could also say-- you could also be saying to Fred, "Gee, I just inherited \$250,000. Put it to work for me." And that's kind of the future as I see it for even our industry. So to your point, communication, and speaking, and listening, we need to practice that. And so I would urge all of our listeners to take to heart what Julian's talking about here. Ultimately, the emotional aspect of it. And that's the E in AGENTS, the emotional aspect of it. I think we're a ways away, though, Julian, from replacing that emotional connection when it comes to AI.

JULIAN TREASURE

I absolutely agree, Bill. I mean, this intermediation has been happening a great deal, but it's going the other way a bit at the moment. So I don't think anybody listening to this needs to be terrified of having their job wiped out by an artificially intelligent investment manager or financial adviser. That's an awfully long way off before people would trust machines to do that. Machines may be able to do trading, but I think there isn't a substitute in a world where there's this tidal wave of content. There's this tidal wave of availability now to us because we can access everything, where before it was our local shop. Now we can buy anything from anywhere in the world. And the same applies to financial services, really. You probably would've had a local advisor, and now you can do anything you like. Well, it's frightening, and the answer to that is relationship. Always. Always.

BILL COPPEL

And that--

JULIAN TREASURE

And it's the same reason.

BILL COPPEL

And that circles back to what you brought up earlier in full circle, which is when you talked about relationships. But ultimately, the real value that that leads to is this concept of well-being. And if an advisor begins to think of their role less about managing money-- because we know Fred or Alexa can do that today. What they can't do today is foster the relationship that leads to this notion of well-being.

JULIAN TREASURE

Absolutely. I want to know that-- just like with a doctor, I want to know that somebody I trust is helping me, and they're doing all of the research and all of the worrying about stuff and filling the forms in and-- I don't want to deal with that stuff. So it's exactly like that. It's having a relationship with a trusted advisor. A trusted guide is the most important role in a world where everything is available. And that is where to go. That's how we can help our clients to feel well, to be effective, to have the free time they want and to be happy in their lives because they know somebody who really knows their [onions?] is dealing with all that stuff and I don't have to think about it.

BILL COPPEL

Let me wrap this up with a final question, Julian. It's fairly simple. We've covered a lot of ground in this conversation. And at the center of this is that the lost art, if you will almost, this lost art of communication, this notion of listening as a big component of it, if you were to provide our listeners with, sort of, one thing to take away from this

to start, perhaps, reflecting on their own listening skills, communication skills, their relationship with sound, if you will, what would that one thing be to start their journey to recognize the importance, and the value, and probably the fundamental thing that will distinguish them from all types of competition?

JULIAN TREASURE

Being conscious about listening, I think, is the first and most important thing. And it's transformative. Anybody who's heard this conversation now has the opportunity to do that, to be conscious that when they're listening they're doing something, that they are listening to their inner voice, they're listening to the sound around them, and they're listening to a listening, which is what they're speaking into, which comes from other people's own personal listenings and also from whatever they've done in the past. So understanding those concepts of listening, understanding that everybody's listening is unique because we all listen through filters, those are really important things. This common mistake that everybody listens like I do is amazingly destructive in conversations. So I would say the big watchword is consciousness, being conscious that listening and speaking are a complex process. They're skills that you can develop. And pay attention to these things so when you start listening to the world, it's amazing what you discover and what you start to encounter that's been around you all the time and you never knew. So there's wonders in it. There's irritations in it, too. I mean [laughter], people often come up to me and say, "After I heard you speak, I can't go in a coffee shop anymore because I'm going, 'Listen to that [inaudible] cabinets over there [laughter].'" So you will hear the noise, but it's good that you hear the noise because that means you can do something about it, move yourself somewhere more pleasant and more healthy. So yeah, consciousness. I wish anybody who's listened to this happiness, effectiveness, and well-being through conscious application of speaking and listening.

BILL COPPEL

So at a personal, I'd like to share with our listeners that, as I mentioned earlier, at the top of the podcast that I've known Julian now for a couple of years. I've had the opportunity to work with him. He has presented for our forums, but I've also read his material and I've had the pleasure of having a lot of one-on-one conversations, and for me, personally, it has been a very important factor in helping me become better at listening, at communicating, and having a better appreciation for all of the filters that we all have. For our listeners, Julian, tell us how they might learn more--

JULIAN TREASURE

Well, at a brand or a corporate level, good sound is good business. And that's what the Sound Agency does. So that's thesoundagency.com. You can find all about the work we do there. My own work about personal communication, about speaking and listening, that's at juliantreasure.com. And also the book *How to be Heard*, which is doing really well and I'm really excited because everything I know about speaking and listening are poured into that one, that's got its own website howtobeheardbook.com. So those are some ways to connect.

BILL COPPEL

Let me end here and say thank you very, very much for your time. And we really appreciate your insights and thoughts on how we can become better at listening and communicating.

JULIAN TREASURE

My pleasure, Bill. Thank you for inviting me.

BILL COPPEL

Until next time, Julian. Take care.

Outro

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