

The 'Impossible Conversation' No One Saw Coming with Dr. Peter Boghossian

(January 16, 2026)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, in November, I went to UC Berkeley. We call it UC Berserkley. I was supposed to be there with the great Charlie Kirk, but we all know what happened to Charlie. And instead I was there with, Rob Schneider, the comedian and author, and actor.

And you've probably seen some of the clips on YouTube. If not, we'll put them in the show notes. But when I walked into the green room, I saw a man that I've admired from a distance for many years, and he's not a Christian. He's an atheist. In fact, he wrote a very good book called 'A Manual for Creating Atheists.' It's actually a very good book on epistemology.

How do we know what we know? What proper way should we think about things? And his name is Peter Boghossian. And Peter was in that room. And as soon as I walked in, I noticed it was Peter Boghossian. I'm like, why is Peter here?

Well, we're going to tell you why he was there at Berserkley that night and why he's here with me today. He actually was a professor at Portland State University, which couldn't be more leftist. And he's going to tell us why he left. You're not going to believe it. So here he is, ladies and gentlemen, the great Peter Boghossian. [Applause]

PETER:

What an intro.

FRANK:

All right, I'm shutting off the crowd, Peter.

PETER:

What an intro. What an intro.



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FRANK:

All the way from somewhere in LA. The man travels 365, ladies and gentlemen. He doesn't actually have an address. And we're going to tell you why in a minute as well. Peter, let's go back to, to your history. I mean, you went to Marquette, you went to Fordham, you went on to Portland State, got a PhD there in philosophy. What was your interest when you got involved in philosophy? What did you want to do with that?

PETER:

Well, first let me say it's awesome to talk to you. I mean, really, you know, this, this, these kinds of conversations 20 years ago or maybe 15 years ago would have been much more difficult.

They would have been in hard mode, so much static. So I'm, I'm very grateful to be here and that we've cultivated a relationship, and so I'm grateful for that. So I left ph-- I left, I was kind of, I was caught up in gratitude and I forgot. What was your question again?

FRANK:

Like, how'd you get involved in philosophy? Why'd you go get a PhD in Philosophy and then ultimately teach at--? Well, I love the bio that you have in the book that you were thrown out of the doctoral program at the University of New Mexico Philosophy department. Why were you thrown out? What's the deal? [Laughter]

PETER:

I've never really, I think they threw a bunch of us out. I've never really been well suited for academia. I think, I do think that there is a kind of-- And that was, you know, really pre-woke, but I just don't think I have the temperament for it.

You know, I think one of the reasons that professors over a long period of time become cowed by whatever orthodoxy that they're engaged in is because, you know, you're on this tenure track. You want to become your assistant professor, you want to get tenure, which is a job for life, to associate professor to the full professor.

And if you do that long enough, you're just constantly bowing to whatever the orthodoxy is. You're writing papers, what people want to know. That's much less true in the hard sciences,

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but it's certainly true in the humanities. Yeah, I got my doctorate in education, and I did my dissertation with prison inmates.

That's available online. And I wanted to attempt to increase the moral reasoning and critical thinking ability of prison inmates to help them desist from crime. And so that was my coursework was a complete and total waste of time. But my dissertation was incredibly fulfilling. And I still use elements. I built on that and used elements of that today.

FRANK:

And then you eventually wound up at Portland State, which, as we know, Portland is a very far left town now. And it turned out that the university went so far left that you couldn't tolerate it. What happened?

PETER:

Yeah, it wasn't just that it was far left. And this is actually something. If you have a minute, I'd love to talk to you about an idea that I've been playing with. It's something that Dave Silverman-- He's a friend of mine. You debated Dave.

FRANK:

Yeah. Dave Silverman used to be the president of American Atheist. Yeah.

PETER:

Yeah. So I'll answer your question. It was that they didn't brook any questions. Like, you just, you just couldn't question anything. You couldn't ask anything. Anytime I was I asked a question about whatever was, you know, the moral orthodox at the time, pronouns or what have you, I was accused of microaggressions. And people were constantly looking to find offense. They were constantly—

And it wasn't so much that the ideas were leftist, although they certainly were. I don't want to give you the wrong impression, but it was the absolute inability to question or challenge anything.

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And the idea that anybody who strayed even a little bit from the reigning orthodoxy, which was to be repeatedly dragged up on investigations, charges, trumped up charges, nonsense and BS. So-- But here's my idea. I'll throw this out to you. I've been thinking about it.

FRANK:

Yeah.

PETER:

And again, push back on it because I'm just working through the idea now. Let's assume that there are an equal number of good and bad ideas. This is a huge assumption. I don't think you need this assumption to make it work, but I think it makes the thought experiment easier.

Let's assume that there are an equal number of good and bad ideas in the far left and far right. And let's also accept by fiat that that's somewhat of a legitimate spectrum in which people can find themselves on. You could talk about a curves or what have you, horseshoe. But why is it that the left are wholesale completely incapable of defending any of their ideas?

I personally don't think it's because they have worse ideas. [Clears Throat] Excuse me. Assuming that that distribution is equal. It's because they don't have a 1 Peter 3:15. It's because they don't have-- They haven't taken in a dialectic.

And most people, the quote unquote thought leaders who are on the left, they've gone through ideological indoctrination at universities and the goal there was to parrot back the orthodoxy. It wasn't a question. It wasn't a challenge. So I'm thinking that one of the reasons that the left has gone so crazy, it's less because they have bad ideas.

Although I personally think some of those ideas are not just bad, but civilization ending. But they've absented themselves of a corrective mechanism or any way to fix their ideas because they don't engage in a dialectic. So that's what I've been thinking about. I'd love to get your take on that.

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FRANK:

I wonder if the reason for that, Peter, and this maybe is a generalization as well, that most of us here on the right are trying to build something. And building takes a process, a deliberate process where you need a foundation, you need a superstructure, you need to have certain engineering principles to just push the metaphor a little bit.

And you can only build something in a certain way. Whereas, generally the left, particularly the woke left, wants to tear down something. You can tear down something without any concern for a foundation, or engineering principles, or even right and wrong.

If you want to tear down the family, you can do that. If you want to tear down borders, you can do that. If you want to tear down reason, you can just refuse to play and call reason oppression, and maybe-- Go ahead.

PETER:

No, I think that's right. Let me add to that. Or you tell me if you think this adds. Because I'm just working this idea out now. Even when you build something, however, what you're doing, you need a corrective mechanism to build. You need some kind of falsification, right?

FRANK:

True.

PETER:

You need—

Oh, the beam doesn't go there. Or we can't build it out of balsa wood, the bridge. The whole thing will collapse. So even in those cases of-- If you look at, you know, Sowell's definition of conservatism, or to conserve society, to build something, to make something, even then you need a corrective mechanism. You need a way to weed out bad ideas so you're less wrong more often.

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FRANK:

And that's supposed to be evidence from our sense? Yeah, evidence from our senses and reason. We're supposed to use that to correct. Right?

PETER:

Yeah. Reason, empiricism-- I would say proper falsification, falsifiability. How could this idea be false? But the left has not only eschewed it, or explicitly repudiated it, but they've had-- You can't even ask those questions because once you do, you've lost the community of which you know-- It's kind of like an ideologically motivated moral community. I call it IMC. It's a term I got from James Lindsay. The idea that it's a—

It's not a community of truth. If anything, it's a community of-- You and I disagree on metaphysics, but we have the same idea of the importance of truth and how it should govern our lives and our institutions.

It should be the North Star of my own life and the civilization as well. When you don't have a corrective mechanism, the whole concept of truth doesn't make sense. So you have to switch to something else. They switch to oppression.

FRANK:

Yes.

PETER:

Bigotry, discrimination.

FRANK:

Well, it's easy to create a victim and it's easy to call a person a name than it is to try and figure out factually why they're wrong. And we're going to cover that more with Peter Boghossian, my guest today. Wrote a book called 'A Manual for Creating Atheists', it's really a book on epistemology.

How do we know what we know, how to ask the right questions, that kind of thing. But that's not what we're highlighting here. Peter's an atheist, or at least he was. I'm a Christian. But we

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agree on so much. And we're going to talk about that right after the break. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network and other stations around the country.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. My guest, Peter Boghossian. And Peter and I met at UC Berkeley back in November. But I know about Peter's work prior to that. And him, despite being an atheist, me being a Christian, we have a lot in common, particularly Western civilization.

In fact, Peter's about to embark on a very dangerous mission we're going to talk about here in a minute. But before we get there--

PETER:

A dangerous, maybe stupid, maybe, just an idiotic mischief. [Laughter]

FRANK:

Well, we're going to talk about it in a minute. He's going to go do street preaching, not for Christianity, but against Muslims in France. We're going to talk about it here in a minute.

PETER:

Maybe not against, but very, yeah, very difficult conversations with Muslims in the Parisian slums, which I've been advised by everybody not to do that.

FRANK:

We're going to talk about it in a minute. But I want to continue our conversation we had just before the break, Peter, because we were trying to talk about how the left doesn't seem to have a first 1 Peter 3:15.

It doesn't seem to have a command in their ideology that says you ought to interact with people and give a reason for the hope that you have, give a reason for the truth that you're trying to put forward. Why do you think they don't have that truth, or that corrective, or that goal to have dialogue with people with whom they disagree?

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PETER:

Yeah, because I don't fold my arms because I'm defensive. I have a horrible shoulder injury that I'm a moron. I keep injuring it from Jiu jitsu. I think that they, that they, they absent themselves, the corrective mechanism because they don't have the same North Star of truth.

I think that they have a fundamentally, [Clears Throat] excuse me, different orientation to the way they think about the world. Gad Saad would call it a kind of suicidal empathy that have the idea that they look at, and all the literature, going back to postmodernist Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, this idea that there are embedded power structures and you have to just remediate those powers somehow.

And they look at the world through oppression. But anyway, when you do that, then you use the tools that will enable you to further that. So that's for example, when you look at the world in terms of power, you use lawsuits. When you look in the world in terms of truth, you use communication, conversation, dialectic.

And so, I also think that's why the left has gone to crazy town. But here's another way to think about it. When you don't think about truth-- And it's again, I'll fully admit this has been exacerbated by social media. But if you have nine people talking at a table and one person with a Nazi uniform comes and sits at the table, what do you have?

The left would say you have 10 Nazis. So they don't even want you to have a conversation with people that they find odious. And remember, as Steven Pinker says, it's the left pole. If you're on the far left, anyone who's even on the normal left looks like they're on the far right.

So you have confounding variables. But I think that the key is that when you absent yourself away to have a conversation with somebody, almost by definition, not only do you increase the likelihood that your beliefs will be incorrect, but over time, and this is the controversial part for the philosophers listening. I think over time, by necessity, you will believe false, false things because you will have an ever increasing number of beliefs that you can't correct.

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FRANK:

Say that again. I don't know if I follow you on that last part.

PETER:

Yeah, maybe I was. I'm sure I was inarticulate. So this is an idea I've been thinking about for a long time. I'm just working through my ideas now. So if you don't have a way to correct your cognitions, or your beliefs, or the way you think about things, it's not merely that you're more likely to be wrong, because you have no way to fix the things you believe.

You can't falsify them, because even the act of falsifying, like even thinking about it in terms of, oh, how could I be wrong about this? Or what would it take to change my mind? That's a kind of cognitive toxin.

So my claim is, if you do not have a way to error correct what you believe, it's not just that you'll be more wrong more often, but that that's a necessary condition of not having a corrective mechanism, that over time you will have to believe more false things because you have no way to correct them and weed them out.

Now, I'm not talking about, you know, the diameter of a hamburger bun from McDonald's versus Wendy's, but I'm talking about more complicated moral principles, and sociological principles, and ways to think about your life, and society, and what a meaningful life is, and what kind of life ought I to lead. You know, ancient questions with an ancient pedigree, Socrates questions.

FRANK:

You know, you talk about this in your book 'A Manual for Creating Atheists.' And it was funny, when we went to Berkeley, we took a picture together, and you put out a tweet that said, here is the author of 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist' and the author of 'A Manual for Creating Atheists' together speaking in support and in defense of Charlie Kirk.

PETER:

Absolutely.

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FRANK:

At Berkeley. That was beautiful.

PETER:

And the grief I got from that was pretty crazy. Pretty crazy. But it's, you know, it's just the usual. It's the usual suspects, you know, the—

It's, you know, the kind of people who would grief you for that are the kind of people who have such moral certainty in their lives, and they're so, you know, ready, willing, able, and hungry to demonize other people who disagree with them. It's the offense by proxy thing again.

FRANK:

Now, wouldn't it--? I mean, thinking about something like that. You and I are on opposite ends of metaphysics in terms of whether God exists or not.

PETER:

Totally.

FRANK:

Yet, when we come together and we start talking about important issues about civilization and how we're to live here together instead of say, going back 15 or 20 years when the new atheists and the Christians were, you know, throwing mud at one another, we're coming together to try and save Western civilization, at least in our view anyway. Wouldn't you think that people would say, well here's a good example of people who don't agree on the God question, but they're talking with one another, you know?

PETER:

I would hope so. I would hope so. So here's what I have to say to your listeners that I think is extraordinarily important. So I'm sure some people have grieved you for talking to me. I haven't spoken to you about that, but that's my guess.

I know people have grieved me for talking to you. I can't use an expletive on the show because it's a family show of what I have to say to them. So I won't do that. But I will say to the people

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who are devout serious Christians, I will say the following to you. You have to kind of update to where we are now. You have to—

So you can't be thinking about, I mean you can be thinking about anything you want. I'm a fan of cognitive liberty. But a more helpful and productive way to think about where we are now in the culture is that we have very serious civilizational forces at work. We have people—

And you know, you don't have to believe me, anyone who's spent five minutes in the news or just look at Western Europe as a paradigmatic example of that, what they're doing, they're arresting people for thought crimes, for praying outside of abortion clinics. And again, as an atheist, I just think that the person's sitting there talking to themselves.

So I have no problem someone wants to talk to themselves. But you have to think about the reason we have a conversation together about this and why this is so important. And I looked at, I almost never look at the comments, but I looked at some of the comments on the channel that were very negative.

If you do not have free speech, Christianity is under assault. It's all under assault. It is the bedrock principle for everything. And so, rather than attempt to excoriate you, or be mad at me, or whatever you're doing, you have to think about what kind of society do you want to live in.

And if you really do want a society in which you're free to believe what you want to believe, I'm free to believe whatever I want to believe, then you have to have a first principle. You have to have certain first principles. You know, one thing I've been thinking about a lot is the idea of honesty.

You know, I was going to give a talk. I just got disinvited from a talk in France. The French are not, they're not happy with me right now. But I think that thinking about it from culture war 1.0 to culture war 2.0 is an extremely helpful move to Christians.

You are now in culture war 2.0. I am in culture war 2.0. We're trying to move the needle on. We're trying to conserve the things in society and civilization that are important. We're trying

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to give people cognitive liberty, free speech. We need to have an open, honest conversation about the nature of our problems, which we are simply not having.

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, any claim, or let me put it another way, anyone that wants to censor your speech is making an implicit claim to infallibility. They're saying that they have all the knowledge and that what they think is absolutely true without any doubt at all, and nobody else should say anything about it.

That is not a humble position. That is not a position whereby you can learn new things. We all ought to be open to learning new things. And, Peter, we're talking to Dr. Peter Boghossian, by the way. If you just tuning in, ladies and gentlemen. Peter—

PETER:

It's un American, too.

FRANK:

Oh, certainly un-American. And it's something that will be the main tool of the tyrants to come in and shut down all contrary views to what the state wants or what the imam wants. That's probably more of a problem coming.

PETER:

Yeah. I'm so happy you said that. And, you know, if you look at Western Europe now, what is the first principle that I spoke about before? They have a complete and total inability to be honest about the nature of the problems.

They also have this idea of, you know, remember if you have a Nazi sit at the table, everybody's a Nazi? So can I tell you a couple of quick stories? So I'm going to go to France and I'm going to do this thing where I have conversations with Muslims in the slums. [Phone rings] I think that was my—

Sorry about that.

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FRANK:

Go ahead. Speaking of free speech, somebody wanted to have some right there.

PETER:

No, I set my alarms that I wouldn't—

FRANK:

Go ahead.

PETER:

So there's a lot going on there. So one of the things that we found is we talked to people to come on the show who specialize in immigration in general and Islamic immigration in particular.

And they were all universally, yeah, this is great, this is great. But then, you know, I said make sure you have a good camera, etc., you know, my project director sends that out. And the overwhelming majority did not want these interviews on video.

Now here's a question for you, Frank. Why do you think that people in France did not want to have a video conversation with me about Islamic immigration?

FRANK:

Because they don't want to be targets of the religion of peace, which is not the religion of peace, but the religion of submission.

PETER:

That's because they're afraid. Because they're—

Now again, these are not random people in the streets. These are people from very prestigious public intellectual think tanks, etc. They're afraid, to be blunt with you, of getting their head sawed off with a butter knife. If you're in that situation, you've already lost. But the reason that I'm saying that at all is because that gets back to the principle of the importance of free speech.

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Because it may not be that the government is preventing you from free speech, but there are certain radically illiberal elements in your society that are preventing you for speaking openly and honestly about, in this case, your research area. The one thing you should be speaking openly and honestly about. That's literally what you do for a living.

FRANK:

In fact, I remember our mutual friend Christopher Hitchens. This had to be probably 2006 or 2007 when Christopher was debating theists like me, and John Lennox, and others. He was with Lennox and this is—

I don't even know if it was a debate, but they're having a conversation. And Christopher kept saying, speak up while you can. Speak up now while you can. This is almost 20 years ago, friends, he was saying this. And the stifling nature of political correctness and leftism.

And now a fear of what could happen to people if they speak out, say against Islam, is a real problem. We're going to talk much more with Dr. Peter Boghossian right after the break. Don't go anywhere, you're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, back after the break.

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FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, do you ever have conversations with people you don't agree with? I'm not talking about your Aunt Bertha, who spits all sorts of cranberry sauce on you during her Christmas dinner rant.

Her political Christmas dinner rant. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about reasonable conversations with people that might not share your worldview, but you might be aligned in many other areas. And that's what we're having a conversation today about. My friend, Dr. Peter Boghossian and I met one another in person at UC Berserkely back in November.

We were there to honor Charlie Kirk and to answer questions from students. In fact, we'll put the link to the entire interaction in the show notes here if you want to see some of that. Peter, I never asked you this because it was supposed to be just me and Rob there.

PETER:

Oh, yeah.

FRANK:

Why were you even there? How did that even happen?

PETER:

Oh, and I wrote a Substack about that. Right. that talked about when we met. That happened because Rob Schneider's a good friend of mine and Andrew Doyle is a good friend of mine. And Rob invited me. He was actually on tour, the college tour. Actually in Alabama. We almost overlapped there a little bit.

FRANK:

That's right. Yeah.

PETER:

Yeah. And so, I was on tour, and Rob told me that he wanted me to come. And I was actually supposed to give a talk, but because of the riots outside of the place, and even the disturbance inside, I never got to give my talk.

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FRANK:

Yeah. You mean the folks who say they're fighting for inclusion, tolerance, and diversity would not tolerate or include you for holding a diverse view? How does this happen, Peter? I mean, this is craziness.

PETER:

It's happened. It happens because you show me the incentives, I'll show you the outcome.

FRANK:

What's the incentive?

PETER:

Well, to belong. To feel like you're a member of a community who's—

Everybody else is an existential threat. Frank Turek is an existential threat. Now I'm an existential threat. But the problem is that they view the existing superstructure that governs us is inherently, problematic would be the nicest thing you could say.

Something that needs to be disrupted and disturbed. And you and I are the enforcers of that orthodoxy. And I would be the first one to cop to it if it's free speech, you know, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press. Yeah, I'm guilty as charged. Miranda rights.

FRANK:

You're about to go to France, which, tragically, ladies and gentlemen, is succumbing to Sharia Law in many areas. I remember I was over there in 2010, Peter. Had a car. We're heading from Paris to Reims, and somehow, we took a wrong turn.

And I thought I was in Mogadishu. I mean, the neighborhood was completely Islamicized. Everybody, all the women were in burkas. And it was a Muslim slum, if you will, in Paris. And this is 15 years ago. You're going there now. What are you going to do? And are you coming back? I hope.

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PETER:

Well, I hope I'm coming back with my head on my body. [Laughter] But I'm actually going to do Jiu Jitsu with a lot of those guys. So that should be—

FRANK:

Oh, good, good.

PETER:

Yeah. You know what I've found? And I've told a few people this, and nobody I've told has understood the gravity of this. So I'm starting to think my explanation of this must not be good. So, you know, I travel 365, and I go all around the world.

I don't even know how many Jiu Jitsu gyms I train. This is a huge thing. But 100% of the people who do MMA, which is mixed martial arts, do Jiu Jitsu. But not everybody who does Jiu Jitsu throws punches and kicks. Maybe 5%, I'm guessing 10%, absolute mass, probably like 3%.

But when you go to these studios in Western Europe, every single time you go to an MMA gym, it's a radically disproportionate number of Muslims in these gyms. And so, I'll let that percolate, the implications of that.

But I'm going to go there because I'm going to interview people about immigration. I'm very much interested in having open and honest conversations about Islamic immigration in particular, immigration in general. And we're going to go in the slums. We're going to go into one area where a teacher was beheaded recently, and we're going to have conversations with young men who feel disenfranchised from the system.

We're going to have conversations with their teachers we've lined up. I'm super excited to get these people's perspectives on you know, because I've just spent the day, yesterday, I just finished a small book reading the testimonies translated into English of kind of the spectrum street epistemology.

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People who do that in these communities with NGOs talking to these people who genuinely feel that France hates them and they're oppressed. So I want to hear, I'd like to know for myself what, what their story is.

FRANK:

Are you suggesting that France, the French government, or these Muslims perceive France, the French government hates them?

PETER:

Yeah, I'm more than suggesting that. I'm telling you, I've read their testimonies and that's what they say.

FRANK:

Why? Why do they think the French government, which allows them to come into their nation, and I'm sure they're getting public assistance, why do they think the government hates them?

PETER:

That is an awesome question. And that's exactly what I'm going to ask them.

FRANK:

Okay.

PETER:

And that's why we need to have these conversations to figure out what people actually believe.

FRANK:

Okay. I hope this is all going to be videoed and we're going to see this.

PETER:

Oh yeah, yeah. It's going to be videoed. It's going to be, it's going to be videoed. I'll tell you something else which will completely blow your mind. I hope that we don't come up against a hard break when I tell you this because it's a story –

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I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

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FRANK:

Go ahead. Go ahead.

PETER:

All right. So I'm going to France. I found it amazingly easy to integrate at the highest echelons of power wherever I go. And I'm not exactly sure why, but almost every country I go to, I'm meeting like, you know, ambassadors, vice presidents, presidents, every--.

That's another story. But it's related to this. I say that only as a point of contact because I was talking to a senior military in the French military. France has two hundred and three active service, people in active duty. Now here's something that's very important to state, which is the obvious. France is a NATO-- Can you hear the dog barking?

FRANK:

It doesn't matter. Keep going, man. It's like you're in, it's like you're in the slum right now. [Laughter]

PETER:

I know, I'm sorry. I cannot control my, my environment here. My tech guy is gone. So France, has two hundred and three active service duty members. This is not, you know, Nepal or Uganda.

This is a NATO country. Thirty percent of those people are Muslims. And the usual disclaimer that I have to say every time I have talking about this. I'm not talking about all Muslims. I'm not even talking about most Muslims.

I'm talking about a small number of people who are hell bent on destroying the fabric of the whole civilization. And it's those people I'm worried about. I'm not worried about, you know, Joe who serves you the coffee at the thing and he says, inshallah, when you walk in. These people, I have no problem with these people.

But we're talking about Islamism, and radical Islam, and those numbers by necessity increase the more people you let--. But just, it's just math, right? So getting back to this point, we met

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with somebody and he was telling 30% of people are Muslims and an unknown number of those are Islamists and Salafists. And they're not only worried about these individuals in any kind of a mutiny, but they're also worried that they were Islamists who went into the military for the explicit purpose of getting arms and armaments. This is utterly terrifying.

That's from a NATO country. So, and why they're talking to me about this, I have absolutely no idea. I don't speak like three words of French, and I can't even say the words of French. I speak on your show. This is a family show. But, yeah, I don't speak French. I've never been in the military. But I think that you know, I think Western Europe is in trouble.

But this gets back to what I wanted to say earlier, which is about our friendship. The first thing is truth and figuring out what we need to flourish as a society. And the precondition for that is freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedoms, liberty. That's what we need. And we have a very serious problem now on civilizational fronts. And among those, I would suggest we should have an honest conversation about Islamic immigration.

FRANK:

Yes. And in fact, as our mutual friend Charlie Kirk said, and he's correct about this, that Islam is not compatible with the West. It's certainly incompatible with the First Amendment. And let me just add that the First Amendment is not a self-defeating amendment. It gives freedom of religion, but it doesn't give one religion the freedom of religion to take the freedom of religion away from all the other religions, which is what Islam wants to do.

It doesn't take away the-- It doesn't allow someone to use their free speech, to take their free speech rights away from everybody else. It's not a self-defeating amendment. And until we realize that Sharia Law is incompatible with the West, it's certainly incompatible with the United States Constitution, we're going to be precarious.

We're going to keep getting closer and closer to the point where certainly in Europe and at some point, maybe in the US, that our freedoms are going to go away. And you've kind of devoted your life, your career now Peter, to going around not only America, but around these other countries and informing people about that, to try and wake them up.

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PETER:

You know, like the first order of business is to ask them like, what do you want? Do you want Sharia? What does it mean to you to be French? And I say this Frank with total sincerity. I'm not going in there with any ax to grind. I just want to listen to what people have to say who are in these slums.

And it is really a kind of a fact finding mission. And if I go in there and I will be completely transparent about my results. If I go in there and I find, you know, 100 of the people were against extremism where having just read this testimony, I would find that to be rather startling if the case.

But I'm just going to accurately and honestly report what I find. I also, I do want to comment on this because I think it's important. Sometimes if you're a hammer, everything you see looks like a nail. And so, I've designed a methodology so that we can get, I've used things like snowball sampling, et cetera.

Like you ask someone to ask someone else to interview. So I've found the broadest possible subsection of people to interview about really serious questions that I consider to be of is what Dan Dennett says, late philosopher, of abiding significance. You know, why is there so much rabid Jew hatred?

Or maybe I'm wrong. Maybe there is no Jew hatred. And I want to have conversations with people and really try to understand why they believe what they believe. And I will honestly and with the integrity report the results of those conversations.

FRANK:

And that's what you do in your book. And that's what we need. We need dialogue. And Charlie would always say once dialogue breaks down, that's when violence erupts because people—

PETER:

100%

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FRANK:

Can't talk to one another. And tragically it took out Charlie. Charlie was trying to reach the guy that allegedly shot him. That's the very guy he wanted to reach. And yet, he's gone now.

PETER:

Yeah. And so, so that's the other thing, echoing my previous comment, what you said. You used the word metaphysics. Yeah, our metaphysics are different. And you know, 15 years ago I would have thought, wow, like the first culture war was more about metaphysics, and this one is not about metaphysics.

And I think one of the lessons that I've learned is that metaphysics is far less important than I thought that it was. My concern earlier was that if someone had a metaphysic, that that would ground their moral pronouncements.

So, for example, if somebody, did miracles, or walked on water, et cetera, then any utterance from them would be incapable of being revised. Forget about interpret like you can interpret those things the way you want. But now we're looking at a world in which metaphysics is radically subordinate to things like individual rights.

FRANK:

We've got a lot more with Dr. Peter Boghossian. And this is really a conversation that we're trying to have, to go forward and make sure we maintain the freedoms we have here in the West. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, they're all in our Constitution, and many of them come right out of the Bible as well. We've got much more with Dr. Peter Boghossian. Don't go anywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, what is the future of America or the West, not only for yourself, but for your children and grandchildren? What is the future of freedom of religion? You're probably a Christian listening to this. Are you going to have the freedom of religion to preach and live the gospel?

Or might that be taken away if we're not diligent right now? Well, my friend Dr. Peter Boghossian, who wrote several great books, in fact, we talked about 'A Manual for Creating

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Atheists.' While Peter and I don't agree on the God question, there's a lot to learn in that book about basic epistemology, how to ask the right questions, how to learn from other people, how to figure out what the truth is.

And so, you might avail yourself of that book. We're going to tell you about another book, an updated book, or a newer book than that one in a minute. But before I do, there's another way you can learn the truth. We've got two online courses coming up here in January. One is 'Why I Still Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.' I'll be your instructor if you take the premium version.

I'll be online with you several times on Zoom live to answer questions. And then our logic course is called 'Train Your Brain.' We have two tracks, one for six to eighth graders and another for adults. It's basically the same material.

That's why we think adults can handle the sixth to eighth grade course because it's written for sixth to eighth graders. So go to crossexamined.org, click on online courses. I'll be part of that, but Shanda Fulbright will be the main instructor. It's called 'Train Your Brain.' Do you know logic? Do you know logical fallacies?

Do you know how to answer or ask questions back? And how to refute the fallacies that you do detect? Take 'Train Your Brain.' Certainly enroll your 6th to 8th grader, 5th to 9th will work too. Check it all out at crossexamined.org. Now Peter, I just learned that you have a newer book out than 'A Manual for Creating Atheists.' It's about impossible conversations. Just tell us about that and where the people can get it.

PETER:

'How to Have Impossible Conversations.' And it's available, Amazon etc. So you can look at the how to-- 'A Manual for Creating Atheists.' It's like the Old Testament, and 'How to Have Impossible Conversations' just like the New Testament. [Laughter] So I go around the world and have conversations with people about the craziest-- Like cannibalism, like whatever happens to come up, and those-- Literally Taiwan, Hungary, all over the world.

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And just go to my YouTube channel, Peter Boghossian B O G H O S S I A N, and you can watch those conversations. And then I talk to public intellectuals, and we have-- I try to push back on all my guests even if they believe what I believe. I have a tremendous difficulty getting leftists on the show and identitarian leftists for the reasons I just mentioned. They can't handle a dialectic. They're just not used to it.

FRANK:

And we're going to put Peter's YouTube channel and his Twitter handle in the show notes as well. We'll put links to both of those books.

PETER:

Thank you. I have a Substack, which I wrote about you there. So thanks. Anyway, go ahead.

FRANK:

Okay, well let's put that in there, the Substack link as well. Peter, you're traveling 365. You're on the road all the time doing this. And you told me at Berkeley that some of these events you don't publicize. And so, the audience is not as large as it should be. Why don't you publicize it?

PETER:

Yeah, they're a fraction of what they used to be. I don't publicize it because of Charlie Kirk's murder. And so, two things. I don't want the universities and the places I go to use security costs which they'll put on my-- I run a small non-profit.

Like we're really a small non-profit. We're just three full time employees, and I don't want them to put security costs on me. So I don't do that. The other thing we've changed since Charlie's assassination is we no longer do this stuff outside. We used to go again, we-- There are thousands of videos online.

We would go outside and we put the mats down: Absolutely agree, strongly agree, slightly agree. All which is another insane story I want to tell you. Neutral. And then we'll ask people all kinds, all kinds of questions from the fun to the fanciful.

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But we can't do that outside anymore because of Charlie's murder. We also can't really do that inside anymore because you need permits, and because there's no expectation of privacy outside, but there is inside. So that puts it on hardball. So I'll just tell you something real quick.

We were, we had a spectrum street epistemology. This is crazy. [Laughter] I am in it. My life is awesome. I get to ask people all over the world what they think about the weirdest conversation. I could truly tell you, I don't think I've ever had anybody in all the years I've been doing this say to me, I refuse to answer that question or what kind of insane question is that?

But I just did one here in LA in which we asked the question, Israel should be nuked. And I had one guy go to the slightly disagree mat. So think about that for a second. Like you're talking about the mass murder of what I don't even—

Eight million people, something like that? Making that land uninhabitable for how many, you know, Hiroshima Nagasaki, 17 to 14 kilotons or something. We're talking about making that land uninhabitable? And you know, the funny thing is like when you see people, they just look like, you know, they're just normal people.

But when you actually dig down to what a lot of people believe, it's just morally horrific. And so, I'm in a unique position. I get to go around the world, and I just ask people what they think about, what they believe, how confident are they, what would it take to change their mind? We facilitate communication across divides, people who disagree with each other. It's cool. It's awesome.

FRANK:

Now it's incredible that you, since Charlie's murder, I mean, we've gotten security, but it's incredible that you can go to these venues and still get a crowd, even though hardly anybody knows about it until the last minute, that it's happening.

And then you're engaging them, trying to discover what they believe and why they believe it. And you're asking hard questions. This is why, friends, it's important to know what you believe and why you believe it. Sometimes you haven't even thought about the questions that underlie your beliefs.

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And you have a section in 'A Manual for Creating Atheists,' Peter, that I wonder if you could just unpack briefly for us. And you talk about the idea that facts don't always, in fact sometimes rarely change minds. There's something else going on. Can you explain that?

PETER:

Yeah, I'll explain that. Sorry again for crossing my arms, my shoulders killing me. Yeah, so if you read-- If facts change minds, then everybody would look at the same data set and believe the same things. So we know that facts don't change minds.

In fact, there's a little controversy around this. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's called the backfire effect. And so, some of that has been disputed. But the basic idea is when you present someone-- I never present anybody with facts.

I never fact check anything. I just kind of run with it or go for it when someone tells me something, even if I know it's factually incorrect. And so, like, I mean, I'm just thinking of something here. Anthropogenic global warming, if you know, why is it that for the longest time Republicans were on one side and Democrats were on the other side. And they're not on one side or the other side about the policy prescriptions, because that's clearly, that's a different matter.

But the data, and the facts, and evidence should never be in dispute. You know what if-- If people agree on that, now what you do with that in terms of public policy, that's totally a different question.

FRANK:

Right.

PETER:

But this is very difficult for--

This is one of the things that smart people will not listen to me.

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Smart people will listen when I say other things like Rapoport's first rule, you know, you know, repeat the argument back to someone, or try not to use but. Try to use and, or all these, you know, myriads of little techniques. But smart people in general think this is the syllogism.

I formulate my beliefs, the base of evidence. Formulating your beliefs in the basis of evidence is good. We should formulate a piece of base of evidence. Another soldier, kind of like-- I think this way, formulating my beliefs on base of evidence. Other people think that this way because I think this way.

Therefore, I can persuade people with evidence. But evidence is totally irrelevant. Evidence, evidence doesn't-- That's why like the best apologists more or less know that. So they eschew evidence based, you know, and they'll go to like the kalam cosmological argument or ontological arguments. But evidence does not change people's minds, especially as a moral valence. When it goes into the moral realm, then forget all about it.

FRANK:

So you're saying generally, because some people will change their viewpoint if they get a fact. But you're saying in general people, are they, are they guilty of some sort of confirmation bias? They believe what they want to believe and then they look for facts?

PETER:

I'm not even sure it's in general. I think they'll change their mind about a matter of fact, if you give them evidence, if the thing has either no consequence to their lives whatsoever or has nothing to do with morality. Like abortion would be a great one. Like when does, you know, life begin or whatever? There's no evidence that someone's going to say aha. Now I know. And when you look at the—

when you look at studies for why people have changed their mind, etc., it's almost never on the base of evidence or the evidence is post facto. It's like they had the moral feeling of the intuition first. Then they look to their epistemological landscape, and they choose this data point, this data point, and this data point, which supported the thing that they already believed.

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FRANK:

Well, yeah. I certainly agree that that is certainly the case more often than not. That's for me. I always ask the question, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian? And most people, if they're honest, they'll say no because it's not an evidence issue for them. They would rather do what they want to do. They think Christianity is going to get in the way of what they want to do.

So that's why they're rejecting it, if they're honest about it. Now this isn't case with everybody, but that's why I always ask the question. And you have similar questions in your book too, that you're trying to get at the will rather than the mind.

PETER:

Yeah. Because people form their beliefs on the basis of morality, not epistemology.

FRANK:

Most often you're correct, I think.

PETER:

Yeah. They'll form their beliefs on the basis of epistemology if they want to like build a bridge or something, or if they want to invest their money.

FRANK:

Right.

[Laughter] Or they want to get cured of cancer.

PETER:

Yes, correct.

FRANK:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. They don't say to the doc, hey, doc, give me your truth, not the truth.

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PETER:

Yeah. You know, and the other thing is, the same question applies if there was no God, would you still be a Christian? Now I would answer to that question because I don't think there's a God, and I'm still a cultural Christian.

FRANK:

Right, right.

PETER:

A cultural Christian. Dawkins is a cultural Christian. You're a cultural Christian.

FRANK:

Douglas Murray, same thing.

PETER:

Douglas Murray is a cultural-- We're all cultural Christians.

FRANK:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because the alternative is horrific. That's part of the problem. They don't want Islam. Right? Especially in the UK. That's why Dawkins was—

Even Dawkins was being careful about he said it, that he was a cultural Christian because he didn't want to go too far and offend too many Muslims.

PETER:

Well, yeah, I mean, and again, we're talking about-- We're not talking about, just to be for the billionth time, I always have to say this. We're not talking about every Muslim or even most Muslims, but we are talking about a subset who are, again, hell bent on making life miserable for everyone.

FRANK:

That's right. We're going to talk more with Peter Boghossian in the midweek podcast. So don't go anywhere. Peter, fascinating discussion. We have a lot more to learn and talk about, so don't

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go anywhere. Friends, be back for the midweek podcast. We'll see you there. All of Peter's stuff's going to be in the show notes. Check it out there. God bless. See you next time.

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