



INTERVIEW



Matt George

Immigration and Economic Development.
Head Start to Employment Team Lead



Q. Did you choose New Brunswick or did it choose you?

I was born in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1992. When I was 18 I started travelling to discover what it was I was so curious about of the outside world.

To be honest, I didn't expect to return beyond annual trips to see my parents and family.

Over the last five years I've committed to working on some of the most pressing issues in New Brunswick and I'm happy to have done so.

I was born here, but in many ways, I chose it again over time.

Q. Your passion?

Empowering people and learning about technology. Most of my work is at the intersections of culture, business and technology.

Q. Preferred leisure activity?

Reading, writing and photography.

Q. Which of our four seasons do you prefer & why?



Summer. I like to be outside and in the sun.

Q. Best advice (and favorite quote) ever received?
Discipline = Freedom.

Q. Most enjoyable voyage?

In 2012 I lived and worked in a small country in the Great Lakes Region of Africa called Malawi.

It was memorable in more ways than one.

Q. Destination yet to be discovered?

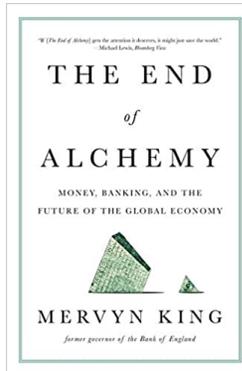
I'm fascinated by Japan and the culture of discipline of the *shokunin*.



Q. You have the opportunity to dine with anyone in human history, who would you choose and why?

My late grandfather and namesake: **George Martin**.

He was humble, wise and lived a simple life. I'm sure there was more to be said.



Q. Last book read?

I just finished Mervyn King's *The End of Alchemy*.

Q. Favorite authors?

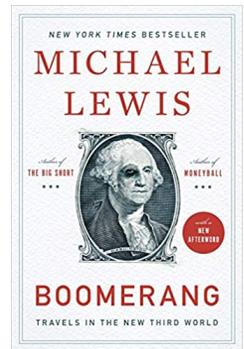
- J.K. Rowling,
- Christopher Hitchens
- Michael Lewis
- Yuval Noah Harari.

Q. A book you would recommend and why?

Michael Lewis's *Boomerang*.

It's a fascinating example of the intersections of culture, business and technology set against the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis.

I couldn't put it down.



Q. What are you most proud of?

Building a strong relationship with my family.

Q. Favorite movie? Music?

Movie is *Blood Diamond*.

Music is *folk*.



Q. Advice to newcomer to N.B.?

We make a mistake in our attraction of newcomers that is both a blessing and a curse.

We tend to promote an *aspirational* version of the province as opposed to the reality on the ground.

This is both natural and, in some ways, good: we're a growing province and we need to carve out our place in the 21st-century. But it also is dishonest in that it misrepresents the challenges and realities of living, working and growing in the region.

My advice to newcomers is try to take that in stride and realize **that it is you** who will build the New Brunswick of tomorrow.



Q. You win the lottery grand prize. What would you do with your new fortune?

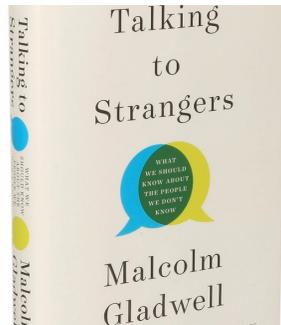
- Make sure my family is taken care of.
- Invest heavily in immigrant youth who want to become entrepreneurs.

Q. What one word best describes you?

Thoughtful
(not always a good thing !)

Q. You are given any three wishes. They are?

It's a daunting question but my fundamental wish in this time is that **we find ways to stop misunderstanding each other.**



Gladwell's *Talking to Strangers* is a good start.

Q. Hero or mentor in your youth? Today?

Youth = **My late-grandfather, George Martin.** He was, in many ways, the patriarch of his small community in Newfoundland and was very thoughtful.

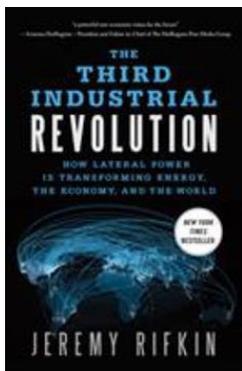
Today = **Chris Weir** because of his honesty and compassion.



Instructor - Business, Faculty of - Saint John, N.B.



Q. What do you believe are some of the main barriers that newcomers must face and overcome to ensure a successful integration into their new Canadian communities?



Much of what I read and write centers around access to opportunity.

Rifkin's *The Third Industrial Revolution* lays down a pretty good blueprint for general access to opportunity in our times.

We've created unnecessary red tape in access to meaningful economic opportunity for newcomers. We're doing better than some and worse than others.

Whether it's socio-cultural concerns like under-valuing international experience or structural concerns like formal credential recognition, we need to limit red tape and think carefully about how we value experience.

I've talked about it as *The Pillars of Proximity to Power.*

For any region to have a fully-functioning, diverse community, we need to see newcomers be elected to public

office, hold leadership positions in our companies, launch businesses and have their hard-earned credentials recognized.

Q. The question you detest answering?

What do you do?

Q. What would you like to see inscribed on your tombstone?

Honestly, I'm not overly concerned.

But, in the minds of those who were a part of my community, I hope I had a hand in them being able to see the big picture.

Q. Share something people may not know about you!

I don't speak very often if I don't have something meaningful to contribute.

But when I do, I've thought long enough about it that I believe it's worth speaking on.



Q. Finally, what question would you have liked to have been asked?

What are two or three of your main principles?

Response :

We can do an awful lot of good if we get back to the fundamentals.

A second question would be :

What is something you have had to un-learn?



**DID YOU KNOW?
CHECK IT OUT:**



SKILLS LAUNCH

- Are you an immigrant adult with barriers to finding employment?
- Do you want to explore careers and gain Canadian experience?
- Are you looking for meaningful employment?



IMPORTANT LINK:

<https://nbmc-cmnb.ca/skills-launch-adult-program/>