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The Transformational Power of Edutainment for Creating a Mindful World

With Stephen Huszar

Covid Hope: I think when people are faced with adversity, there's this couple of things you can do, you can hide and you can pretend it's not happening. You can do very destructive things, or you can decide to go within. And within, I don't mean disassociating yourself from other people. I just mean asking questions to yourself of what's really important.

Doing Well Now: There is an opportunity for people to really take a step back and to ask themselves, why are they here, what is their purpose, and what they really want to do? When we're just tagging along and everything's fine, I think we sometimes get into this sort of repetitive type of living, which is okay.

Action Item: One thing would be to close your eyes, take a deep breath and really ask yourself what do you want? and if it's in your life, fantastic, keep doing that. Keep doing that with a hundred percent vigor, and inspiration.

Three Points

1. Stephen's story of how he found mindfulness practices and how they transformed his life.
2. The power of story for inspiring change.
3. How Edutainment can help us learn how to incorporate mindful teachings into daily life in order to create a more mindful world.

Speaker BIO:

Stephen Huszar is an actor who has said several projects on the small screen, big screen. He's also a producer and entrepreneur, and the co-founder of Mindful World. He's one of the reasons we are here doing this event, his passion for story combined with his pursuits and mindfulness led him to produce. Milton's secret, which is the first ever feature film that was based on the teachings of none other than Eckhart Tolle. This film suggests the mindful approach to tackling major issues in society, such as bullying, violence, and stress, and is such a gift.

Stephen has dedicated much of his life's work to producing conscious media for mainstream audiences. He's inspired by transformation in this committed to empowering adults and youth with practical tools to overcome the bully in our schools, our homes, and in our own minds, he co-founded mindful world to produce edutainment properties, such as Milton secret, along with mindfulness education and social emotional curriculum for schools.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Hi, everyone. Welcome to the Mindful World Parenting Summit. I am your host, Dr. Stacy, and I'm so excited for our guest today. He is none other than Stephen who's you might recognize, Stephen. He is an actor who has said several projects on the small screen, big screen. He's also a producer and entrepreneur and the co-founder of Mindful World. He's one of the reasons we are here doing this event, his passion for story combined with his pursuits and mindfulness led him to produce. Milton's secret, which is the first ever feature film that was based on the teachings of none other than Eckhart Tolle. This film suggests the mindful approach to tackling major issues in society, such as bullying, violence, and stress, and is such a gift.

I can't wait to talk to him more today about it. Stephen has dedicated much of his life's work to producing conscious media for mainstream audiences. He's inspired by transformation in this committed to empowering adults and youth with practical tools to overcome the bully in our schools, our homes, and in our own minds, he co-founded mindful world to produce edutainment properties, such as Milton secret, along with mindfulness education and social emotional curriculum for schools.

He's here today to talk to us about the transformational power of edutainment for creating a mindful world. Welcome Stephen to this summit.

Stephen Huszar: Thank you very much, Dr. Stacy. Oh, I forgot. I wrote that. I can't remember.

Dr Stacy Thomas: It's all true. It's all true. and I'm so excited to have you here. you were. I've, I feel so blessed to have been invited to host this.

You are the reason I am here and all of these great speakers are here providing so much valuable content that is so needed today to support parents and their families. So thank you for that.

Stephen Huszar: Thank you. It's my pleasure. And honestly, I enjoy doing this so much, so it's wonderful to see this all come together and having such an amazing host as yourself.

So thank you, Dr. Stacy.

Dr Stacy Thomas: All right. You know what I think. Yeah. I'm really interested. I think our audience is really interested in your journey. You are somebody who certainly walks the talk you've had, you've literally traveled the globe. really watch your own path. Sell yourself going from a very traditional path to something not so traditional and finding success along the way.

So I'm really curious to know about how mindfulness came into your life and the differences made for you sure.

Stephen Huszar: Thank you. A big question, but, yeah. People often ask this and I love to share the story because I think, I, the more I speak to people about mindfulness, I feel that it is entering their lives and in different ways, and they might not even know it is.

And sometimes it's nice just to talk about it, To get it out there for the ether. I, as you said, I started off, I grew up competitive. I was an athlete in many sports. I grew up in a very conservative, home environment and it was also just always just about winning and getting the best, just for myself.

So I felt in a way I was, I had a really good upbringing, but I didn't realize till later that it was, I felt a little bit disconnected from other people, while I was doing that. but anyway, I ended up going to commerce. So I went to business school and I graduated from commerce and then did what everyone else does.

Did and went to a joint, a great firm and started working and everything seemed perfect. I was making the good money I had, I had a great job and, I was having a lot of fun, maybe too much fun sometimes, but something was just missing for me. I just felt like there wasn't, something was disconnected for me.

And, this is about now two and a half years into corporate America. And, I read this book, and it's often, it just takes one little catalyst to change called the celestine prophecy. And it's funny, it comes full circle. We'll talk about that a little bit. And literally my life changed.

I didn't realize how disconnected I was from other people. It made me realize. That we are all connected, that we have a purpose and that everything we do has a ripple effect among society. and that there is this force that really ties us all together. Now I didn't grow up religious or spiritual at all.

So this was all new information to me. And it really, I started to question everything and. Fairly soon. I quit my job. I started traveling the world, as we mentioned, and just exploring culture. I tried to really get a grasp of what this was, from different perspectives, and started reading. many different books like Eckhart tolle, a, some great authors, Deepak Chopra, Don Miguel Ruiz, all people that I really respect and some that we've had on this conference actually recently as well.

And, it just really opened my heart its the best way I could put it. And that I couldn't go back. I couldn't go back to this, this way of life that I had before. And I really want to honor this new experience I've been having in this connection to the world. And, I decided that I've always wanted to be a performer.

I remember my first performance was in grade two when McDonald's had a farm. And, I remember that I meant why was that? So such a pivotal moment in my life, and I realized I just love to perform. I love to feel this energy flow through me. So I'm like, why not? i am 24 years old. Let's change my life, so I had my quarter life crisis. I tell people to have one. It's not bad and maybe better than, maybe the midlife, but who knows. I'm sure we can all have, I'm sure we all have many crises through our lives, but, and then I just started to focus on acting. I studied acting and boy, I'm so glad I did, because that was the key to really a deep dive into this.

As an actor we're always analyzing ourselves and are always asking these questions. What is the truth? Are we being truthful? How do we feel? are we really tapping into that emotion in a way that's, that feels real, right? Because that's the only way our audience is going to go for the ride with us.

And really relate, so I'm so glad that's in a way saved me. I think it allowed me to find something that I was. Always meant to do I feel and thank, thanks. That's what mindfulness did for me. It actually laid the path for me and I'm just so grateful and it's been a wonderful ride since, and then. I just really enjoy when I'm not acting, obviously pull great people like yourselves and all the wonderful other experts that we've come across in our lives together to share this knowledge and to inspire people to get on the path.

Dr Stacy Thomas: So amazing. Thank you so much for sharing that. And, as you and I know many people make very different choices and once they find this way of being in the world, and I just wonder, cause it was such a nontraditional route that you took from something very laid out.

It's like you do this and you do that. Give you this much structure as an athlete, so much structure, And then to do something like really what, James garner would say is like following your bliss, right? Like really following what you feel compelled to do. And so I wonder how mindfulness supported you or did you on that? Very. Non traditional path,

Stephen Huszar: how it supported me. Yeah. Good question. Yeah. it's in a way. It's a, as I mentioned before, it's a, there was no choice once I found mindfulness, it's it guided me in a way. The more, I feel we can go within and the more present we can get with ourselves and others, yeah, it just, it, there's just knowing that you're doing the right thing.

and, in addition to that, It provides such great tools for artists I find or anyone for that matter. I could have easily just stayed in, doing the jobs I did as a management consultant, but was that really something I was passionate about? No. So I decided to do something else, other people, of course, that might be what they're passionate about and being more mindful will just help you be more proficient, happier, more successful, in what you're doing.

So specifically for me, I found techniques such as meditation. It was extremely powerful for me. I was very unsettled. I still have my moments. Of course. You never know. hear that. You never just leave some of those insights security is you have, we all have them, and they pop up.

but what mindfulness is provided or the tools to deal with that when they do come up. simply meditating breathing. I've, I've doing a lot of yoga these days.

This is one of the practices I find that is such a gift to society right now. Not only are we meditating, but we're moving at the same time, which is so important for a body to keep the energy flowing actually for performers as well, where you have to.

Have that energy going all the time. So it's provided, almost like a platform for me. I find that without mindfulness, I would not be able to, well to really Excel and improve, from what I do. So it's been just such a gift. So I go to it every day and all the time.

Sometimes right before I do a take and a scene, I'll just close my eyes and give myself 30 seconds and way you go. And there's. Such a massive difference in my, I notice in my performance or at least how I feel in my performance. Sometimes it shows up on the camera sometimes not, but usually the camera would lie.

and even just in conversations with people that I know, it's just, it's very helpful just, for those to use those techniques.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Absolutely. And as the psychologist that works with performers, this is like a foundational practices that we teach all of them. And if you look into elite athletes, now this is becoming so mainstream and it's making huge changes in people's performance.

It's amazing. Thanks so much for sharing that. And, as an actor, you deal with story all the time and you've, I'm not sure. I have done lots of deep work around the power of story. and now you're bringing this incredible offering called Milton secret. It's like such a gift, to have Eckhart Tolle's teachings in the world in this format.

So I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the power of story and how it can help transform us.

Stephen Huszar: So thank you. Yeah, that's a great question. As we know, history has been around since the beginning of civilization, that's really the medium to Share information, knowledge, inspire, before there were books, there were drawings, and before that people were just showing people and trying to.

Converse and tell a story that really told the history of where we came from and perhaps where we want to go. It's just, it's always been, I am in my mind anyways, the most powerful medium to communicate and to inspire. and, the story is, I really feel that it's. The most important thing about stories is that they inspire change.

And, when we have a very, inspiring story to tell, for example, no secret. What it does is it brings people together in a way that will help them move themselves forward, but also people around them in a way. So it's this beautiful communal changes that can change the community can change the world.

Kind of thing, right? So it's these kinds of stories that I think are very important to be told. I act in all sorts of kinds of stories because I just enjoy performances, but I choose to produce things that make an impact. And, I do believe that having mindfulness in stories is the best is one of the best ways to.

It's to really inspire a major change in society. And so I feel the more we can produce and the more content we can have that is as mindful. And it has interwoven into the story that people can relate to those characters. They can see themselves in those characters. They can go along the ride with those characters and then they're in there at that point they can actually change themselves if they so choose.

A lot of mindfulness, or I can call it, sorry, transformation, content, or mindful content. often model situations that we have in our lives. when you're watching a character or a situation and you can really relate to it, Then it's something. I think that we can change, change our emotional resonance, and then we feel a certain connection to it.

And as soon as we start to feel, through a movie, then it actually resonates with us. And there's a room for change there. Once you start feeling something, if it's just very heady, if you're reading a textbook or something like that, sometimes. That's okay. You learn, it's very educational, it's intellectual, but are you really inspiring change with them?

And I think that's the difference that we can have with storytelling, especially in the film medium, because especially anyway for me, I do feel very emotionally charged after watching films. And I think a lot of people do music and other things, But film is a medium that has all those aspects wrapped in one.

So it can be very powerful as a catalyst for change.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Yeah. And, as someone who is, I love this entire project, this film. I was fortunate. You guys invited me to the set. So I was able to be there and need some of the kids that are in this film and have such rich conversations with those families.

And just observing just the tone and Barnett bain, who we're going to talk about, like just the energy around him. And there was so much love happening on the set. It was amazing. And to

hear about, even though some of the nuance of what, Donald's son is such a inspiring actor that so many people have seen him perform and to see him embodying those teachings in a way that was just, I heard the rumors were like some type of off script, like really came from him.

Was just incredible. and as, as a psychologist, I could let you know, and I know I've mentioned this before, but I'll mention it here that I'll often have my clients watch the film and watch it with their families and just see what they take away, And it's film where, I watched it so many times that every time there's something else.

That stands out these subtle little details that are interwoven in the film. And this is, as much as it's a story, it's a film and you can watch it with your family. This phrase that's new to me is edutainment. And you mentioned it, this modeling. so we talk about Compassion forgiveness presence, and in the context of bullying, which is a really divisive subject where it can be.

and so can you tell me a little bit about edutainment as you see it and how this film and this whole project really takes it? Another step further, not just watching it and Oh yeah, that was a nice thought, but actually creating impact that you could implement. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Stephen Huszar: Sure. Yes. as the audience may or may not know that this whole. Films started because Eckhart Tolle wanted to bring his teachings more to a family audience. And that's what happened. And we, he actually, co-wrote a children's book and we adapted this children's book into a feature film, quite a process.

so he's very much involved in the whole process, making sure that these teachings were kept interwoven within the script. as we went from iteration script to script until we finally had our final. Final shooting script. but it's and the whole edutain, the idea of entertainment, of course story is.

Such a powerful medium, it's such a powerful platform, but when you combine education within an entertainment, edutainment, we call it. I love that term because it has so much, it has the ability to teach on so many different levels. And there's now a platform where, Anyone watching it can really discuss, around those themes more.

They can, there's an opportunity to learn. you can watch the movie over and over again and get something new from it every time, because there is the, there are these nuances of teachings interwoven through there. There's been a lot of. I guess heart and a lot of thought went behind these, the story, on many levels and, and there's a whole modeling component to it as well.

just when you do watch, for example, as you mentioned, Donald Sutherland's performances and just what he brought to the character, you can tell that he really wanted to do this. This is the one that wasn't just a paycheck for him. He really wanted to experience this and really step into it. The shoes of this very grandfather, who had also been dealing with his stuff, but he's made a choice in his life to be present for his family, and his grandson.

And, and it really just comes alive and you can, and as you said, The character, the actual actors that perform, they were all in this for the same reason that they wanted to, they really felt like this was an opportunity to shift society in a way to provide a platform for people to really learn from and be inspired by and to change.

I do feel there could be more and there should be more edutainment, coming in the future. I'm certainly dedicated to producing more. but for now, we, once we produced this film, we also took the opportunity to take this a little deeper. And we provided educational properties around it.

For example, there's a home study guide that you can, they can watch with your family at home or Eckhart teaches through each scene because he was again so connected to this story. Of course, he originally. It's based on the story. And then although that he wrote, there's also a, we've adapted this into a, the school curriculum as well.

So for grades seven to 10. After the class watches the film, they can then discuss. discuss certain aspects of the film, what it, what happened to the main protagonist, how does it feel when you were being bullied or are there experiences in your life that you can bring up? all this was made, knowing that there, this could be really a beautiful platform for discussion and, we're really excited to.

To release this and to see how people can really adapt and to incorporate that into their lives and with their family.

Dr Stacy Thomas: And Stephen, I got to say, there could not be a better time than right now for this. with all this happening in the world, the level of turmoil, tension, and people are sitting at home with, Sometimes not great choices.

This is, and for this pivotal age, when people are, these kids are online, to be able to watch something that's really part of that social, emotional learning that we all need. I'm going to guess. You didn't, weren't raised with, I wasn't raised with most of the parents watching were not raised with this.

And so I've, I'm so thankful that all of these offerings are coming out right now, because I do think this is a really pivotal time that this can, where our minds are open or looking for something to create a change out of this chaos. And this can be a helpful resource, I think for a lot of families,

Stephen Huszar: certainly.

Yeah, certainly I, again, I know how it helps me personally, in my experience, but, just speaking to the younger generation and the kids, yeah. I certainly was really stressed out, looking back into my early teens, even being in sports, I remember literally getting sick before a race.

I used to be very, and not being able to focus and having to, really, it took a lot of energy out of me, whereas I could have, if I had the tools in place, I could have used that too. Containing and using that actually into the competition itself rather than being wasted on stress and worry and all this other things.

So truly, I'm just, since I've been there, I really feel like it's my responsibility to. To offer some of these tools, as best as I can because, the kids deserve it, and the parents deserve it too. I'm not a parent yet first to say, but I certainly am an uncle to a lot of kids, friends, and family.

and I can, and yes, at the same time, boy, The world has changed even before the world was like this. the topic of bullying and these kids being very stressed out. And I really feel like there should be more tools available for the younger generation. So I think anything we can do to provide that is important, is really important because they are our future and they deserve to have these tools.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Yeah, absolutely. Okay. let me just step, they've been asking some standard questions to all of our contributors, and I'm curious about your take on them. Many have called this pandemic a sign that we're in the midst of a global paradigm shift.

And I'm wondering, what is your hope for how humanity might evolve as a result of this pandemic?

Stephen Huszar: Oh, that's a good question. In a way I think when people are faced with adversity, there's this couple of things you can do, you can hide and you can pretend it's not happening.

You can do very destructive things, or you can decide to go within. And within, I don't mean disassociating yourself from other people. I just mean asking questions to yourself of what's really important. In a way that once people do that more people do that in there, and they're able to share those experiences.

I feel it can bring us together even more, yeah. we've come in a way we've really come together as a country. I feel, other countries have as well. Of course, there's the other side you can see as well. There is some dichotomy, but yeah, in a way, this. This is a truly global event.

And I feel from a perspective, just from my perspective, anyways, I feel there's a lot. There's a lot, we're more aware of what's happening on a global level right now. and we're a little more connected that way, which makes us more connected with each other, which then actually connects us with ourselves.

So I feel there's in a way. it is. It is an opportunity to bring us together and to have a bit of a flowering of consciousness through this, through this really difficult time. And if we can really keep working on ourselves and connecting to people and being really present with them and honest about how we feel about things, I think we can work through things.

Faster if there wasn't this, there wasn't a tragic event that's happening in a way, and we turn that tragedy into an opportunity,

Dr Stacy Thomas: absolutely. I've, I'm totally on board with that. let me ask you what, and it's in your answer, but I want to hear more. What are you, what do you think we're really doing well, that makes you feel hopeful about the future.

Stephen Huszar: Just in general, what we're doing. I think it's happened in my life and I can see it happening around me. I'd like to see it more, but I think what, there is an opportunity for people to really take a step back and to ask themselves, why are they here?

What is their purpose and what they really want to do? When we're just tagging along and everything's fine, I think we sometimes get into this sort of repetitive type of living, which is okay. what's going to happen in five years, 10 years that's not a hundred percent guaranteed and you get into this rhythm, which is okay, which is fine, but is that really.

All we're here for, so I do feel at this moment, people are starting to really think about what they, what is their purpose? What do they want to do dream, take this opportunity to dream and to focus on that, to really focus on that and go within deep enough to, to really ask that question.

Can I do it? and if, and finding that answer. hopefully the yes. and finding that, that stability in yourself to say, yes, I can. And actually making that choice and making that change, it doesn't have to be a massive life change. It can be just a small thing, but these are the times where we can do that.

And I can see people doing that thing. People have really significantly changed their lives, maybe not necessarily knowing or wanting to, but it's starting to happen. and it's beautiful to see. And I think perhaps. We're going to be more aligned with what we, what our talents are and what our purposes on this earth individually.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Yeah, I hope so. And I am hopeful about that. I've seen that happening in my practice. People who've started the process pandemic hit. It's been exponential. Change, exponential transformation. It's been incredible to watch. Incredible. okay. So you've shared so much with us today. I so appreciate you sharing your story and your own experience.

If there was one thing that you would like our viewers to action today that you think would make a significant difference for themselves and their families, what would that be?

Stephen Huszar: One thing to action. Yes. it's going to, it's going to seem simple, but, we'll see how people interpret it, but, one thing would be to close your eyes, take a deep breath and really ask yourself what do you want? and if it's in your life, fantastic, keep doing that. Keep doing that with a hundred percent vigor, and inspiration. But if you don't have that in your life and you're at a quiet place, and you're really asking that from a truthful place, then connect with that one and then go for it, dream from a place of calmness and a place of honesty.

And then once you find that, just don't let anything get in your way. just go for it because. Life is short, as we know, it changes all the time. And, I wouldn't want anyone to live through their life with too many regrets, and this is an opportunity to change that and get yourself on the right path.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Awesome. Awesome. Thank you so much for that. It's beautiful. okay, Stephen, I can't state enough. So thankful for you following your place, you actually helping other people on a massive scale through this event, through the film Milton's secrets and all of these. Offerings that are going to come with this experience.

It's a movie as well. I'm including this summer too. If people want to, I know this is a special film. Milton's secret is going to be released online. How do people? Get connected with it. Get connected with the materials, where do they go?

Stephen Huszar: sure excellent. you're all on the summit, which is fantastic.

So you're going to be getting information. as the summit goes on about the release, the online release of the film, which is going to happen very shortly. miltonssecret.com is going to be the place to go to specifically for film related information. So that's, miltonssecret.com and, Once you're there, you'll be able to sign up to watch the film for free.

And, and then from there, you'll see how you like it, and there's going to be all sorts of opportunity to engage deeper. And so the whole world of Milton's secrets, so I'm pleased to check it out. And, and just attention to the emails coming your way, because we'll definitely keep you up to speed of what's happening on this launch and all the information that we're releasing.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Awesome. I said, I can't wait. I am so excited to have so many people around the world participating in this.

Stephen Huszar: So am I, this is great.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Yeah, this is fantastic. Okay. Stephen Huszar, thank you so much for everything you are doing, everything you are and your contribution to making this a more mindful world.

Stephen Huszar: Thank you, dr. Stacey, it was a pleasure being here and thank you for the interview.

Dr Stacy Thomas: Okay. You take care.

Stephen Huszar: Thank you. Bye.