

## **Transcript of Interview with Ted Kuntz by Kit Heintzman**

**Interviewee:** Ted Kuntz

**Interviewer:** Kit Heintzman

**Date:** 02/22/2021

**Location (Interviewee):** Kelowna, British Colombia

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Transcribed By:** Angelica S Ramos

### **Some of the things we discussed include:**

Losing trust and confidence in the medical system after his son, Josh, was vaccine injured; chronic seizures; regular ambulance rides; neglect in the Canadian healthcare system. Homeopathy, acupuncture, and natural medicines. Experiences of being marginalized, silenced, and censored. Government responsibility to health consumers. The Charter Rights and Freedoms; individual rights. Nazi Germany. Vaccine Choice Canada's decision in April 2020 to file a statement of claim against the Canadian government; filing legal action in July 2020. Masks as medical devices; personal choice not to wear a mask; dangers associated with masking; confrontations over masking with everyday people, verbal assault. Political divides and changing social circles and family ties. The decision to stop engaging with mainstream media, shifting to alternative media. A Freedom Rally in Vancouver Feb 2021 with ~12 speakers; weekly Freedom Rallies in Kelowna. Isolation and loneliness as disabling. Not having any direct experience with anyone close catching COVID or dying from it. Border closures. The narrow narrative of COVID-19; comparisons to the Spanish Flu. Mental health and physical health. Compliance in education. The desire to be of service during a crisis.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:06

Hi.

**Ted Kuntz** 00:07

Hi.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:08

Would you please start by telling me your full name, the date, the time and your location.

**Ted Kuntz** 00:13

So my name is Ted Kuntz. The date is February the 22nd, as far as I know, 10 o'clock where I am, and I'm located in Kelowna, British Columbia, which is outside of Vancouver.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:24

And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under a Creative Commons license, attribution noncommercial sharealike?

**Ted Kuntz** 00:36

I do.

**Kit Heintzman** 00:37

Could you please start by introducing yourself to anyone who might end up listening to this? What might you want them to understand about you and the position you're speaking from?

**Ted Kuntz** 00:47

Well, I would say first of all, Katie is that I'm a parent. And and I'm a parent of a young man that was severely vaccine injured. So what I bring to the conversation is the experience of vaccine injury. That has dramatically changed my life, and has put me onto a path where I became an advocate for ensuring our right to informed consent in my country. And so I'm part of an organization and currently president of an organization called Vaccine Choice Canada. And our mandate is to both educate consumers health consumers about the risks of vaccination, as well as protect and preserve our right to informed consent.

**Kit Heintzman** 01:35

You touched on this already. So take this as an opportunity to elaborate if you'd like, Would you tell me a little bit about your experiences with health and healthcare infrastructure before the pandemic.

**Ted Kuntz** 01:46

So again, my experience has been dramatically impacted by the injury to my son. Up to that point in time, I think I was fairly typical, I had lots of confidence and trust in the medical system. I assume that the the measures or the recommendations were all evidence based and robust. And I have to admit that as a parent, I didn't do any homework or research around the decision to vaccinate my son. I simply went along with what the recommendations were and assumed that that was best practice. And in the best interest of, of, of my son and my family. Josh was severely injured by his first vaccine shot in 1984. It was the DPT shot. And as a result of that he developed an uncontrolled seizure disorder that he lived with was for his entire life. And so the first five years or so I we were regular visitors of our local children's hospital, just to give you some idea of the kind of frequency that there was a space in his life, and he's about four years of age when we called an ambulance more than 30 times in a three month period. And so, our experience with the healthcare system was considerable at that time, we went through every single recommended medication for seizure control without success and then began to do some investigational drugs as well as some other therapies such as vagal nerve stimulator, which was implanted into his chest cavity as a way of trying to manage a seizure disorder all without success. When Josh was five, the chief neurologist at our Children's Hospital pulled me aside one day, and he invited me to think about not bringing my son back to hospital anymore. And as shocking as that conversation was, it was actually a gift to our family, because it caused me to let go of thinking that there was an answer here, and that I needed them to pursue other alternatives, other considerations. And as a result of that, I began to open up to other possibilities. So homeopathic care, herbal, acupuncture, you know, other remedies. And as a result of that, of that investigation, my son's condition improved dramatically. We were never able to completely arrest the seizures, but we improved it 90%. And so it made our life much more manageable as a result of that, and what I learned was when we would go back to Children's Hospital for an annual consultation that they were not interested in, and the measures that we were taking that were creating improvement, it was it was outside of their paradigm. It was outside of their narrative of what healthcare was, and so the lack of curiosity or interest in in his improvement was was a shock to me. And what I realized is is that our medical system is has a particular paradigm that they're rigid about and when you don't know do well under that paradigm, or when you challenge that paradigm, the reaction is pretty severe that they you're dismissed, you're marginalized, your silence, you're censored. And so that experience

really caused me to begin to question the way that we're engaged in medical care, at least in our country. And the ability to actually be committed to what I would say is genuine scientific research, which is, let's look at the evidence, let's allow us to challenge the, you know, the theories and the assumptions that are the basis of our medical model and, and learn from that experience and grow from it and benefit from those situations that don't fit. And and what I saw was there was a, an inability or unwillingness to do that.

**Kit Heintzman** 05:57

I'm curious how you see the relationship between personal responsibility and government policy when it comes to health care. Again, this is a broad question, not particular to COVID-19

**Ted Kuntz** 06:07

Yeah. You know, I think we trust our governments too, to review, you know, drugs that are being put forward for our consideration, and to put them through some kind of a testing to, to evaluate their safety and effectiveness. And because, you know, as an individual consumer, I can't do that, myself, I have to rely on on a level of expertise to do that. So we put a lot of trust into our government or health regulators, or health agencies. And, and it's, you know, that's, that's the system that I think that we, you know, we need a system like that we need a system of, of expertise. And I also suggest at some point, you know, my own belief is that the responsibility is to is to share that information with the health consumer, and then health consumers, you know, consult with those that they, they wish to, to figure out what's in their best interest and to make their own healthcare decisions. So I believe ultimately, a healthcare decision needs to be the individual. So we're the parents. And that's why it's so important to me, that we preserve the right to informed consent, because we're we're moving to is a place where, you know, centralized governments are making healthcare decisions for us and taking away our ability to make our own risk benefit analysis.

**Kit Heintzman** 07:37

Could you tell me a bit about what your day to day is looking like now and how that differs from, say, February 2020?

07:49

Well, yeah, a lot has changed in a year. So my son has passed away, so that he passed away in 2017. So that part of my life is, is has changed, and I'm no longer engaged in the day to day care of my son. I would say in in February 2020, that we were I was spending considerable amount of time both in the disability community being an advocate and being involved in disability organizations to help support their inclusion and welcoming in community. And the other place that I was investing considerable time was with Vaccine Choice Canada, and just again, in the work of, of education research, I would spend considerable amount of time each day trying to stay current with the emerging science. And and being an advocate. You know, since February 2020, with with the the introduction of COVID. And the measures that governments have imposed, at least in our country, my focus has changed quite dramatically. Vaccine Choice Canada, was has been recognized across the country as a resource for parents around the vaccination decision. And so when COVID presented in there was implied, the message that was given was that a COVID vaccine should it be developed would be, would be mandated or effectively mandated. We were inundated with requests from Canadians saying somebody's got to do something about this. And we actually didn't think we were the right organization to step into that into that challenge, because one is our mandate was was narrower than that in a way and two is, you know, the, the media and our medical industry has has pretty effectively marginalized a group like ours and saying that we're anti science and, you know, we're

conspiracy theorists and you know, all of that language that is used to dismiss and discount and we thought this issue of, of our rights and freedoms, you know, standing up to the violations of rights and freedoms, we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada like your bill of rights. And we saw that those, those Charter rights and freedoms were being violated on a consistent basis. And, and yet, we didn't think we were the right advocates to stand up, but we didn't see anybody else doing it. And so probably by about April, I guess, is when we really began to wrestle with the question whether we needed to be the organization to stand up, and we decided that we needed to do that. So we did, and in May, we hired a constitutional lawyer to begin to develop a Statement of Claim against our government of Canada and, and over the next couple of months develop that Statement of Claim, we did a lot of the research around the science. He pulled together the legal arguments, and in July, we filed legal action against the government of Canada. So as a result of that my life is looks a whole lot different and playing a much bigger arena.

**Kit Heintzman** 11:15

And could you tell me a little bit more about changes from last year to this in terms of sort of more practical activities, buying groceries, mobility, going into work, those kinds of things.

11:31

I would say that, you know, the biggest shock for me, the biggest place of impact really is around the mandate of masking. And that, to me that the the mask is being used as a medical device, it's being imposed without informed consent, I find that challenging to accept, I believe that Canadians ought to have the right to make that medical decision. I personally don't wear a mask, you know, my, my research of the literature suggests that it actually increases the risk of a respiratory infection. And so given my health, I've made a decision that I feel there's more risk in wearing a mask than and not wearing a mask. And I'm good with that decision where I meet resistance is not so much from the government. Because the government, at least where I live, has clear exemptions for mask wearing, and I fit within those exemptions. But it's it's fellow citizens who I think are captured by a panic. And I think I think a lot of it is is fear for their own health, if I'm not wearing a mask, and I think for others, it's around simply that I'm not complying. And there's, it's uncomfortable to have people not complying. And so the day to day is fraught with when when you when I need to go into the outside world, so to speak, and and I encounter those that want to impose their medical choices upon me is where I have the most challenge. And what it does is that means that I become very selective about where I go out, because I don't want to expose myself to that kind of, I think the word is assault is not an overstatement. It feels like an assault. And sometimes it's just a gentle inquiry. And I say I have an exemption and they and it's respected. But more often than not, it's, it's, it's a verbal assault, name calling, minimizing, you know, I'm killing them, I'm killing my children, etc, etc. And so that that makes my world smaller than I would like it to be. And so I I have now identified which store owners will honor the masking exemptions and do so respectfully, and I support their business and that's where I limit my my consumerism, too. I stay away from restaurants and other places that I feel are imposing measures and won't honor my rights as as a citizen. So yeah, it means that my world is a lot smaller, staying home and and limiting my relationships to people that support the things that I value.

**Kit Heintzman** 14:23

If I may, can I ask about how you experience, how do you feel when you when you are met with these confrontations with people?

**Ted Kuntz** 14:34

Well, it's, I have to say that it activates, you know, in emotion and intensity because in like I said, in many of these cases, it's an assault, it's an attack. And so I have to work hard just to stay grounded and centered and try to be compassionate where they're coming from and I do my best to try to explain to them what what, what the laws entail, and laws include exemptions. And in my experience, most are not interested in hearing the information, they have a fixed position that's rigid and and. And it doesn't matter what what information I share with them, it's not going to change the situation. So most often, I just have to make peace with the fact that I'm in that situation and do my best to disengage from the person. And so it's it's uncomfortable. Occasionally, there are people that are open and receptive to the information want to know more, but I would say by and large, most of the population is unwilling to have a respectful conversation around it.

**Kit Heintzman** 15:48

I wanted to follow up on the intersecting issues of informed consent when it comes to masking and the informed consent advocacy work that you're doing with Vaccine Choice Canada. What is the information that you want people to have to be a part of that informed consent that you think we don't have?

**Ted Kuntz** 16:09

Yeah, I think what's missing, for example, with the masking is the amount of research that shows that there isn't a benefit, you know, through randomized controlled trial studies, you know, there's extensive evidence now, and there has been over the years. And what I find is that there's not even an opportunity to have the conversation. And when you try to introduce the conversation, you're very immediately, you know, shamed or censored or or dismissed, as if you're, you don't know what you're talking about. And, and so, you know, my wish is that we, there were more opportunities for thoughtful dialogue. And in the beginning, the media would engage me and I would participate in those conversations, thinking that we could advance a, you know, an understanding a shared understanding of the science. And, you know, I'm open to learning and being moved along in my position as well. But what I saw in every single case with mainstream media is that my words were twisted, the the messaging was used in such a way as to, is to discriminate or to, is to marginalize, as opposed to educate, and I finally had to get to a place to saying, I'm no longer going to speak with mainstream media. And so the only conversations that we'll have now is with alternative media that has demonstrated a willingness to be open to the conversation. And so I find that really disconcerting that that these conversations aren't permitted to happen. And it's not just with me, I mean, we just had a rally in Vancouver over the weekend of that included some doctors and some nurses, and they were consistent in their experience, as well as that, when they bring forward information that goes that challenges or is countered to the narrative. They're immediately dismissed, there's, there's not an opportunity for that conversation to really be fruitful. And I'm sure you know, as well as I do, that. Our social media is being actively censored, so that anything that is challenges or questions, the narrative is fairly quickly now removed. So we're getting a very one dimensional exposure to this conversation in a way that I think is very destructive, that we're dealing with complicated issues that require balancing out risk and benefit. And and you know, as more information comes forward, I think we need to keep having these conversations over and over again. And it feels like we took a position back at least in our country and in my province back in March and April. And there's a real reluctance to say, you know, that position probably was based upon more panic than facts. And we've got more information to work with. And let's, let's shift our position on this. It seems like if anything, there's an entrenchment, there's an unwillingness to acknowledge that we might have taken this too far, and that we need to retrace or retract someone. So I it concerns me that I think not only what we're doing, but how we're doing that we're not moving through this complex social experiment, a medical and a social experiment with really opportunities to have full engagement, to have dialogue, to have debate, to, to, to bring forward information and

work through it together. It feels like the intention is really to, to divide the community, you either go along and if you don't go along, then you need to be dismissed. And I think that that doesn't bode well for both a free and democratic society. It doesn't bode well for the scientific process.

**Kit Heintzman** 20:00

That's a very quick follow up, would you be willing to tell me more about the focus of the rally over the weekend?

**Ted Kuntz** 20:07

Yeah, it was, you know, it's presented as a freedom rally where it's people that come together both to celebrate our rights and freedoms, and to speak about these issues. And so there was probably a dozen or so speakers that are presenting both scientific information experiences with COVID, as well as medical professionals talking about what they're seeing on the front lines with their day to day experience with, with patients and with the medical community is and so you know, for me, they're they're uplifting experiences. One is there's there's a rich amount of information that's being made available that often isn't available or mostly isn't available through mainstream sources. Second of all, there's there's a beautiful heart energy that exists there where people are caring for one another, you know, we know, most people there are open, being hugged and hugging, there's a celebration of humanity, there's music. And so I find that a place that nourishes me, it feeds me, both in terms of my understanding of these issues, as well as nourishing the, you know, the the human connection, which I think is being really massively impacted, you know, from these lockdown measures people are, I think people are literally dying of isolation and loneliness. You know, in the disability community, one of the things that we recognize as the greatest disabling condition is not a particular medical condition, it's isolation and loneliness. And, and, you know, what I believe that we need to do is figure out ways to bring community together not to separate it. And when I witnessed where we're at now is where we were a year ago, we are much more divided community, there's much more angst, there's more anxiety, there's more fear, there's more despair. And I just think, wow, to me, we're by virtually every measure of health if we're going to measure various parameters of health, where I think we're moving in the wrong direction.

**Kit Heintzman** 22:29

What's your remember about when you first heard about COVID-19?

22:32

Well, we were actually wintering in Arizona at the time. And, you know, I don't even remember what the first news was. But, you know, the messaging, I think, in general was is that, you know, there's this novel virus that, you know, began in Wuhan, China, and it's moving around the world. And, and drastic measures are needed. Because the, you know, the modeling, particularly from the Imperial College was, you know, that, you know, millions and millions of people are going to die from this thing. And, you know, there was no personal experience of COVID at the time. I mean, I didn't know anybody that got it. And even at this point, I think I only know of two people that might have had it, they were never tested So my own experience is that this is this is not something that I've experienced it in my day to day world. Where we were, though, is that we began to see the notices from our own government that were beginning to contemplate the kinds of measures that would be imposed for travelers coming back into Canada. And so we made a decision fairly quickly, literally, within about 24 hours that we needed to pack up our belongings and head back to Canada, because we were concerned that they were going to close the borders. And, and so, you know, we, my first memory is just this kind of panic

conversation about are we going to be able to get back into our own country? And, you know, just shocked that that that kind of consideration was, was being floated out there.

**Kit Heintzman 24:16**

Beyond COVID-19, in particular, what have been some of the most significant issues on your mind over the last year?

24:25

Well, for me, I would say the most significant thing is the violation of our very fundamental rights and freedoms, it feels like our government and I think governments around the world have taken a position that rights and freedoms are no longer important that they can somehow be easily dismissed, that we have an exceptional situation and exception means that those fundamental rights and freedoms no longer apply. And I think it's a very dangerous place to get to when you dismiss those fundamental rights and freedoms. So, So callously and without, without any real consideration or debate by, you know, by either our governments or by the citizenry. You know, our governments very quickly moved into a place where they were not functioning, they were allowing a very small group of people to be making critical decisions, our courts were closed. And so there wasn't, you know, the process of law that would allow sometimes a sober second thought, or demand a much higher level of, of conversation in terms of evidence. And, and so it felt like all of a sudden, we were, we were captured by a narrative, and there was virtually no opportunity for that narrative to be really challenged or for the, for the, the response to the to the narrative to be, you know, fully discussed and figured out, you know, who we are as a country, and where do we want to land with this? And, and, you know, how serious is this and what, you know, what measures need to be imposed, and what measures are going to be encouraged, and that we come from a place of honoring people's ability to make the best decision that they can, you know, I believe, like, in the beginning, when the the narrative was such a, there was such a strong message that we were in this this state where, you know, people were going to die, like the Spanish Flu of 1918. You know, my observation of people is that they, they easily comply, they said, you know, if it's that serious, I'm willing to do what it takes. And it was only when we began to recognize, I think that it wasn't what they made it out to be that we then wanted to step back from, from those severe restrictions and take advantage of what we believe we're entitled to, and I believe we are entitled to and, and when I saw that that conversation wasn't allowed to happen. Again, to me, there's two things. One is what kind of measures were imposed. But how they were imposed is even more of a concern to me that we didn't function as a free and democratic society, we very easily allowed a very small group of people and a very narrow narrative to capture how we move through this experience as a community.

**Kit Heintzman 27:24**

I ask what could you can I ask you to tell me what you think democracy means?

27:28

For me, I think a big piece of democracy, you know, democracy isn't everybody gets a vote in the 51%, decides, to me that's not democracy, democracy is there's a there's a regard and a respect for for every human life, and that and everyone has a voice, they have the right to free speech. They have a right to debate and discuss and to enter participate in the governance of their community to disagree with elected representatives. To me, that's, that's how I see a functioning democracy. And, you know, I found this quote from Thomas Sowell that I thought was good, he said, there are no solutions, there are only trade offs. And what that means to me is there's no easy one, one right answer. I mean, what there is, is there's really some challenging discussion about what, you know, what do

we hope to gain? What are the possibilities, you know, what are the consequences? How are we going to measure that? And, you know, and I see in, you know, virtually every other aspect of our life, we're willing to engage in those kinds of conversations. But what I saw with this COVID is that that kind of debate and discussion and consideration and, you know, community engagement was disallowed. And the other place that I see that as around vaccinations, I mean, in my experience, you know, I can have a debate at I can go to somebody's house for dinner, and I have a debate around politics or religion or any kinds of issues, but the conversation that I can't have is around vaccination, that there's it's a it's one of those narratives that that you're not permitted to, to question. And so it concerns me that we move to a place where so much of what our day to day life now is around things that we're no longer allowed to question. And to me questioning is, it's essential. It's so that we tap into the collective wisdom of humanity, you know. In our remember, and I don't know if the story is true or not, but I remember reading about Steve Jobs at Apple and they said that he would bring together a team of people to brainstorm and it would be a broad spectrum of his employees, everybody from the chief financial officer to the to the janitor, because he believed everyone had a particular perspective that was important to consider. And I think that we've particularly in this COVID narrative that we have. We have we're being dictated to by a very narrow viewpoint. And I think if you step outside of that viewpoint, the amount of harm that has been caused is significant. But that's not allowed to be acknowledged.

**Ted Kuntz** 27:47

I'm curious, what does health mean to you?

30:36

You know, to me, health is I think there's a quote the definition from the World Health Organization, it's more than the absence of disease, it's about, to me, it's about quality of life. It's about psychological health, emotional health, physical health, relationship health. And I think all of those dynamics are absolutely critical. And so, you know, in gaining, for example, the goal I think of all these lockdowns would be to say, well, I want we want to gain physical health. But if it's at the the cost of emotional or psychological or community health, then to me that, you know, we're we're not fully understanding what health is we've we've, the definition of health is too narrow. And I would say that that's my criticism is that we don't fully understand or we're not considering various dynamics of health. Yeah.

**Kit Heintzman** 31:41

What are some of the things that you would like for your own health and the health of those around you? And how do you think we attain that?

31:53

What I'm witnessing of those around me there, many in my community are, I would say, in a chronic state of fear. And I, it concerns me to see that chronic level of fear because we can't sustain that level of fear. You know, I think anybody who understands any biology would say that the impact on on the physical health is dramatic. And so somehow we have to, we have to transcend the fear, we have to be able to better evaluate the risks we face. And I think my own opinion is that the fears is out of proportion to the actual risks that we have a very distorted understanding of what our risk is from this COVID situation. I remember reading a study just a number of months ago, where they they polled the American people to ask how many of your fellow citizens have died from COVID. And the answer, the average answer answer was 9%, which meant that 30 million Americans had died. And to me the fact that that was their perception. And it was so far away from the actual numbers. It says to me



that that there's, there's something wrong here that people's perception is so out of, out of line with what, what the evidence suggests it is. And so for my fellow man, I wish that we had more opportunity to actually discuss this so that we could come to a better understanding about what we're really up against. And then the question would be is, how do we move through this? What's, what are the possibilities? What are the ideas? Let's bring, you know, just like Steve Jobs, let's bring everybody from the CFO to the janitor together and say, you know, what ideas do you have? You know, where can we how can we retain as much of our freedom and our rights as possible at the same time is recognize that there is a health issue that needs to be considered. And so I just find that that my fellow citizens aren't permitted to be in the conversation. So we're sitting, witnessing something that is being imposed upon us and and there isn't the opportunity to contribute. You know, it reminds me of my profession as a psychotherapist. And I remember reading about the research that was done with the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma many years ago. I can't remember what year that was. But there were some pretty interesting research that came out of it when that when the bombs first one off in the building collapsed, people rushed to the building and began to pull away the rubble in an effort to release those that were trapped. And then very quickly, the police and the first responders showed up and they they put yellow tape around the building and barricades and then made people stand outside of the barricades. And after the event, they had psychologists interviewing people, and what they discovered was the people that got to go in and remove the rubble and try to help were the least traumatized by the event and those that were forced to stand outside of the yellow tape and witness it, but do nothing were the most traumatized. And metaphorically, I think we're forced to stand outside of the yellow tape with this. And and we're not allowed to be part of the solution. The solution is being dictated to us.

**Kit Heintzman** 35:20

What does safety mean to you?

35:28

Well, that's a these are interesting questions that. You know, I don't think there's any any thing as absolute safety. I think that's, you know, it's it's one of those words that I think that we use irresponsibly. And so for example, I see it because of my vaccine advocacy work. You know, we use the language of vaccines are safe and effective well, and with no disclaimers are qualifiers. And I think that's part of the deception, part of the distortion. You know, we we need to say is that, I would suggest when you say for many people, it might be safe. And for others, it's not safe. And so we have to be honest about that. So when we use these kinds of absolutes, as if anything is safe, I mean, to me, there's varying degrees of risk. And what I think we ought to be teaching our kids is how do you evaluate risk? And so, you know, we talked about every situation involves risk. And so how do you make those decisions? You know, how do you evaluate risk versus benefit? I think that rather than teach those kinds of critical thinking and discernment skills we're teaching, in many cases, obedience or compliance, or just memory like this is the answer and regurgitate the answer. I used to also be an instructor at the college level for a number of years. And I found it interesting how resistant the students were to actually being challenged to think for themselves. It's like, they wanted to know what the answer was, and just memorize it, and then give it back to me on a test. And, and, you know, I remember giving assignments, essays for them to write and they want to know exactly how many what's the word count how many words. And I would say, as many words as it takes, or as few words as it takes to demonstrate your knowledge of this topic. And I have to tell you, the fewer words, the better for me, because I have to read everybody's paper. But they didn't like that answer. They wanted to know 500 words, 1,000 words, 2,000? And I always found it interesting how, if I said to them, just demonstrate your knowledge of this of this matter. It was that was, created unease for them.

**Kit Heintzman** 37:48

How have you been, so you've mentioned this in relationships to strangers coming up to you, but how have you been having conversations about safety with people sort of closer to you?

38:00

Oh, that's a good question, Katie. Yeah, it's, you know, my own family and extended family are no different than, than the rest of humanity. There are those within my network of family that I can engage in a conversation with, but they are actually relatively few. And many of them, you know, aren't interested in the conversation. And then there's those that are even further along the continuum, where I'm actually a dangerous person by asking these questions. And so the experience has been that I would suggest that I've lost, at least in the short term, some family and friends, that those relationships were strong and rich before, but because of all of this, and because of, you know, the position that I take that I'm, I'm interested in questioning, that that that has severed those relationships, at least, at this time. And so it's difficult to lose family that way. And I have a very good friend that I worked with in the disability community for 20 years. And he and I did fabulous work together, and I think did some really wonderful, innovative things together. And when I told him about our filing action against the government of Canada, and basically it says, we're asking them to be accountable for their measures for their actions. He said, Oh, Ted, I can't go with you there because I believe in science. And I said, well, what part of this is unscientific? I'm actually insisting that the government participate in an evidence based conversation to me that's my understanding of what science is, but from his perspective, even insisting on that was somehow anti science and I just found it absolutely shocking that this long relationship basically fell apart over the fact that I was part of an organization that was asking the government to be accountable for their for their actions.

**Kit Heintzman** 40:02

What are your feelings about the immediate future? And what are your hopes about a more distant future?

40:11

Well, I think we're really at a crossroads for humanity right now, I think, I think there's terrible suffering happening. And people respond to that suffering in different ways. And so, you know, there are those that I think are because of their fear, they're, you know, they're becoming even more insistent that, that we give up our rights and freedoms. And then there are others that are saying, I, I'm unwilling to allow that to happen, and I'm going to become even more vocal. And so I see this polarizing happening in society where we're becoming much more polarized, much more divided. And I think that's going to probably increase in intensity in the next little while. I think, you know, the whole COVID vaccine issue is really creating a very challenging dynamic, because there are those that are eager to be at the front of the line for that, and there are those that saying, it's not going to happen, I'm not going to participate in that experiment. And, and what's being proposed, at least in my country is those that don't participate in the vaccine experiment are going to have their access to, you know, to their livelihoods, to travel to, to their community, severely restricted. And so I think we're going to see, in some ways, you know, maybe a civil war is too strong, but I think we're going to see a very challenging time where things become even more divisive. Now, out of that, I mean, I think we can't stay here, this is too uncomfortable a place, we have to figure out how to get past it. And so in my own journey, and with my work as the therapist, I mean, you know, what I say is, nobody ever came to my office saying, Ted, my life is really good. And I just wanted to get better they come in, because they're suffering. And I believe that the suffering is, creates an opening for us to begin to do things different. And, you know, my hope, and my prayer is that the suffering that we're going through is, as a

human community will actually challenge us to deepen our wisdom around this and move past it and benefit from it. So I like to think that this is a there's a possibility here of a transformation of humanity. But I think we're going to have to go through some more suffering, before we get to the there's going to be a crack that opens us up to that possibility.

**Kit Heintzman** 42:49

Would you be willing to share some of the ways that you've been taking care of yourself since COVID-19?

43:01

You know, I have a small network that we stay connected to I, I think those relationships are important to my health to my emotional and psychological health. So I, I persist in maintaining those relationships, we we get together for meals, we go for walks. In my community, there's a freedom rally that happens every weekend, every Saturday morning, and has since May. And so I participate in most of those. It's a way of coming together with a community of people that value the same things that I value, and it's a way of staying connected to people. And so I find that that's an important part of my week. I host a national zoom call every Wednesday for the members of Vaccine Choice Canada, right across Canada, and we bring in, you know, recognized experts from around the world to bring their perspective and share their information with us and, and I find that those are, they nurture me, they they keep me thinking and bring forward information for consideration. So, you know, the people that are in those calls will say to me, Ted, that's the most important hour of the week. For me, that's that's where I come together as a community. That's where I learned that's where questions get asked. And so those kinds of things are really important. And I think in terms of my health, I tried to get outside every day and go for a walk, I tried to read something that is not entirely focused on this topic, so that I'm just using that opportunity. I mean, most of my reading is still pretty serious, but I but I find that if I just give myself permission to read for half an hour a day that that that's helpful to me. I do a lot of writing. You know, my mind is constantly trying to understand this human experience right now. And so it's important for me to think about it and, and articulate it and and share it. And so it's my way of contributing and and I feel like I need to be of service in some way. So it's important that I find some way to participate in this as opposed to stand outside of the holotape. So to speak.

**Kit Heintzman** 45:20

We've reached the penultimate question. So there's all kinds of biomedical research being done right now, some of which you've referenced, I'm wondering what kind of research you think people in the humanities and social sciences should be doing to help us understand this moment?

45:37

I like that question, too Katie. So you know, like, what you're doing is you're asking fabulous questions. And to me, this is how we move through something is by asking questions like this. And so if part of me wishes, Katie, for example, is that you got to ask everybody, these kinds of questions that we, we invited curiosity, I'd like there to be more research to understand how humanity has been so I think, easily captured by a narrative. You know, when I, when I asked people tell me about your own lived experience with COVID, how many people do you know that have died from COVID? How many people do you know? You know, what I find is that, for the most part, people have either not, or very few people in their life that have actually had a significant consequence of, of contracting COVID. But if I say to them, what's the impact of the measures, I mean, everybody's got a story to tell of everything from unemployment to, you know, losing their home to, you know, I know of six people in my network of relationships that have committed suicide. And so from my perspective, the psychological impact has

been significantly higher than the so called disease impact. You know, I think we need to do research to understand how to strengthen humanity during times of adversity, as opposed to, I think what we've done is we've actually weakened humanity.

**Kit Heintzman** 47:16

This is the last question. So one of the assumptions that I carry forth as a historian is that I cannot guess what a historian 50, 150, or a few 100 years from now will value. So I'd like this chance to ask you what kinds of histories would like the historians of the future to tell about this moment, or at least to understand, or important to you that they be remembered.

47:41

You know, I think they're going to look back at this time, not unlike the way we look back at Nazi Germany, the 1930s. I remember, as a high school student, when I was learning about World War Two being very, what's the word I'm looking for? It was hard for me to understand how Germany, which was a thriving democracy, ended up in a dictatorship that then did some pretty horrendous things. And so, you know, I think we need to understand how you move from a democracy to a dictatorship. And, and I believe that we've effectively done that same thing, but we've done it globally. And so how did that happen? What was the mechanisms of that? How was it that we, you know, in some ways, what I what I see is that we were losing our humanity, what's the mechanism of, of the the erosion of of humanity you know, when I think about the stories that were told during World War Two of you know, the bombing of London and how people came together, this doesn't feel like a coming together, this feels like a coming apart. And so I think that there are some incredible lessons here for humanity to learn. Again, how do you face adversity but you do it by by strength, as opposed to in some ways by weakness. And so my hope is, is that this is a very teachable moment that benefits future societies.

**Kit Heintzman** 49:32

Want to thank you so much for taking your time to share these experiences with me. And I want to know before letting you go if there's anything else that you would like the chance to say that the interview hasn't given you the space to say so far?

49:47

Well, I just want to express my gratitude to you Katie, both for I don't know whether you generated these questions or somebody else but these are beautiful questions. And and you're giving voice you know, when you and I chatted before hand you talked about there's something therapeutic about being heard. And I think it's, this is an important process. And you've given me the opportunity to be heard. And I'm grateful for that. And my hope is that many more people will be given the opportunity to be heard as a result of this project that you're a part of.

**Kit Heintzman** 50:20

Thank you so much.

**Ted Kuntz** 50:22

Thank you