

# **Dancing with Words, Dancing with Wisdom (2)**

## **Stephen Dynako**

Dr. Janet: Today I have a fascinating guest with me. His name is Stephen Dynako. He is a courage builder. He has many interesting stories to tell. He is also currently the Program Director for the Conscious Business Enterprise. We'll be talking about that a little later.

Stephen, before we get into what you're doing in the outside world, let's talk a little bit about your life path. You must have a sense of purpose. Do you want to talk about that at all? When did that begin? How did it begin? Are there any particular experiences you had that moved you toward and along this life purpose path?

Stephen: Sure. I really appreciate that question. The answer to that question is like a whole program itself, so I'll be as succinct as I can.

I, from a very young age, felt drawn to some sense of spirituality. I really didn't have the words for it at the time, and I really didn't have a very strong network of people in my family. I come from a very devout family. My experiences were much different than just going to church.

I had this really profound experience when I was seven years old. I was floating above myself in bed, and it just felt absolutely real.

I was always drawn to things that were deeply spiritual. As I grew older, I sort of lost touch with that because I got socialized into the world as it is, the world of the material, and did the things that were expected of me -- go to school, get a job. You kind of work towards, all of the typical milestones we're expected to have.

It wasn't for many, many years until I got reacquainted with my spirituality. This was actually after 9/11. I had a consulting business at the time that basically just dried up because people were very much in fear after 9/11 and, like many small business owners, I had experienced essentially a complete halt to their business. People stopped spending money, taking on new projects, that sort of thing.

At that time, I got reconnected with this deep spirituality and reinvented myself in the business world. As I did that - It wasn't just an immediate light bulb going off, but as time went on, I increasingly felt that my purpose was about taking what had been a really strong business experience, because I worked diligently in

the business world for years, and taking that experience, with my desire to practice spirituality more deeply and practice helping people. It wasn't about leaving the business world behind to just help people, but it was really about taking those two things -- my desire to help and to practice spirituality with my business experience. It took a long time to get there, but when I finally had the realization that felt resonant as my purpose, I really haven't looked back.

Dr. Janet: This idea of integrating business and spirituality, from my perspective, that seems like a huge challenge, because in their dysfunctional aspects, they seem so separate and apart. Do you have any insights on that?

Stephen: Yeah, I would have believed that at one time myself. I certainly came from the typical practice of business particularly in the West where business is an entity unto itself, and there's no connection with anything emotional or spiritual or artistic or aesthetic.

I think one of the really powerful transformational experiences I had as a business person is when I became a manager. I had done project management for many years, but when I actually became a manager of people, there were people who were reporting to me and they were coming to me with issues to resolve. I was responsible for monitoring their performance and so forth, and there was something about that position when I came into it, that I felt this really deep sense of responsibility to those people first and foremost as people. That was a really big shift for me because I had this realization that the truth was that the people that you manage in a business aren't just cogs in a wheel. They don't just exist to get a job done. Really, fundamentally, first and foremost, they are people.

I came into this management experience — into a group that had suffered really poor morale. They had poor management before I came in. They were really beaten down. They really didn't have a good sense that somebody was there to support them. In this experience, my instinct, my intuition, — the first thing I needed to do was to treat everyone with respect and honor them as people. Even though I might make some operational tweaks here and there, it really wasn't about me telling people what to do or reinventing their job. It was really about, first and foremost, honoring them as people.

The beauty of it was that that was so powerful that within six months the morale of the team completely turned around. It was one of the highest performing units in the company at that time. To me, from my perspective, it just spoke to this deep intuition about treating people with respect. It was seeing, quite frankly, the divine within them as well as within myself and honoring that and listening to it.

Dr. Janet: What I'm hearing you saying is that you stopped treating people as objects, and you started connecting with them as living, breathing human beings.

Stephen, if we think in terms of Ken Wilber's four-quadrant diagram, focusing a little bit more on your upper left quadrant path, which is the individual subjective, the path which actually led you to what you are able to manifest in the world now, you said that you grew up in a very devotional family. Have you always felt somehow connected with a God or a Power greater than yourself or a Cosmic Energy? I think there are different terms for what ultimately is an experiential connection. Have you always felt that connection, or have there been times in your life when you either lost it or it got deeper meaning for you?

Stephen: Yeah, that's an excellent question. The first thing I'll say is that I realize and I understand that that connection has always been there throughout my life. My *awareness* of that connection hasn't always been consistent. I want to just give that disclaimer because I very much know and believe that that Spirit/God/Presence/Source, whatever we want to call it, is always there and available.

There was a point in my 20's up to my early 30's where I really was not consciously connecting with it myself. Again, this was the time of my life when I was very much into the work world. It was all about advancing my career and striving for all of the material things that we're socialized into believing that somehow, we need in order to feel fulfilled. That was the point where I did not consciously have the connection, even though I understand it today that it had always been there.

When I did consciously reconnect with it, I realized it was always there supporting me, and it would continue to show up in much more powerful ways the more that I meditated on the Presence of that Cosmic Force, that Energy, God, Spirit.

Dr. Janet: Do you see that as a source of abundance — an always available source of abundance in your life?

Stephen: Absolutely, I do. It's essential that we understand how to define abundance, as well, because I consider that abundance to be beyond material abundance. Now, material abundance is part of that and it's not the end-all of it. As I regard my connection to Higher Power, I consider that to be an abundance of inspiration, an abundance of wisdom, an abundance of direction, an abundance of life and health and strength. Abundance has a much greater meaning than simply looking at it from a material perspective. Yes, I absolutely believe that that abundance is unlimited.

Dr. Janet: Yes. Thank you for that. We'll talk more, later in the program, when we talk about the outer manifestations that you have been able to bring into our physical world, because of all the inner work you've done.

You talked earlier about the importance of respect in your life. Are there any other principles that you can think of that really matter to you? What really matters in this world, or what matters most?

Stephen: Sure. There is this profound sense and reality of Oneness — that we really, all of us and all of life on this planet, are just interconnected. If you really meditate on that, and I invite anybody just to meditate on this principle of Oneness and interconnectedness, if you really regard every aspect of your life and how you got to where you are and what supports you, whether it's the resources you need to do your job, whether it's the knowledge that you have gained through your own education, it is always connected to something and somebody else. There truly is no one who exists on this planet that is completely independent.

To me, to really live in that spirit and to honor the depth of that divine design and live in accordance with it and in harmony with — it is absolutely essential if we're to continue surviving as a human species on this planet, because the separation consciousness is just completely detrimental. I'm very much into a "Oneness" consciousness and the interdependence and interrelatedness of all things and living my best from that center.

Dr. Janet: I think we may be talking about excellence here rather than perfection. It seems to me that as fallible human beings, we never really reach that goal of perfection, but we can certainly live the best life that we could possibly live, given the resources that are currently available to us.

Stephen, again still focusing on that upper left quadrant of Ken Wilber's four-quadrant diagram, I heard you say that you use meditation, certainly as one of your practices, and I think another practice or focus of yours is certainly connection, which maybe is lower left quadrant in Ken Wilber's four-quadrant diagram. But do you consciously work with intention? If so, just tell us a little bit about how you do that, if you would.

Stephen: Sure. The thing that came to me as you were formulating the question was mindfulness, that I have really come to appreciate the power of doing things mindfully as part of my inner work, and to just be ultra-aware of the impact of my own actions and the impact of the intentions that I set.

There's, for me, a very deep reverence for the power of intention. Mindfulness is like the fuel for that and to just be so aware of how my inner self is developed

and is nurtured, and the more that I have that inner mindfulness. This includes self-acceptance and self-love.

For a long time, I wrestled with an inner critic and I still do at times, but it's nowhere near as violent as it once was. As I practice that mindfulness of the sacredness of my own life, as we're getting to the outer, it helps me to show up with greater intention, with greater love and with greater wisdom as I go forward to do the work of conscious business and of living my own life.

Dr. Janet: Talk a little bit more, if you would, about that inner critic and how you have dealt in your personal life with that inner critic.

Stephen: Sure. The inner critic is an interesting phenomenon that seems to be fed by a lot of inner chatter. Some people might call it monkey mind. It's also fed by introjecting what we believe others think of us or what we believe others think we should be doing with our lives.

The inner critic gets a lot of energy from a lot of different places. For me, for a long time, it was very much about if I wasn't doing something that I thought wasn't pleasing somebody else or I wasn't doing something right in the eyes of the other, my inner critic would come up and just beat me up over it.

I had a conversation with somebody yesterday about this where I really came to think about it. At the end of the day, the extent to which other people are thinking about me is a lot less than I think they are. In other words, if I feel an authority figure wants me to be something or wants me to do something or is judging me, really, in reality, that person is probably only thinking about me for a nanosecond a day — if that. In coming to peace with that as a truth, I have more time to be gentle with myself and actually be compassionate with the inner critic and not allow it to run roughshod over my life.

Dr. Janet: Are you afraid? Is there some fear? We're talking about these connections, everything being connected. Is there some fear in connection with that inner critic? Is there fear of what other people may think, say or do if you don't do what they want, or if you stand in your own truth and integrity? Do you see a connection there with inner work on fear?

Stephen: Sure. There's a point where I was much more afraid. The beauty of doing one's inner work is that we can sit with that fear. Most people want to avoid it somehow. If we sit with it and just come to feel it and understand it and know that it also will pass, it strengthens inner resolve and it actually then strengthens our inner encourager. Because you've started this program saying the "courage builder," so I believe just as strongly, if not more so, in my inner encourager. I then allow that to rise within me.

Dr. Janet: What does that inner encourager look like to you? What does it feel like? How does it work? Can you tell us?

Stephen: Sure. That's the part of me that loves me unconditionally, that absolutely believes in me, that believes I've been put on this earth for a purpose. That's that part that believes that my life has meaning and will stand by me and gird me up regardless of what's happening in the outer world. It doesn't judge by appearances. It's filled with love and with truth. It is omnipresent.

Dr. Janet: And always available to you, I am assuming, through perhaps your connection with this Source Power greater than yourself.

Stephen, I think I hear in your words that you have a pretty big vision, both for yourself, but also for all the people with whom you connect. What is that vision? Can you put it into words at all? Can you tell us some stories that would help us understand how you believe this world can not only survive but thrive together?

Stephen: Sure. The most simply stated I can put it is that I feel we've reached the point in human evolution where now is the time to get radical about making love our priority, that we as a humanity are required to show up from a center of love and peace. In particular, I am doing that in the realm of business.

The Conscious Business Innerprise program that you've referenced, for which I'm Program Director, is very much about recognizing that business plays a key role in this interconnectedness of it all, and that business doesn't exist for its own sake. That's a big shift for people, particularly in Western business.

Thankfully, there are businesses that are making this shift. To the extent that business has existed in history, and I'm thinking of the Industrial Revolution where this is the beginning of so much of our current troubles of global warming and carbon in the air and environmental degradation and so forth — business has really been a force for extraction and for behaving badly. If business can be that powerful in that respect, we believe through the Conscious Business Innerprise that business can equally be, and even in a greater sense be, a force for good. It must be a force for good if we are to survive as a human race.

Dr. Janet: What does that look like, this business that is a force for good? Can you give us some specific examples of this vision that you've got?

Stephen: Yeah, sure. I believe many of your listeners might be familiar with — if you go to the store, for instance, and you look at products, I know people who are conscious will be looking for products that are produced by businesses that do good.

You may have heard of this certification called the B Corp certification. B stands for benefit. The idea is that “for-benefit corporations” are focused, not on a single pillar of profit as being the end-all and be-all, but they're equally focused on social responsibility and environmental responsibility. With respect to B Corps, they have a mission and they're accountable to those three pillars, basically people, planet and profit.

That's a really very present and very visible example of businesses being a force for good, because you'll see businesses and you'll see a logo on some products that say "1% for the planet" — meaning they're giving 1% of their profits to causes that support the flourishing of planet. Fortunately, there are more and more of these businesses being created and being certified every day.

In the Conscious Business Innerprise, we add one more P. I've talked about planet, people and profit. Well, in the Conscious Business Innerprise, we teach presence as just as powerful and essential a pillar as those other three. Presence really is about business as a spiritual activity. It's about being present in business, fully showing up as a benevolent person, a conscious professional; and it's about being present to one another in that spirit of cooperation versus one of competition.

Dr. Janet: As I look at your websites (we've got <https://www.cbinnerprise.com/> and <http://www.consciousbusinessdeclaration.org/>, which we can talk about perhaps in the next segment), there's very little mention of money. Maybe every once in a while, I saw the word "money," but I didn't see that word very much when you were talking about Conscious Business Innerprise. Is money a part of this? How do we value, in money, if that's the way we value? How do we value a conscious business? How do we decide what it's worth in money terms?

Stephen: It goes back to those pillars. Traditional business has been all about profit and enhancing shareholder value — those kinds of things. As I mentioned in the B Corp movement, in the “for-benefit movement”, you have, in addition to profit, planet and people as essential pillars. Profit is still there. The whole idea of money and making money, earning money, money being transferred, paying money — there isn't an elimination of that, but there is a leveling of that with these other aspects.

If we go back to our earlier discussion of abundance, abundance isn't all about just being financially wealthy. You can have all the money in the world, but if there isn't a planet on which to do business anymore, it really doesn't matter. We look at financial abundance as one pillar, and then the environmental abundance, social abundance and then spiritual abundance are equally essential.

Dr. Janet: Stephen, during the last segment, we were talking about this whole issue of money, and you are saying it is part of conscious business. Yet, for myself, I often envision a world where we become so aware of the abundance that we have that we are simply giving to one another out of abundance, out of service. Perhaps a money system isn't even necessary. Is money simply a conditioning that we've all been inculcated to and which is human-created and very arbitrary?

Stephen: Yeah, I share that vision with you, absolutely. I am holding that out as well in my consciousness.

In the context of the current work I'm doing with Conscious Business Innerprise, we continue to talk about money and recognizing that it is part of the current material reality and holding out and continuing to build a consciousness, to your point, that really the true abundance is in the sharing, the generosity, the free givingness, the desire for all of us to flourish. I'm absolutely on board with you there, and I feel like what we're doing in this current work in conscious business (whether it's Conscious Business Innerprise — or conscious capitalism is another movement — or B Corps), we're the bridge between the current paradigm and what will and what is emerging as the new paradigm of that generosity — and the antiquity of our money system and moving to something that's much more abundant, much richer and not operating from a scarcity, win-lose type of consciousness.

Dr. Janet: And, also not operating from a control consciousness but much more from a freedom of choice in each and every moment consciousness. Do you have any comments about that?

Stephen: Absolutely. I agree with you there, as well, because part of the current conditioning — as I know you're aware of and as we all have grown up in — is that there are so many people that don't have the opportunity or have been discouraged from the opportunity of pursuing a passion, pursuing something that they really feel is resonant and has been a God-given talent — something that they can really offer the world in a powerful way but they were socialized out of it because, for whatever reason, it doesn't make money, there's no market for it, no one is going to care. There are all these reasons that conditioned society gives us as to why somebody shouldn't pursue their passion. It's a tragedy.

In the new paradigm, part of that infinite abundance is that we all can show up with our gifts and offer them freely and be mutually benefited by the sharing of our gifts regardless of what they are, whether they're artistic or technical, and whether they're environmental or exploratory. There is a new paradigm emerging, and it will be lovely to see everybody show up in their full authenticity to offer their gifts to the world in the form of business.



Dr. Janet: Nice. Talk a little bit about this Conscious Business Declaration and how you use the term “inform”. I think what you're saying is it helps you gain information so that you can manifest the work you're doing more fully. Tell us about it.

Stephen: Sure. The Conscious Business Declaration was developed in 2015. There are four nongovernmental organizations (including Humanity's Team, which you referenced at the beginning): Humanity's Team, the Goi Peace Foundation of Japan — they put up these peace poles that you may have seen around your neighborhood or around the community or around the world literally — the Club of Budapest in Hungary, and then Case Western Reserve University Fowler Center for Business. These four organizations came up with this Conscious Business Declaration.

There are seven principles of conscious business. It became the basis for the Conscious Business Innerprise, for the training program and for the vision of training conscious business change agents to go out into the world and practice these principles.

So, if you go to [www.consciousbusinessdeclaration.org](http://www.consciousbusinessdeclaration.org), you can read the seven principles and you can actually sign the declaration if the principles resonate with you. Essentially, the principles, just in summary, are: Oneness; the purpose of business being to contribute to a healthy environment and human well-being; restoring the self-renewing integrity of the Earth; transparency, economic, social and ecological transparency; business being a positive and proactive member of society; business as celebrating the interconnected nature of all human beings and all life; and then in alignment with this Oneness, business being among the most powerful forces for good.

Dr. Janet: I hear you use this term "Oneness." I'm a little challenged with that. I like better the idea of conscious individuals connecting, so that I like the idea of us all being connected and interconnected and supporting one another. Do you have any thoughts about this idea of Oneness? It almost sounds as if we ought to be clones of one another, and I don't think that's what you mean.

Stephen: No, not at all. This is a full honoring of our individual manifestations. We are all here in these vessels we call bodies, and with that, we all have our own personalities, our own egos, our own desires, our own intentions. Oneness is a transcendent principle that, by all of us as individuals coming together in the interest of improving life, we are practicing a "Oneness" beyond the material realm.

Dr. Janet: Stephen, during the last segment, we were talking about this concept of Oneness. I mentioned before that it sounds as if Oneness means we're all

identical, and yet you were saying, no, that's not your idea of Oneness at all, and it's not my idea of Oneness either. In fact, I don't even like that term "Oneness" because it feels like we all have to be exactly the same. So, in what respects would we all be the same and in what respects would we be different? Do you want to address that a bit?

Stephen: Sure. I look at it in terms, very simply, of life. As human beings, we're all born into life on this planet. For me, Oneness is that what we share in common as human beings is that we're all interested in living, that we've all come into this world, and we're interested in continuing and living the most abundant life we can.

If we're not in harmony with that — We know in today's world that there are certainly people who would want to deny others' life. We're in this very divisive, crazy world where there's so much conflict and tension. Just think about how you feel when you're in the midst and you're meditating on all of that conflict and violence versus when you're meditating on the abundance of life, when you're meditating on your own fulfillment, and how you, as an individual human being with your own agency, are nevertheless contributing through your work to helping this planet be a better place. To me, that's really the spirit of Oneness.

Maybe it's not the best word. Maybe it's more of a Spirit or an Essence that it is. It can't be limited to a single word and maybe "Oneness" is just the best word that we have in the Conscious Business Innerprise. But it's so much more than that, and I really just bring it to, "Are we interested in supporting life and are we interested in supporting the lives of one another?" Then, naturally, we all do that together, if that's what we really believe.

Dr. Janet: And supporting our own life too, don't you think, which is part of what you were saying earlier about loving yourself, being kind to yourself, telling that inner critic to go away and asking yourself, "What do I think? What do I feel? What do I need? What are my choices? And how can I contribute both to myself and those around me?"

Stephen: Yeah, absolutely. It's going back to the beginning, where you talked about our inner work, and we have to start with that self-love. It's not selfish love, but it's really self-love. Then as we do that, we can hold and practice that love for all. It is self and other.