

Changing The Use Of Media To Incite Positive Global Change

Dr. Michael Laitman Interview Series

With Judith Regan, Publisher & Radio Show Host



Host: Hello and welcome to this episode of our series which creates dialogues between innovative thinkers. These conversations are focused on changes occurring in our world, seeking to build bridges in an ever-increasing interdependent world. As always, I'm joined by Dr. Michael Laitman who is a Professor of Ontology and Kabbalah, with a doctorate in Philosophy. He's the founder and director of the Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Institute.

We're very lucky today to have Judith Regan with us. Judith is one of the most successful publishers of our time. She currently hosts a Sirius and XM radio show and she's been known to be a little controversial, but for the most part she's had success wherever she's been.

I'm going to open up the conversation with you Judith. Are people still reading books? There's been a lot of talk about it, especially in times like this where time is moving so fast and things are happening so quickly, that publishing is going the wrong way.

Judith Regan: I don't know if it's going the wrong way, but I think that there are a lot of different kinds of books published worldwide; there is something for everybody. I do think that in this culture people are reading less, and in terms of just books, most books are bought by people over the age of fifty.

That doesn't mean, however, that young people aren't reading. They are just not reading things necessarily in book form and the kinds of things that we grew up doing, because they have

many, many more options. Of course, the Internet has provided other ways for them to read, and they do read on the Internet. They read a tremendous amount of material on the Internet, and they still do read magazines to a degree, but the periodicals, newspapers, and so on and so forth, the younger generation is tending to read online.

Book buyers tend to be people over fifty and that is a reality. It's dangerous to think that the book is dying because the book may come in many different forms. It may come on a printed page; it may be delivered digitally. I do think it's worth noting that the attention span of young people in particular has diminished and so reading something that would be book length, for instance, would be considered a task for a lot of young people.

Host: Dr. Laitman, in these times where people are being confronted with crises in almost every aspect of their life be it financial, ecological, personal, family, and education, where do you see content going, particularly in books?

Michael Laitman: I am actually optimistic. What were books about previously? Humanity is in a transition phase. What we read before, the novels, the younger generation, we can't blame them for not reading the way we were hungry for books. I remember I grew up in a home where if I weren't reading dozens of books consecutively, my parents would follow me and were worried, "Why aren't you reading?"

Today there is no such thing. My kids have grown up and I see my grandkids. I can't approach them and say, "Why you aren't reading the classics that I did?" It's different for them.

We're switching to the media because the world is faster and is more global. The connection between us forces us to be that way.

Host: Okay, so it's becoming more global, but what does that mean? Is it more internal or more external?

Michael Laitman: It's more internal, actually, because we're suddenly discovering that we are all connected. We still don't understand how connected we truly are. Today we are like one family. The problem is that hatred appears between us, in other words, our nature, where we are all hateful of each other, and we just want to use and exploit everybody else.

At the same time, the problem is that in the global world, where everyone is interdependent without really being supportive or considerate of each other, we have a problem of human relations. As a result, I think, we have all the problems in the world; they are all results of our incorrect connection. And here the new media, especially in its electronic form, can from minute-to-minute be more mobile and connect us more correctly.

As we've evolved in humanity, the ego has been prompting us to evolve further and further in technology and building the societies. Through every generation we've evolved, but now we've come to a point, well, not really now, but basically in the last sixty or seventy years we've come to a point where the ego has closed us all in. It unites us actually, but we are now in a global integral system where we are all connected, but hatefully.

Judith Regan: In this culture and the things that I have gone through in my life, whether it's working in corporations or dealing with the sexual revolution in the 60s, the fallout of the sexual revolution, the things that I've seen in my lifetime and experienced personally really

have to do with a culture that promotes what I call “an every man, woman, and child for himself,” that the interconnectivity of people: the family, the community, the extended family, the extended communities and the interdependence that we have on each other has really broken down tremendously. And I see a culture, where you call it ego and I call it sort of selfishness, that’s extreme, that the self is put above everything else, so the idea that...

Michael Laitman: That’s what I call the ego. It’s exactly that.

Judith Regan: Yes and I’ve seen this so much in my life. I grew up on a farm with my grandparents, my parents, and a very large extended family in the same community. Because I had that experience, I have seen something different, and I have been able to have had the benefit of a childhood like that where people really do take care of each other and there is not one person who is more important than another person. So, the young people and the old people are connected in a very profound way. That’s how I grew up.

Michael Laitman: They felt the need to be together because they were interdependent and that was very obvious.

Judith Regan: Exactly.

Michael Laitman: But are we not discovering, at the end of the day, that it’s the same all over the world today?

Judith Regan: It is the same because I think the interconnectivity just starting with family life is so broken down. I know in my life it was much easier when I had children for the men to leave because the sexual revolution enabled them to basically run off and do what they wanted, and not raise their children, and not have a commitment to me, and not have a commitment to the children. It begins there because if you have a broken family like that where the wife and the mother is commodified, and you are basically a commodity and an interchangeable part, you become like a piece of property and not a human being. And I think that the beginning of the social fabric unraveling starts there.

Michael Laitman: But perhaps we, in our education system, should somehow add that kind of reciprocal connection between people. Because it seems to me that all of our problems today with drugs, depression, and all the personal problems, although they are surrounded by technologies and whatnot, but, at the end of the day, all they have is electronics, not a warm world, not hearts that they can relate to and be together with.

Judith Regan: Yes, I totally agree with that. I’ll give you some examples of things that illustrate that I’ve had in my life. I recently interviewed a woman who did a show for MTV. It was a show about finding an appropriate mate. She had ten or fifteen men and ten or fifteen women vying for her affection. For me it was probably a prime example of the most debased and demoralizing experience that any human being could have.

She was booked on my radio show as a guest to come in to promote her show, and I really didn’t know much about her, and I read the material, the accompanying press material about her before she came in to the show. I said to her... she was from Vietnam. She had some kind of childhood trauma where she was separated from her parents. She was raised by her grandmother in Houston, Texas, outside of Houston, Texas. It was very tragic because she was

uprooted. She had a lot of cultural differences and she was now in a public school in Texas. She felt estranged from other people, and she found a home, as she described it, on the Internet and on MySpace where she became, as she said, the person with the most friends on MySpace. She had millions of people who befriended her. Now they'd befriended her because she was a teenager wearing bikinis; she had gotten breast implants and she looked like a little girl with breast implants, and it was actually quite perverse. So she'd basically mutilated herself to get attention.

Now when she came on my show, she was bubbly and very attractive. She had just finished taping the MTV show where all of these people were vying for her affection, and the basis of the show is actually humiliation. People do humiliating things to themselves; they do humiliating things to each other under the guise of finding love. Of course, love has nothing to do with this.

I asked her, "First of all, you have millions of people who you call friends on your Internet page, but these people are not friends. You do understand that?" She was trying to give me sort of public relations answers, and then when we got right down to it, I said to her, "When you were in high school, were you suicidal, were you depressed, did you ever try to hurt yourself?" She had tried to commit suicide six times.

This was a young woman who had so many problems, but the culture viewed her as an object for entertainment both on her MySpace page and as an MTV celebrity. She broke down on my show because the reality of her life is for the millions of people who are viewing her picture on the Internet; this is not a relationship. This is not something that satisfies a human being; this does not give you comfort; this is not what having a friend is. And this is how perverted the culture has become. And this is, I believe, a real danger because people are so divorced from just everyday communication, just having a conversation like this.

Host: Right now it seems that we are in this spiral where even though some of us feel the need to be in this global village and be part of it, technology and society is taking us away from it. What's the answer?

Michael Laitman: We have to bring things together. We can't go against technology and human development. How are we going to do that, on the one hand? On the other hand, we need to study the system that we are in. My first profession was biocybernetics, which is about systems in the human body. Just as in the human body, all of our parts are in harmony and each part acts to provide life for the whole body. If the heart doesn't work, the lungs, too, will not, and vice versa. Each part takes upon itself a specific role that's good for the whole system.

It turns out that if we are now truly evolving, and it's not up to us really, if we are now evolving into a state where we are all in a global system, then we have a big problem. We all have to care for each other just like cells in an organism. A cell that cares for itself becomes a cancerous cell. It consumes its environment and eventually itself, and in the end it dies. So, here is our problem. We need to introduce to humanity the knowledge of where we are, and that we're beginning to consume ourselves. It's as if we're all holding each other's oxygen tubes, and here we'll discover that anyone can close the valve on us because we are hateful of each other and we want to use each other.

Host: Judith, what do you think about a message like that?

Judith Regan: I agree. I mean, I think that if we look at the financial crisis, a lot of which was caused by the ego, in essence, because people were so self-interested, whether it was....

Michael Laitman: But they couldn't restrain themselves. The ego that's been operating in them was prompting them; they could not stop; they had to take. They didn't need those billions but they couldn't stop themselves; it's terrible.

Host: Are you saying that everything that we are seeing, the breakdown in society, these crises, all will subside if people find a better connection between each other?

Michael Laitman: We can see that in a global world with the integral connection that we have, now that we have this interconnectedness, it's impossible that one person will not affect another. In all these negative impacts that we have on each other, which are primarily with our desires, with our thoughts, not even in our actions; in actions, or technology, or finance, or in the connection between us in the Internet, in all that we are very good. But we are only bad in our internal connections, in our human connections. And that's the huge force humans have, because it is their desire that is acting in reality.

There are beautiful studies, especially in the United States, actually. I've met colleagues who engage in it, that have studied it, and they see that the connection between people is what acts to our detriment. We have to change that; otherwise the crisis will not be resolved.

Judith Regan: How do you think we got there? Do you think that this is unique to our era?

Michael Laitman: Yes, yes. In truth, as much as I can see in my studies, my expertise is ontology, which is the perception of reality basically, so we had to come to that state, actually. We are always moving from one state to another one. We discover that one state is bad, and then that bad prompts us to something better, but if we don't... It's like a family when it approaches divorce. You discover that things are getting worse and worse, and when you can't stand it anymore, you get divorced. That's how we are.

We can't leave the current state until we see that it's impossible to stay in it. So, today we are in a situation that should actually teach us that with our egos, in our current egos, we will never advance, and we will not progress. If we continue with it today, we are going to destroy the whole of nature, and we are headed for terrible blows from nature. But how do you tell that to people before you see these blows? This is what I am trying to do. How to explain to them before the blow comes?

Judith Regan: Do you have a specific plan or things that you recommend people do to prevent that?

Michael Laitman: No, you don't need a specific plan. You don't need something specific to do. You just need to use the environment, the media, and create such relationships around people, so it will compel them to treat others properly. And suddenly we will see nature on all levels: ecology, diseases, human relations, the economy, culture, education, we'll see it thriving everywhere; the world will be paradise. It depends only on how we are in balance with each other.

It turns out that... well, the plan is simple; man is dependent upon the environment. If we build our social environment in a way that it affects each of us, condemns us for bad things and appreciates us for good things, we will not be able to be any different. It depends only on society. The problem is the media, the culture, and education, which are not into it. They don't want to take that part on themselves.

Judith Regan: What do you think the media should do?

Michael Laitman: I think that everything depends on the media. The media is the educational tool, really, of people. If we could introduce to the media the importance that here we can build a new generation, which has to be integral, global, all interconnected, and considerate of each other because the conclusive system of nature which is now closing us in forces us to do so. If the media understood that, and would take that role on itself, we would resolve the problem.

Judith Regan: Is there anything in the media that you think is positive? Are there any television shows, movies, books, or magazines that you think illustrate the sort of message that you think is important to change the culture?

Michael Laitman: I think that all types of media can be good, on condition that they have a message that explains to people that if they are inconsiderate towards others, and they're inconsiderate towards you in return, by that we are destroying our lives. We truly are facing the next crisis. It's going to come like plague after plague, consecutively. Scientists, psychologists, and ecologists, everyone is saying this is so. Regrettably, I spoke at many conferences and forums worldwide, but people don't listen.

Judith Regan: Do you think that it's possible, let's say, an individual who controls a big media empire could make a decision to change the direction of their enterprises to basically promote and reinforce, and tell stories that are positive, create movies that demonstrate good behavior and the consequences of bad behavior? If they focused only on that could you imagine: a) A media company doing that, and b) Do you think that they would stay in business?

Michael Laitman: I think that if they were to decide, especially the media moguls that control the media, that in order to save the world, they have to change their attitude, then they would certainly succeed. Because I know that there are many people like me who know and understand where we are headed, but regrettably, the power is not in our hands.

I wanted to ask what is your impression how is this crisis, which in my eyes is not over, it's actually hardly started, but people are saying, "Maybe it's over; it's better now." We are getting used to something bad and we think that it's better already. Did it affect the media or not? Have the media people become more sensitive to it?

Judith Regan: Well, this is very interesting question. I think we are in the early stages. As you said, I think the crisis is just beginning. I think that we haven't really seen what's going to happen in the media. Right now they are in a panic mode because they are worried about staying alive and staying in business. A lot of people.... I recently got invited to attend an event where they were talking about the future of the media, and there were hundreds of people who were afraid of losing their jobs.

Host: Media people?

Judith Regan: Media people, afraid of losing their jobs: reporters at the New York Times, editors of financial newspapers and magazines. People are in a period of great uncertainty with respect to their media jobs because they don't know what is going to happen. Many, many newspapers around the country are going out of business. People are getting fired all over the place.

Now, the second question: Does it affect the content? Are people reassessing whether or not they should be promoting sensationalism? What I've seen in television, in fact, is that there is greater sensationalism because as people get into greater and greater panic, they fall to their basest levels because they think, "Well, this sells; we'll just keep doing more."

Host: It increases their ratings.

Judith Regan: Right, it increases their ratings; we'll do more and more of this demoralized stupidity because we need money. And as people become more and more desperate for money, instead of actually stepping back, reviewing the big picture and understanding that they have to have a major shift and change in their values and how they live their lives, they are chasing after the same, the same, the same, to make more money, which is not working.

Host: Isn't it analogous to what happened in the financial industry, where by making it worse and worse and worse, they won't be able to help but to destroy themselves?

Judith Regan: Yes, that's a very good point, I think you are right.

I think that the question is people really, everyone globally has to really sit down and ask themselves essential questions about their lives, and what they value, and what they really care about. We are very, very fortunate in this country [the United States] to have a lot of physical possessions, and people are going to have to change their lives, and how they live their lives. Because if they are chasing after more and more and more all the time, their lives, generally speaking, tend to have less and less and less meaning; and there is a balance, as you say: We have more; they have less.

Teaching children how to share at a very early age is essential; they have to learn to share. We are all in this together. It's not all for me and none for you. And we have to do that with respect to the environment, with respect to our sense of responsibility in terms of the media and what we do and the messages we put out there. We all have to take responsibility in some way.

I think that there's a big shift going on in the world right now, and maybe we are going to be forced to do these things; maybe we are going to have no choice but to do these things. It would be wonderful if human beings could rise to it on their own and understand it on their own. I am not sure that it's going to happen.

Michael Laitman: Yes, not through the blows but through the understanding. That's what I'd like to see.

I'm grateful to you.

Judith Regan: I'm grateful to you. Thank you so much.

Host: I'm grateful to both of you.