

How Dads Can Harness The Force w/ Stephen Kent

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SUMMARY

Stephen Kent discusses the moral lessons embedded in the "Star Wars" saga, emphasizing its relevance to modern societal issues. Through his book, "How the Force Can Fix the World," he explores themes of empathy, fear, hope, and redemption, illustrating how these concepts can guide individuals in navigating life's challenges and fostering meaningful conversations with children.

- *"Star Wars" serves as a powerful cultural narrative that can help teach moral lessons to children.*
- *Learning to be a good person can occur through doing, observing, and storytelling, with "Star Wars" as a prime example.*
- *Empathy is crucial; characters like Rey and Kylo Ren illustrate the importance of seeing past masks to understand others.*
- *Fear can lead to anger and suffering, highlighting the need for individuals to confront their fears rather than control everything around them.*
- *Hope is a driving force in the "Star Wars" narrative, as seen in the Rebel Alliance's struggle against the Empire.*
- *Redemption is a central theme, with characters like Darth Vader and Kylo Ren showcasing the possibility of returning from darkness.*
- *The importance of shared stories in a society is emphasized, as they can bridge divides and foster understanding among differing perspectives.*
- *Kent advocates for using "Star Wars" as a tool for parents to engage with their children on complex moral topics in an accessible way.*

- "Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering." I think it's one of the most true things that "Star Wars" has ever said about the human psyche and possibly what goes wrong in society and civilizations. - There are basically three ways you can learn how to be a good person. One, we learn by doing and making mistakes. Two, we learn by observing what other people do. And three, we learn from the stories in our culture.

From the Bible to the "Bhagavad Gita" to "Back to the Future," popular stories play an outsized role in our understanding of virtue and the difference between right and wrong. And as a geek, few stories can match the awesome power of "Star Wars." A YouGov survey found that only 31% of US adults had never

watched a "Star Wars" movie. When it comes to teaching moral lessons to our children, it can be a challenge to find a common language.

So why not turn to one of the most iconic and influential stories in American history? Well, today's guest, Stephen Kent, has done just that with his book, "How the Force Can Fix the World." Stephen takes a deep dive into the virtues of "Star Wars" and how it can be an antidote to our modern problems. From the fearlessness of the Jedi to the hope instilled by the Rebel Alliance and the redemption sometimes found by the Sith, Stephen lays out an epic set of virtues to be learned from a galaxy far, far away.

We've also worked with Stephen to create a really cool viewing guide so you can watch "Star Wars" in a whole new light with your kids. - Being able to just talk about the latest "Star Wars" movie or ask somebody their opinion on whether or not Luke made the right choice in Episode Five by going after Han and Leia, all of a sudden you have a basis to talk about moral choices that politics and news does not provide.

But yet, our culture is trying to fill that void of morality and story by filling it with politics and really divisive stuff. - Stephen's work is a great way to explore important moral topics with our kids in a way they might actually listen to and spare everyone a boring lecture in the process. (upbeat music) Stephen, welcome to "Dad Saves America." - It is so nice to be here. Thanks, John. - When did you first see "Star Wars"?

How old were you? - I'm one of these people who I don't have the 1977, stood in line with my dad and saw it 20 times story. - I was busy being born in 1977, so neither did I - Yeah, I'm 1989,, and I'm very unimpressed with my story. I don't remember, you know, I just remember wearing out those gold box, you know, tape cassettes. The re-release from 1996. I've got those just emblazoned in my memory, and I know that my brother and I just tore through 'em to the point where they didn't work anymore.

And most of my formative memories are the prequels and those theater experiences, because those were like the real ones for me. - Before we get into the book, I needed to talk about this because I have a handful of friends, and they're only a handful, that prefer the prequels to the original three. - There are dozens of us. Dozens. (laughs) - So are you in this camp?

Are you in the prequels camp? - I would not say that
I prefer them to them, but they're my "Star Wars."

They are the ones that
are closest to my heart, and when I think about the
ones that get me excited to, like, talk about with people,
it is one, two, and three, whereas I can admit that four,
five, and six are better. - Well, why? Why do you think they're better since you grew up with
these, the newer ones? Not the newest, the newer. Right, I mean, I think that we should
always be able to distinguish when talking about movies, your favorites versus what is better.

And it's just obvious from, I think, Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill,
Carrie Fisher, that chemistry, to the work of Kershner in Episode Five and Marquand in Episode Six as
director, that these were better movies, and they had a more interesting flow. They were punchier, they're great.
They come from that time period
of Indiana Jones, and "ET," and, like, the best of the early '80s is when "Star Wars" is really popping. They're
just better. But in terms of favorite, so much of "Star Wars" is nostalgia.

So much of "Star Wars" is wrapped up in, who were you with when
you saw these movies? When did you begin your
journey, and with who? And when you ask people, when
did you first see "Star Wars"? They usually tell you that
parent story about '77 and seeing it at the theater 20 times. And I have that experience
with Episodes Two and Three with my best friends in high school and waiting in that line until midnight and
having light saber battles
with strangers on the street while we waited to get in
for that first showing, crying when Anakin bursts
into flames on Mustafar and becomes Darth Vader.

Those are the memories that make the "Star Wars"
experience so powerful and important to you. So those are my favorites because
they just mean more to me. - So why write a book about "Star Wars"? Why use this as the entry
point to talk about morals and about how to make
the world a better place? - Because people can't stop doing it. I mean, you can't get enough
of people just remarking that, "Oh, you know, my friend or my uncle's gone over to the dark side."

Or you know, like, "I'm
a red light saber person or a blue light saber person." It says something about you, "Star Wars" has reached over
the course of four generations to being part of the cultural commons and the language that we
use to describe morality and light and dark choices,
and right and wrong. And I believe in that sense, and this is a sort of a tired

point that gets made a lot, that, you know, it's the greatest modern myth of our time and offers us sort of a common shared mythology in a culture where I think we are losing, every day, the things that we share amongst each other that give us the ability to talk to one another, and sort of bridge those divides, being able to just talk about the latest "Star Wars" movie or just ask somebody their opinion on whether or not Luke made the right choice in Episode Five by going after Han and Leia, a basis to talk about moral choices that politics and news does not provide, but yet our culture is trying to fill that void of morality and story by filling it with politics and really divisive stuff.

- You know, I just finished watching the "Andor" series on Disney Plus, and it's been interesting thinking about it because I'm curious if you'll agree with me, it seems like it's one of the most politically, small P, like nuanced takes on the "Star Wars" universe I've seen. You're spending a lot of time with these, like, imperial bureaucrats who are like actually, like, fleshed out as three-dimensional characters, and they're living in the empire world and trying to defend the order of the empire world.

And it's like, "Okay, I could see how you could be a storm trooper instead of just being, like, a kind of, like, stupid clone that's jumping into the lasers that are probably being blasted at you." - "Andor's" beautiful. I mean, it's the perfect take on the banality of evil and how people sort of find themselves in the empire doing incredibly boring operational work. But, you know, they are contributing towards, what we as the audience are meant to understand as incredible evil.

But in the context of "Star Wars", you know, this is coming on the tails of a nearly 10-year-long civil war where millions, if not billions, in "Star Wars", you know, numbers have died in the Clone Wars conflict, and the Empire comes to fill that void to finally stop the fighting and stop the bloodshed and destruction. People have turned to total authoritarianism to try to just live in calm and peace for once in their lives. And it makes a lot of sense, but there's another way of looking at "Andor" as well, which is that, in a sense, it is the best "Star Wars" spinoff, but it's also the biggest departure, maybe betrayal, of like what "Star Wars" was supposed to be about.

- Oh, interesting. I want to hear this. - George Lucas, going back to '77, he debated with his friends,

Francis Ford Coppola, his wife Marcia, Marcia, about whether or not this movie needed to be high-minded, artsy, have a really strong commentary about the world and politics or whether or not it needed to be a popcorn movie. And George Lucas, though he was sort of born in the cast of, you know, the anti-war movement against Vietnam as sort of a California hippie, his dad though is more of a conservative business Republican, he understood very clearly that the country was at a breaking point and that there could not be any more of these cynical movies about moral gray, good guys who have to do bad things.

He knew that this had to stop and that if he was gonna have a hit, it needed to be a rah-rah hero, you know, take out the bad guy's serial movie. He was committed to that. And his friends and his filmmaker buddies did not agree. To this day, "Star Wars" has always struggled with how do we get families and kids out to the movie theaters. And at this point, we're talking not just parents and children but also the grandparents who were there when it all began, because we are at that point.

- Oh yeah. You have a daughter, has she seen "Star Wars" yet? - Oh yeah. Yeah. - How old is she? Gimme a little bit of your dad's story. - Yeah, well, so my daughter is 12 years old. She's a sixth grade student, math whiz, and increasingly amazing creative writer. And she saw "Star Wars", I mean, I suppose when she was three was when she got inducted. And I remember, gosh, it was at her seventh birthday when we played the "Force Awakens" for her, and all of her friends and one of the kids ran out crying in the first 10 minutes 'cause Kylo Ren executed someone in the first five minutes of the movie.

So "Star Wars" has just kind of always been part of it. I mean, she's got baby pictures, you know, wearing a Darth Vader helmet. So it's a huge part of our daddy-daughter story. - So you've got a 12-year-old daughter. How old were you when she was born? - I was 20, and there's your story. - Okay, so we're gonna talk about this for a little bit. I think the average age of women being pregnant for the first time just crossed over 30.

Tell me about being a young dad. - There are times in your life where your choices are changed for you based on choices that you have made. You know, my daughter came about during college with my now wife and then girlfriend, and we'd known each other for years, and, you

know, we got pregnant, and we moved forward with wanting to stay together and have this child and raise her, and after that get married, and then see if we could have a family, and that was 12 years ago.

It's been the best choice I ever made in a life of really bad choices. What is it like? I mean, it's not being able to relate to your peers. It's when you go to work and everybody wants to go hang out afterwards. I got things I gotta do, I'm gonna go home. And you kind of become a little bit of an alien, but I've only found that in my life it benefited me professionally and creatively because every day when I wake up, every day when I go to work, I'm not goofing around.

I'm here to work, 'cause I got some things I need to take care of, bills to pay, people to take care of. I feel like it's been a huge asset to me and the greatest thing I ever did. - Let's dive in, because I bet a lot of this comes out of the conversations you've probably had with your daughter about "Star Wars" over the years. So let's start with empathy. What did we learn from "Star Wars" about empathy?

- When I think about how empathy plays in "Star Wars," the very first example that I dove in on was in "The Force Awakens." This is "Star Wars Episode Seven," 2015. Rey has been captured by Kylo Ren in this movie. This is the girl from Jakku, the girl from nowhere, and she's sort of being held prisoner by the first order and Kylo, and she's all mad and you know, wants to be let go. And he's got her, you know, chained down to a table and all this stuff.

And she calls him in this moment "a creature in a mask," because that's all she knows. He's just wandering around with this mask on, kind of like Darth Vader, and he's got this garbled voice. You would assume that he is some kind of alien, hideous person, not the case. She calls him a creature in a mask and he just silently pops his mask off, puts it down on the table next to them, and she's kind of flabbergasted.

She goes, "Oh, wow." It's probably because he was a very cute boy. - You're Adam Driver. - You're very handsome, Adam Driver. She was either like, "Wow, he is very cute," or "Oh, my gosh, he's a human being, he's about my age, and he just looks like anyone I could have ever known. This person who I had othered, that I considered to be a monster, and I don't know

them, they're actually just a person like me."

And from that moment, Rey and Kylo, even though they have this, you know, rival relationship where they're out to kill each other for three movies, they also are just really drawn towards one another magnetically. This is sort of the immediate effect of empathy that we have a capacity for when we see past people's masks, the fronts that they put on, the shields that people put up to protect themselves from others. Like, masks can be literal or they can be figurative.

- I love that because I do think that, in a way, we live in this world where we're all being mediated by a kind of mask in that black mirror, right? We're seeing a cartoon sketch of other people in their profiles on the internet, and their opinions that are supercharged and packaged. - Quite literally our avatars when we're setting up our social media profiles, you know, your Instagram is a mask. People are not putting their overdue bills up on Instagram to share with people and they're not videotaping their fights with their spouses or their kids.

They're putting up their family photos and they're putting up the picture of their newly renovated kitchen, but not the debt that they went into to maybe fund, you know, the HELOC loan for their flip of the kitchen. - Not the evening sweat, sitting at the edge of the bed being like, "Why did I get an arm?" (both laughing) "Oh God, 7% interest." - "I've mortgaged away my family's future." These are functional masks that society allows us to put on and you know, we call it a facade or we just call it, you know, not, you know, sharing your dirty laundry, but masks have all sorts of different functions in our lives.

And "Star Wars" basically just has these consistent themes of villains in particular that are masked and unknown to the main characters. The other obvious example is Darth Vader. You know, he is "more machine now than man", says Obi-Wan. Even Obi-Wan in in the original "Star Wars" films, he basically tries to make it feel to Luke like, "Don't try to save this guy, I've tried. You cannot fix this person." But then after Darth Vader pulls the rug out and says, "I am your father," Luke can't turn that off.

Now he knows like, "My dad is trapped in there, he used to be a person, now he's this, what can I do?" And this is what leads him all the way to redeeming him in "Return to the Jedi" and

never letting go of the idea that Anakin Skywalker can be saved. - Things have become so white hat, black hat, and that sort of assessment, are you an oppressor or the oppressed? Are you a villain or a victim or a hero, is triggered so easily and then so absolutely in our culture these days, at least in the culture of the internet, in the culture of sort of online discourse.

And there is no sense of redemption. It's like, "Oh no, you said this thing that is like two steps away from the thing I hate, therefore you are the thing." It's like the transitive property of you're my enemy almost every which way. - I think one of the ways that I've tried to understand the hyperpolarization of our time has been why are so many of my friends, who used to consider themselves middle of the road, you know, I'm like center right, I'm center left, and I'm like a Republican ish, I'm a Democrat ish.

How in the past couple of years have they all just shot off in the directions that you accused them of earlier? Like, oh, my friend's a Democrat. Ah, he's a commie, you know, my Republican friend, fascist. And it's like, oh my God, 10 years later, like, oh, now we're all flirting with those movements. It's like people called one another devils for long enough that they eventually were like, "You know what? I'll just be whatever you say I am."

- You've had the disadvantage of working in Washington, DC, for a long time too. So there's- - Not a real place.
- Yeah, yeah. - [Stephen] Not a real place. - What location in "Star Wars" is DC? Because in other canons, like the "Hunger Games," we know. - What location is DC? The hive of scum and villainy. Well, it's certainly not Tatooine, where everyday people are just trying to have a drink and enjoy themselves free from government control.

It can't be that.

- Yeah. Is it the Death Star or the new super Death Star that was like the rehash of the Death Star in "Force Awakens"? It's like we built a new one, it's inside a planet. - I think that's right. I think Coruscant is a cop-out answer. I think it probably is the Death Star, where all we're doing is just using money that came out of nowhere to build something and build a world that we're all gonna live in.

You think about like the

DC area, where I live, it's just everybody is a government contractor and works at these bureaucracies and are funded by special projects from agency X, Y, or Z. You know, it's just all the machine and "Star Wars" has just always been this story about people versus the machine. Even down to the struggle of Anakin Skywalker to rediscover who he is. Can you go all the way to the dark, and can you find your way back to your humanity?

The empathy question that you asked earlier, I always think about this in terms of how dark someone can get, and then why did they go down that road in the first place? Because the masks discussion is, what masks do people wear to protect themselves? Have they been harmed so many times in their life that the mask is the thing that is keeping them alive? You had on your show, Antong Lucky? - Yeah, I was just gonna say, you know, we had Antong Lucky on from Urban Specialists, and you write about Urban Specialists in the book.

You know, his book is about redemption. So tell me about your experience there and why you chose to include it in the book. - Oh, I had come across this guy by the name of Bishop Omar Jahwar. He's, I suppose, the founder of Urban Specialists. As I was working on the concept for this book and I was thinking through, you know, "Why did Darth Vader and Kylo Ren commit to the Sith way? Why did they commit to being on the dark side?"

A good example of that, I think, is Anakin Skywalker. He joins the dark side initially to save his wife from death. He has a vision that Padme's gonna die prematurely. So he makes a deal with the devil so that she will live. He realizes at the end of Episode Three that he was lied to, that Palpatine never had the ability to save her. And now he is trapped in this suit. He's lost his legs, he's lost his wife, and he stays, and it's because what else is there?

There's no other way out for him at this point. This is who he is. And I had listened to Bishop Omar Jahwar speak in DC, and he was talking about his experiences working with gang members and the way that he talked about the way that gang members bifurcate their identities to survive, both on the streets in their neighborhoods, but also behind bars. I was listening to this and

going, "This is the Sith way." Kill the old you and embrace fully that new identity because the choices you've made, there's no other options for you.

Like that's what a gang is for you. You can either be prey on the street or you can be a predator. You can join the group that's gonna take care of your family and protect you, or you can be the group that gets preyed upon. It's even worse in prison if you wanna survive. And these people, they have to let the old them go because empathy, feeling for others in a situation where it's life or death, is what gets you killed.

That's how you die if you get too squishy and touchy-feely. - It is interesting that in the movies, Obi-Wan Kenobi's like "He's lost. He's more than machine than man now." Which, if you are a Jedi, if you are essentially a priest of the light, giving up on somebody doesn't seem like a very priest of the light kind of thing to do. Why do you think Obi-Wan gives up? I mean, we see it in the prequels, but even so.

- Yeah, I mean, we saw it in the prequels, you know, just down to Anakin's killed the younglings and "You are my brother, I loved you." This is the death of a person and the rebirth of another. So I guess to, before I answer that question, to go deeper on the Sith bit is, you know, the Sith religion is the death of the old self and the rebirth of a new person. That's why Anakin Skywalker is dead.

And if you ask Darth Vader, who were you before? There was no before. This is the only me, that's the only me there will ever be. - It's year zero. - The Jedi don't believe that. They don't believe that that is the real you, that you will always be Anakin Skywalker, you will always be Ben Solo. I think that Obi-Wan lost his way, and he was being completely sincere when he said that there is nothing left of Darth Vader, Anakin Skywalker, and there is no way to save this person.

He does not want Luke to go down that road, 'cause it's a trap. We see in the new Obi-Wan show kind of really how this crystallizes for Obi-Wan Kenobi. Did you get a chance to watch that? - I haven't gotten to watch this one yet. So don't spoil it for me. - It doesn't have high marks. But as a prequel fan, and seeing Ewan McGregor back in the role, it's a really, really fun ride. And he has to grapple with this reality through this show that, you know, just because there's a biological human being underneath this armor doesn't mean Anakin is there anymore.

And it's really, really heartbreaking to watch. So I think he was being sincere in those movies, not trying to push Luke in a certain direction. - In a sense, there's a kind of father-son relationship with Obi-Wan and Anakin, right? You know, he takes him in as a boy, and then he sees him get corrupted. I know folks who've struggled with their children having battling addiction. And there is actually even a limit to what your empathy and your compassion can do there, that you can become enabling.

There's a lot of interesting lessons and sort of warning in that struggle that Obi-Wan has. It's like, okay, there's nothing more I can do. He's gonna have to find his own way. And I know several people who have come to that with their children, where it's like, "There's nothing more I can do that will help them, and I have to come to terms with the fact that they might actually die with the choices they're making. But I can't stop that."

- Parents will do anything for their children, and it can tear them up inside. It can keep them up at night. There's this moment in Episode Seven when Han Solo finally dies. Harrison Ford got his wish. He goes to his son Kylo on Starkiller Base, and we don't really know what his motivations were in this moment, but his son is lost. He has left the family and embraced the dark side, and Han was a lousy father.

What we don't know much of in the run-up to that movie is that he was a no-show dad. And he shows up and approaches his son, and he puts his hand out to him and he just puts his hand on his face, and, you know, says, "Anything you need, I will do it." And there's this moment where Kylo hands him the lightsaber, and he puts it in his father's hand, and then they lock hands. He doesn't hand it over to him.

But we know that the Sith way is that he has to kill his old self. And the biggest wound that he has is his father's love, the fact that no matter what he has done, the people he has killed, the way he has betrayed his family name, that he has shamed himself, that his dad still loves him. So he is gotta kill his dad because this is the only thing that is keeping him there. And so Han says, "I'll do anything," and he puts his hand on his face, and he holds that lightsaber as his son ignites it into him and kills him right there.

And I think he did that intentionally. I think he knew that when he walked out there on that platform that he was doomed. But that if he allowed his son to do the ultimate thing, the ultimate act of evil, I think to drive yourself

away from your family, that it would break him. That this would be the point of no return. And he was right. When his father gave everything, his son was broken, and he did find his way back after two films.

Not great movies, but I love that arc. How far will a parent go? They'll put their body on the line. - I can see you're moved. Is there something else behind that? - I don't have like that traumatic of story in my life. I don't have stories of bottomed-out addiction in my family and all of that. But my dad, he was always a very kind of stable figure in my life. My parents divorced when I was about 11, but he was just always a hard worker.

Had his stuff together, he was always there to guide, and second marriage was not so pretty. And I would say that that really drove a wedge between us, where I was getting older, going through my teen years. And that second marriage was really me going off into the darkness of my teen years. And my dad really in the darkness of this not good relationship. And in 2008, I go to college, and the market falls apart. The recession happens.

My dad was actually in the realtor business. Association work. But it's first time where things are not good. Within two years, my dad has really lost a lot, from career to that second marriage. And I've also now ended up with a baby on the way. And all of a sudden, we are just both in it together. We are both in the bottom of the barrel of, like, how we view ourselves and where we were going. I went to school to be a filmmaker, and I just messed everything up, and I ended up back at home with him.

He had nothing negative to say to me, no judgment. We were just both there for it in that moment together, hugging each other and supporting one another. And I remember when I told my dad that I got my girlfriend pregnant and that we were gonna have the baby, I thought he was gonna ream me out. I thought it was gonna be the worst conversation of my life, but all I did was hug me. And I think it was just because, you know, you get humbled by life in all sorts of ways, and we've been close ever since.

'Cause I think we both saw different sides of each other in that time. - There's this incredibly weird relationship we have with our fears, right? Like how we confront them, whether we tell the truth, whether we stand up to it. You're lucky to have somebody that did that, that was there like that, that speaks to his

character and made your way because it's, like,
especially when you're down, the easiest thing to do is sort of have that feedback loop happen and be like, "Well,
now you
did it," and sort of wallow.

There's that kind of gallows. - Yeah, and you know, being at the bottom and being humbled by life, this is the
only way that I
think we as people, friends, spouses, and, you know, maybe
just like citizens as well, members of a democracy, have the capacity to forgive one another when other people
fall
short of our expectations or what we would like to see them do. In "Star Wars," the path towards redemption
is not just walking away from the dark.

It is having experienced dark at all and realizing that you to
are capable of ugly things and you have a dark side, it's the idea of the dark passenger. And "Star Wars" ultimate
image of a redemption is the Force ghost. You know, like at the end
of "Return of the Jedi," everybody gets Force ghosted,
Obi-Wan gets Force ghosted, he shows up in "The Empire
Strikes Back" as a spirit. And this happens with Yoda,
and then it happens with Vader.

And this was always kind of unexplained, like how did Vader end up as a Force ghost at the end of "Return of
the Jedi"? The more that you delve into
the comics and the TV shows, you kind of get a little bit of an answer, which was that this was not
Judeo-Christian redemption. This was not like on your deathbed, Darth Vader accepts Christ, and then he gets
to live
forever and go to heaven. But that's kind of how I
understood it when I was younger.

But the "Star Wars" path
towards redemption is much more of this like Buddhist, Hindu, you know, whole-self sort of
journey that people go on of discovering their
shadow and knowing it, experiencing it, and then conquering it, and actually then saying no to it. But a Sith, or
a Dark Sider, gets stuck in the shadow,
and they never leave. Darth Vader saw the worst of himself, and then he eventually left. - Well, you have that
moment, right?

The throwing over of the emperor. - Beautiful.

- The choice, that's the big choice for him. Is that the moment, you think, where he's turned away
from the darkest point, kill your son. Man, Darth Vader had to commit to the dark side a lot over
the course of his life. - He has. And my favorite moment

in all of "Star Wars," Like if you ask favorite scene, favorite shot, this was something I remember I had to write in film school.

They were, you know, what is your favorite sequence and why? And everybody had these pretentious movies that I'd never heard of. And I was like, "It's 'Return of the Jedi' when Luke is being tortured by Force lightning." (laughs) It's incredible. I love it because Palpatine is torturing Luke in that moment to kill him. And Vader is just having to stand there and watch, and he's standing above them, behind his master, and he's watching his son, and you see the light flashing in his eyes from all the lightning.

And it's remarkable how this mask that you've seen now for three movies, he looks so sad. It's the same face, it's the same Darth Vader mask, but the angle, the way that he's looking at his son, the light, he's looking at all of his sins flash before his eyes, every lie the dark side has told him about who he is, that Anakin Skywalker is dead, that his wife could be saved from death. He realizes it's all a lie.

And in that moment, you just see it on that face. And that's the moment when the switch flips and he comes back because people were not telling him the truth about who he was and who he could be again. - You were talking about the, and you said "like living with your shadow," which is a very Jungian thing, right? So let's talk about the next theme in the book, which is fear. What does "Star Wars" teach us about what fear is, how to confront it?

- "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering." Probably - You didn't say this in the Yoda voice, (laughs) which is the greatest mistake of the show. - Hate leads to suffering. - There we go. Alright, now I understand. Now I know where the quote comes from. - I think it's one of the most true things that "Star Wars" has ever said about the human psyche and possibly what goes wrong in society and civilizations.

You know, fear is just the very beginning of a pipeline towards hating and distrusting everyone around you. That's where "Star Wars" begins for, I think, the audience and also every character, is just what are you afraid of and why? - This is a big theme for us because one of the reasons

why we started the channel was seeing the anxiety,
which is, you know, physical manifestation of fear, in so many of my teenage son's peers. And like, you know,
you
look out in the landscape, and our kids' generation is suffering from essentially the disease of fear at a greater
level than any prior one.

Even though they, essentially, don't have any reason to really, it's safer than it was when we were kids. There's
more opportunity
to express yourself and to find out who you are, and to be accepted for who you are than at any point in history,
and yet we're racked by fear. How can I watch "Star Wars"
with my son, my young child, and use it as an antidote
to the fear we see? - That's a big question.

We could probably unpack this for hours, but if "Star Wars" is
trying to tell us one thing, it is to not be a control freak. It's that you're going to have to let go of either just the
way that things are, you know that the world is a certain way and you just can't change it. And then there's also
going
to be that you cannot predict and be ready for everything
that's going to happen. In the stoic philosophy, there's the philosopher
Epictetus, he was a Roman slave, and his writings go on to
inspire Marcus Aurelius and stoicism, later an emperor, who he basically breaks down
the philosophy into one thing, which is that a stoic
is supposed to separate that which they can control from that which they truly cannot and focus on the area
where they can.

And in today's culture, I look at people who just are trying to control all of the wrong things. They're trying to
control every
single traffic intersection. There are people talking about trying to control the weather. There are people trying
to control, now, what kind of stove you
have in your kitchen, apparently, this is now where we're at. Rather than letting people
make choices that work for them or just letting people be the
way that they're gonna be, let spontaneous order reign.

"Star Wars" has pushed
everyone of its characters into making choices about how much they're
gonna try to control. We know what happens with Anakin. Luke actually dabbles with
the dark though in this way, and it's in Episode Five. He has a vision that Han
and Leia are suffering in Cloud City at the hands of
the Empire and Darth Vader. And he is completing his Jedi training, and he is gonna go save them because that's
what a hero does.

A hero goes and saves them, and Yoda says to him, "Always in motion the future is, you can't change everything, and you don't know what's gonna happen. You don't know what their fate is." Luke says, "I have to try, I have to go do something." And he goes up there, he can't do anything, and all he does is get his hand cut off because what he saw through the Force was always going to happen. It's the conceit of thinking that you can change the future.

- You know what you're really talking about there is agency. Where do I have agency? Where do my choices matter? And I know just from the psychologist we've been talking to as part of our work, that that's like the single thing that is universally understood to be an engine of happiness is recognizing that you have an internal agency, your choices matter. You are not a victim of circumstance or of the system, or of the world. Like, "No, I can make my life better or worse based on the choices I make."

And yet, to succumb to a fate that you can't control is at odds with that. Is it not? Like, how do you think about the tug between Yoda saying, "Hey," you know, "your friends are gonna, your friends are gonna end up in a metal box, and there's nothing you can do about it," versus-
- You know, our kids are-- use the Force, Luke. - Our kids are like, 'cause you had asked me about practical advice for children, and I didn't say anything particularly practical, but what you said there reminded me of actually in Episode One, where Obi-Wan has a bad feeling, you know, "I have a bad feeling about this."

And Qui-Gon Jinn says to him, "Keep your mind here and now in the moment where it belongs." And Obi-Wan says, "But I thought I should be mindful of the future." Qui-Gon goes back to him, and he says, "Not at the expense of the moment." This to me, I think about the amount that our kids are bombarded with all the time. The amount that they're supposed to be mindful of the future at all times. That, you know, oh, every single thing that you do, be aware of the downstream consequences of every, you know, drive that you take, every bit of omissions that you put out, could all sort of spell the end of humankind.

They've got these phones that are just buzzing on and on and on with disaster and chaos, and friends with mental problems, and kids who are hurting in their school, and then they're being bullied constantly. There's never any off switch for any of it. And my daughter, I think

probably the only thing that I know that I am
proud of as a parent, is that when she was four,
we were at a doctor's office, she asked if she could play with my phone, because I'm addicted to my phone.

And I told her in my,
you know, Qui-Gon way, "When you learn to be okay
alone with your thoughts, then maybe we'll talk." You've gotta learn to be
okay alone with your thoughts and content with that. Be okay being bored, you know? Can you actually just
sit in a waiting room and have nothing to do? Can you go on a drive and
just stare out the window and watch the world go by instead of constantly filling
the void with information and stimuli, and warnings
about the future and news?

And she listened. She actually heard me,
and she's 12 years old now and has no devices, and
has never asked for one. In fact, I offered her a tablet, and she said, "No, I don't want that." So I've got a Luddite
for a child. She looks at me and sees a prisoner. She looks at the way
that I act with my phone and my computer, and she feels
bad for me, and I love that. I mean, good for her.

She looks at me rightly as
a person who's held hostage to employers, to friends,
to random people online that I've never met in
my life at all time. They steal stuff from you, they steal your mental bandwidth, like your emotional energy. And
she looks at me and goes, "I'm gonna go outside and
climb a tree." (laughs) - Man.
- Good for her. - Do I understand this right?
That you've homeschooled? - We started in the
pandemic, homeschooling, so we're about two years in at this point.

So we are just now over, I think, the hump where we're like, we cannot do this. We are not cut out to do this.
And I think after year-two
we're like, "Oh, we can." They programmed us to believe that we couldn't teach
English to our child. And it turns out I do know how commas and exclamation points work. - I can teach English
as well as someone who
didn't study English but studied how to teach
subjects that they didn't study.

- Yeah, no, so we're
actually really loving it, and it's been really enriching both for me and for our child. - I've got the same
addiction that you have. I'm like a digital

disaster, like, you know. - [Stephen] At least we had a chance though. - We did have a chance. I did live in the before time from my childhood, where boredom was the primary activity. And filling it required actual creativity and sometimes just learning how to cope with your monkey brain.

- These things that we've got in our pockets are anxiety factories. It is nothing but all of my problems and everything that I'm afraid of on this device. And you know, my daughter is in scouts, and she spends time with all these really awesome and cool, you know, girls, you know, going on camping trips and all this stuff. But you know, those girls take their devices out, and they immediately get distracted from the quality time with one another.

In tents and hiking, and all that stuff. I don't know, to like, see what's going on in the world. I said to you, at least we had a chance, you know, we had an opportunity for our brains to develop, at least through our teens, to the point where we could develop impulse control. And we could try to say no to certain things at certain times. A smartphone came into my life at 2008, right when I went to college.

So I got to have my childhood before I then took this on and it's kind of shocking to me. And I never mean to come across as judgmental to people whose kids use devices, but, you know, it's just shocking to me that we're giving these to our children when we know how much they suck up our attention and we at least have impulse control. (laughs) We at least had time. - A declining amount of it over time, I think.

- Yeah, it's going away every single day. And these kids are sitting at Applebee's with their parents and their grandparents, and they hand 'em a tablet as if they don't want to talk to them, as if they don't want them to be loud or say something dumb at the table to their grandparents. And it's everywhere. Everywhere you look, the kid is staring down, and it's like the parents want them to. I don't really have anything good to say about that besides, like, we need to live in a messy, disorderly world where kids are loud and they get into trouble and they say things they shouldn't, and then you correct them and tell them what they should and should not be saying when they're amongst others.

Not that they should be saying nothing and watching a video, 'cause they'll never learn how to speak and find their voice. - There is the "Star Wars" moment, right? Luke is in the trench,

he's using the technology, we all know it, and the voice comes in saying, "No, use the Force." And, you know, does that resonate for you as a prophetic request from George Lucas of the past? Put your future phones back in your pocket and use the force of your mind and your attention.

- Yeah, I think you could make that argument. The thing that I come to with that particular moment in the trench run is it's always gonna be, again, that control factor. Think about everything that Luke must have been afraid of in that moment when he is in that Death Star run. He has one opportunity before he gets blown outta the sky, like all of his friends, to make that impossible shot. You know, the little tractor port that is gonna, you know, only the size of a womp rat, and he only gets one shot before he's toast, and maybe all of his friends die as well when the Death Star fires.

And he's gotta be terrified. He's got a targeting computer, he could zone in right on that, or, as Obi-Wan reaches out to him, he could let the Force do it for him. Let the Force work its will. Is it the Force's will that the Death Star destroy Yavin and hold hostage the other planets of the galaxy? Or is it the will of the Force that this Death Star has gotta go? And he does take that moment to shoot blind.

He puts his visor right up, and he shoots. And I guess I always think of like, let go and let God, you know, let Jesus take the wheel. - It is a very Christian moment. It's like God has a plan, and either yeah, either it's all gonna work out or it's not, but just sort of surrender. That's what the Force is. What do you think the whole body of "Star Wars" is trying to say about what the Force actually is?

- I suppose for me, the Force is exactly what Yoda describes it as in Episode Five. That it's, you know, "a life force that moves through all living things." Actually, no, that's Obi-Wan when he's describing the Force, that it's a life force that moves through all living things, and then Yoda says, "It surrounds us, it binds us, it connects the whole world together." And I think, you know, the Force is us, you know, the Force is human potential.

It's our ability to see something shared in one another. It's our ability to feel what others are feeling. You know, when you're out of balance and you're just like lost in the dark side and lost, I don't think you can feel much, I don't think you can feel much of the energy of human potential or the way that the world spins. - Next theme. It's right in the titles hope. What do we have to

learn

from "Star Wars" about hope and the role that it can play in our lives.

- "Rebellions are built on hope." It's all a story of a bunch of ragtag people with barely any chance at success overturning an empire. And hope is this choice that they all have in this pretty impossible situation about what kind of rebellion do they want to have. In "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," that's the movie that comes out in 2016, it's the first standalone "Star Wars" movie that Disney made.

We get a really interesting snapshot of a rebellion that is actually divided because, in the original "Star Wars" films, we had only seen a united rebellion. It's the Rebel Alliance, it's led by Mon Mothma and Leia. And they're inspirational. They're hopeful. And they give us a vision of the way the world could be once the Empire is gone. But "Rogue One" introduces us to Antifa in space. (both laughing) This guy named Saw Gerrera, played by Forest Whitaker, and Saw Gerrera is a rebel.

He is an anti-fascist. You know, he hates the authoritarian state, but his rebellion is different than Leia's rebellion. His rebellion is just built off of the Empire is bad. We need to destroy them and set people free. But is that enough to build something in place of what the Empire is? Leia is trying to build a new republic. She is trying to restore the republic that the Empire had squashed. And hope is basically your choice of are you just afraid of the Empire and it's evil, or are you hopeful that something better exists?

And "Rogue One" was just really cool to me 'cause it actually showed us, I think, a more realistic split in how these movements tend to work. - It's funny because it's like, you know, having just watched "Andor," I wanna rewatch "Rogue One" just to connect it back to it. - I think it will land even better for you, just setting up, again, like this rebellion, which hasn't settled the tone of what it wants to be. It's interesting 'cause it came out around 2016, right after the Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton primary.

At risk of getting too

political in this conversation. That primary, I think said a lot about where the country was at and the kind of direction that particular, the Democratic party wanted to go in. And if you think of "Star Wars" as, you know, it's made by Hollywood. So, you know, it's made by kind of liberal people, you know, probably democratic karate people, but, you know, they're freedom fighters nonetheless. But what kind of movement do you want to see challenge Donald Trump in the upcoming election?

Bernie Sanders, the sort of rabble-rousing, everything needs to change, more hardline radical or Hillary Clinton, an institutionalist, you know, she believes that the system is working, but it could be better, (laughs) and we're going to preserve most everything. It's the neoliberals versus the actual socialists. - Are you saying that Hillary Clinton is Princess Leia? Is that the overlay? - I've made that argument. You know, I think everybody sees themselves in the rebellion, so I've also made the case that Nikki Haley could be Princess Leia for her foreign policy views, but everybody sees themselves in the rebellion.

And so understanding that and being gracious, yeah, like, you do see sort of, like, do we want to have institutions that exist and that come from something? Do you want to work within the system, or do we blow the system up? And that primary happens at the same time in that movie where "Star Wars" shows us a radical figure in the rebellion who says, "No, we need to flip the table over. Institutional change, tweaks around the margins, slow, you know, progressive success is not good enough.

We need to crush the Empire, probably execute everybody who is involved in it." And then what? - Right. - Then what? - It's like the questions that get asked of the people, then the CHAZ slash CHOP autonomous zone. - The summer of love. - Right. Once you've dismantled everything, what's gonna come? Well, it'll just be like a phoenix that rises from the ashes, you know, the Chesterton's Fence thing. Like, "Oh, there's this fence here. Do I rip it up?

Well, I don't really know why it's here, so maybe I shouldn't rip it up." And it's two different revolutionary mindsets. One says, "Tear down this fence. It's probably some jerks that put it up anyway." And the other says, "Well, maybe we should know a little more about the circumstances

before we go ripping that thing apart." - Yeah, do our boundaries make us free? Or does the removal of all boundaries make us free? I mentioned that my daughter's has, you know, basically expressed that she feels bad for me and feels like I'm a prisoner to my phone.

But I could say I have all the access to the world of information possible. I can look up anything, I can book any travel with my phone right now possible. We could go to Greece, like I'll book it right now on my phone. It's making me free. Or is it, you know? Or is it something that is actually constraining my experience, depressing my relationships, changing the way that I see the world? Is freedom abstention from potentially dangerous things, or is it engaging with all of it?

I used to smoke when I was in high school. I tried it out. I did it up until college. I love smoking. I haven't smoked in in 10 years. I was never really an addict, but like, I liked it. It was just nice to do with my coffee. And now - - It's a great breath combo, the coffee and the smoking together. - Ooh, it's such a perfect flavor. But, you know, every time I have a coffee in front of me, I'm like, "Man, I'd like a cigarette."

But if I have had a cigarette, now every time I have a coffee, I'm now gonna have to contend with this thought. Every time you have introduced something addictive into your life, pornography, cigarettes, a drug, indulging yourself with Twitter while you're sitting in a waiting room for a doctor, that at some point is now gonna be the thing that crosses your mind every time you're in a certain environment. Are you more free for engaging with all of these things, or are you less free?

I don't think that a father who is sitting and watching his son's basketball game who is thinking about a cigarette instead of watching his son is free. And I think we as a society have agreed that, like, these things, with these addictive qualities are taking away your freedom. And we might now be trying to expand the scope, I think rightfully so, to a lot of different things, from our technology devices to our food. You know, what if we made things that were not warping our chemical state of mind?

- The movie, the cannon, the universe, the rebels are the good guys, even if there's this internal division, what they want to overturn in the empire, save for, you know, the occasional cranky NeoCon who thinks the Empire is

actually the good guys. "But they brought order to the universe." It's like you couldn't play more to type there, bud. But why is hope more powerful than simply united in opposition? - Just because you know who your enemies are, it doesn't mean that everybody else is your friend.

I don't think that you would necessarily make real, quality friendships in your life based on shared disdain and shared enemies on the playground. That's not necessarily how you're supposed to sort yourself in your life. It might be what you do for survival, which, you know, we can talk about whether or not the Rebel Alliance was united and factions had to come together purely to survive, the Death Star probably did force that, but a successful rebellion is going to give people something that they are trying to build.

It is not enough just to destroy. I think the Death Star might be a good place to zoom in on this as a motivating factor for how these different factions come together. So you've got the burn it all down wing of the Rebel Alliance led by Saw Gerrera in "Rogue One." And then you've got the institutionalists who wanna build. They can't get along, they can't do anything, and be successful against the Empire until the Empire overreaches.

They decide that the only way to quash the rebellion, to unite all the star systems, is to unite them in fear. And they build the Death Star to do this. And with the Death Stars, as Tarkin says in the original "Star Wars," you know, "They will be able to keep all the star systems in line." But that's not what happens, is it? Like, people don't just roll over and take it when their lives are at risk.

They will band together with other people to try to survive. And the Rebel Alliance absolutely does that. - You can kind of see a Death Star moment in China with the lockdowns that happened. You know, we're having this conversation at the beginning of 2023, and here you have an ostensibly empire-like regime, no voting, it's just a unitary state. And yet they went all the way to we're gonna beat you up if you attempt to leave this iPhone factory.

And despite billionaires being disappeared, like Jack Ma, people were like, "We can't take this anymore," and rose up, and now all these COVID

lockdown restrictions are being lifted in a unitary authoritarian regime. It's like, you can only go so far, no matter how much power you think you have. - They say this in "Andor," but the control of regimes is always more brittle than it looks. It is always cracking right around the seams. And these small acts of rebellion are always happening in societies in ways that you can't see.

It might be what the artist is painting on the corner. It might just be the thoughts that your citizenry are having. It could be a business that a person starts. Like, heck, in China during some of these lockdowns that they've been having, a guy going to open up his store when the government has said that it all must be closed is an act of rebellion. Even from that to symbols carrying around an umbrella in Hong Kong at the wrong time could be seen as a political statement.

Like there are all these small acts of rebellion happening, and regimes have to try so hard to tamp down on all of that. I think when, like, we as people who are lovers of freedom really, really realize that, like, we don't have to try that hard to build movements around our ideas. We don't really have to try to come up with these messaging campaigns and, you know, putting money in just the right place to get people to believe in freedom.

People feel it in their bones. It's really a question I think of when do the bad guys overstretch? When do they overreach in their authority? The Death Star is like the biggest overreach. You make people feel completely existentially threatened, they will rise up and they will overthrow you because they have to, they have no choice. - I wanna turn to redemption. "Star Wars" has a lot of redemption stories, obviously, you know, we've talked about many already.

Darth Vader, the fact that he has that Force ghost moment despite being kind of a demon for the better part of his life. - Well, space Nazi, I think that's pretty accurate. - Yeah, yeah. A super-space Nazi. What are the lessons of redemption that "Star Wars" has to teach? - Well, I think one thing that, you know, we've kind of touched on is this need to be humbled in the world that you operate in. Luke Skywalker, in Episode Five, he is an idealist.

He is a person who's on the hero's journey. He's gonna be a Jedi, and he thinks he's gonna save the galaxy. And I don't think he's

really ever contended when he goes to Dagobah to study under Yoda with the possibility that, like, he too could find himself in the Empire. Like he too could possibly be a person who does evil in the galaxy. And then he goes down into the cave, he goes down into the cave in Dagobah, surrounded by snakes and vines and all this stuff.

And he confronts Vader, a vision of Vader. He sees him for real and he fights him and he cuts his mask off, the head falls to the ground, and underneath the mask is Luke Skywalker. He looks himself right in the eye, and he has this realization, this moment that "Star Wars" is giving us throughout every trilogy that it's done, which is you too can become the Empire. You too could be Darth Vader if you make the wrong choices.

And then he starts making wrong choices. He immediately goes back up and tries to save Han and Leia, exerting control over fate. And he takes one step closer to being more machine than man. He loses his hand, and he goes down that journey towards being Darth Vader that he doesn't realize until "Return of the Jedi," Darth Vader's on the ground in front of him, and he's looking at his own robot hand, and he's looking at Darth Vader's cutoff robot hand and going, "Ah, crap."

(both laughing) "If I strike him, I did it. Yoda was right." The cave moment is the moment where you face your greatest fear, and it is usually that you're gonna become your father. That you're gonna become the thing that you set out to destroy. I wanna make the world a better place. Like, I wanna save humanity. I want to try to make everybody love each other. But what if, in my commitment to those values, the commitment to that purpose, like, I'm like, "All right, well, I might have to break a couple of eggs to get there."

Like, this is reality. This is what our kids are gonna run up against when they try to, you know, deal with things like climate change. We need to try and get our situation of emissions under control. We need to see what's going wrong with all this extreme weather that we might be confronting. Are we gonna let it go and let it happen? Or are we gonna micromanage people's lives to try to control the future? This is the "Star Wars" story, and it all really happens in the cave of just, it's looking in the mirror.

- Is there any redemption lesson outside of Darth Vader that has the same force, if you will? I'm struggling actually a little bit to remember how the Kylo Ren story ends. Those movies got a little unmemorable for me at least, like, what happens, you know? - I don't begrudge you for that. There's another big redemption story in "Star Wars," and it happens with Kylo Ren

in Episode Seven through Nine. And so there was, you know, the moment where he kills his father in "The Force Awakens," and Han Solo rightly calculated that this was going to break his son.

In "Episode Eight, The Last Jedi," we do see everything start to fall apart. Even Kylo Ren's masters says, "The deed broke you when you killed your father. It split you in two." Kylo Ren immediately cannot bifurcate his identity anymore. In the final movie, Kylo Ren is alone in a moment of stillness and quiet on, you know, a rainy planet on a ship. And all of a sudden, he hears his father. I don't know if it was a Force ghost, I don't know if it was a vision, if it was a mental episode that he was having, but all of a sudden, Harrison Ford, Han Solo, is standing behind him.

He says, "Hey son." And he talks to him, and he turns around, and they replay the moment that they had in Episode Seven on the bridge. They almost have the same conversation, "Dad, I know what I have to do, but I don't have the strength to do it." Han Solo just again puts his hand on his face. He says like, "My son is alive, and I'll do whatever you need." And instead of, again, violently attacking his father, he throws the light saber into the sea, and at the end, it was, again, just the love of his father that was able to bring the son back.

Whereas in the original, it was the love of the son that was able to bring the father back. You know, we've just got to constantly be reaching out with grace towards people who have fallen short of our love and our expectations. And I think often about my daughter, what are the things that she could do that would just make me go, "Wow, where has my kid gone?" It's my greatest nightmare. I'm sure it's yours.
- Yeah, yeah.

- And you just can't give up hope, that they're always in there, even in their darkest moments. 'Cause I had a dark chapter as well, but people believed in me, and they reached out their hand, and I always came back. - I ask this of every guest, how do you think about your role in the American story? You know, "Star Wars" is a sweeping story. It's this archetypal Jungian, Joseph Campbell journey. But we all have that journey.

So how do you think about yours? - I think where I'm at these days is just to remind people of the stories that matter in our culture. There's so much noise going on right now in the world, and we are forgetting what we have in common. Jonathan Haidt, the sociologist, he has said numerous times in his writing and speaking that successful liberal democracies are defined by three things. Society has to have strong social bonds, strong civic institutions, and then shared stories.

Now strong social bonds can be family, your friendships, people on your block, your community. So you gotta have that. Then strong civic institutions are going to be, hmm, the courts, rule of law. It's gonna be, you know, police, like trust between them and the community. It might also be churches as a civic institution. Those two things are both cracking. Social bonds, loneliness is running amok. Civic institutions, rule of law, trust in the government is breaking down.

- All time lows.
- So what's left? Shared stories. There's not much left besides the things that we are able to talk to one another about and believe in. Now America has a couple of shared stories. There's one shared story, which is religion. You know, I would say that by and large, we used to be a majority kind of Christian nation. So we had an understanding of where we came from together in the very beginning, that we're made in the image of God, a loving father.

And you know that neighbor who you hate, he is also his son too. That is also a child of God. So religion's on the downslide. There's another shared story. Our founding. Where did we come from as a country? Who are we? Are we the 1776 project or the 1619 project? Are we a country born in hope and ideals, or are we a country born in sin? Surprise, the answer is both. We don't have to choose. But that story is also now in contention.

We do not know who we are. That is why statues are being torn down. It's why the kids aren't saying the Pledge of Allegiance in classrooms. It's why, you know, we don't have American flags on every street corner. We usually just have just sport teams, foreign flags, and, I don't know, MAGA flags, and, like, it's not the American story right now. We are losing that. Now, this isn't gonna make everybody happy, but I actually really happen to believe that myths, fiction, movies, there is a moral duty for these things to step forward and help fill the gap.

Not because they can, "Star Wars" cannot fix civic institutions and fraying social bonds, and it cannot be our shared story, but it could certainly try, and it could make things a little bit better. You know, if I am able to talk to my far-left friend about the moral choices that Luke had to make with his father and whether or not to redeem the space Nazi who had fallen from grace and done horrible things, maybe I can talk to him about cancel culture and redemption in the real world.

That's what "Star Wars" can do. And I think that that has been my calling for the past couple of years is just to bang the drum about other shared stories

that we could love to gather and try to preserve. - Thanks for being on "Dad Saves America." This has been a great journey together. - Well, the Force fixed the world. The dads will save America. Everything's great. - I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Stephen Kent.

We'll drop a link to "How the Force Can Fix the World" down below. Like I mentioned at the top, you and your young padawan can put Stephen's work into practice by watching your favorite "Star Wars" scenes with our new viewing guide. Click the link above or find it down below. Enter your email and receive a copy of the "Dad Saves America" "Star Wars" viewing guide in your inbox. My key takeaway from this conversation is that life lessons for our kids are all around us, but it's up to us as parents to identify and communicate these lessons through content filtering and conversation.

We can make sure they stay away from the dark side of the Force. If you enjoyed this video, please share it with your friends and family, and be sure to like, subscribe, and hit that notification bell. At "Dad Saves America," we believe that dads are heroes that play an essential role in overcoming the challenges we all face together. And now we leave you with a dad doing something awesome. - "I hear you're turning nine. I can't think of a more perfect time to visit.

You'll never forget it. May the force be with you. George Lucas." - What?
- What is happening? - Congratulations. (child laughs) (logo whooshes)