

Missy Singer Dumars Awarepreneurs interview

📅 Wed, 8/12 11:32AM ⌚ 56:03

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

farm, food, people, work, business, live, grow, year, missy, coaching, women, western new york, honoring, chef, question, life, community, support, farmers, cook

SPEAKERS

Paul Zelizer, Missy Singer Dumars

P Paul Zelizer 00:05
Hi, this is Paul Zelizer. Welcome to another episode of The aware printers podcast. This podcast is all about the intersection of three things, conscious business, social impact and awareness practices. Each episode I do a deep dive interview with the thought leader in this intersection, someone who has market tested experience and is already transforming many lives. Before I introduce today's guests in our topic, I have one request. If you could go over to iTunes or whatever app you're listening to the show and hit the subscribe button, do a rating and review. It helps tremendously. We'd really appreciate it. Today I'm thrilled to introduce you to my friend and colleague Missy singer dumar and our topic is women food and spirituality. Missy is a conscious businesswoman and coach, a mindful farmer, curious cook and a spiritual seeker. She has been coaching and consulting for business owners for 20 years. her newest and most passionate about Is crown Hill Farm? Missy, welcome to the show.

M Missy Singer Dumars 01:04
Thank you so much, Paul. I'm really, really honored and excited to be here with you.

P Paul Zelizer 01:10

Mr. You know, our name is aware partners and one of the ways we like to get to know somebody is to hear about a wellness or an awareness practice that you personally use to bring your best self, your most resilient self to this important, but not always easy work.

M

Missy Singer Dumars 01:26

Well, that's an interesting question, Paul, because to me, and especially now that I live and work on the farm, there is not one practice, but I feel like everything I do is about mindful practice. And I've always strongly felt even before the farm, that maybe it's my Jewish background that brings the sacred into everyday life. That that is mindfulness and sacred work is part of everyday life. Whether it's making a meal or washing something, or folding laundry or tending animals or working in the garden, and so I don't have a specific practice in that way, I just try and bring mindfulness and awareness of the sacredness of life to as much of everything as I can. And I don't do that all the time. But I weave it as much as often as possible.

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Paul Zelizer 02:27

But long Converse, I grew up Jewish as well, long conversations in my family, particularly my mom about that being one of the more part of the Judas Jewish tradition. We love that, that it's an embodied practice more than some, and there's so much wisdom there, like you said about food and relationships and you don't it's not so much a spiritual bypassing kind of thing. It's like this is your life and pay attention in it and celebrate it and do it in community and be as attentive to these things. I just I love that you brought that I don't think anybody's ever said that. Thanks.

M

Missy Singer Dumars 03:04

Thank you. Yeah, I'm totally a ritual junkie and, as I call it, and, you know, one of the things I think about ritual is you know, what is ritual but bringing regular attention to an intention. And so that goes for brushing your teeth. You know, the intention is to have clean healthy mouth and teeth and you give it regular attention by doing it that goes with cooking a meal, the intention is to nourish or bring your mouth some pleasure or your belly some pleasure, and you give attention to that intention as you make the meal. And so I think that philosophy has infused as much of everything I do, especially on the farm.

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Paul Zelizer 03:46

So we could like be here for like, I don't know, 20 years or something, talking about all the various things you've done. But yeah, and, and how you landed on what you're doing now.

Give our audience a little bit of sense. You've had corporate career and then like years decades of coaching and consulting for business owners, like how did you get into that part of your work?

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Missy Singer Dumars 04:11

Oh my god, I think I stumbled on it. But really, no matter what interest or career path I've pursued, whether it is entertainment lighting, or I was a massage therapist, or just anything, business is woven through, and I grew up in a family business that was started by my great grandfather that I'm actually named for. And my, my grandfather and his brother took over and then my father and his cousin took over and I grew up, you know, as a little kid playing in the store and everything and, you know, the whole family helped out at various times in the stores and in the business and was the discussion around the Holiday Inn. dinner table and, and all that. So I think there's just a way of business. Business has always been there. And I stumbled into coaching really I wasn't when I was a massage therapist, someone invited me to a holistic business coaching training, you know, event, and I went, and I was like, Oh my god, this is what I've been seeking, like, a way to make tangible my sense of purpose. At that point, I had a strong sense of purpose on the planet, and didn't know how to turn it into a physical thing that can then manifest a sustainable income. And here are these people talking about that and I was like, blown away and started volunteering at their events and they eventually hired me into their team and then I became one of their coaches, and continued on business coaching from there, but truly even before that, I was doing a lot of healing and counseling work. consulted with various family run businesses over the years because I think I just have this natural tendency to see systems and see efficiency and walk into a place and make it better. And so I can't help myself. So I do that. And even I remember, it's funny to talk about it. I remember when I was in college working for a temp agency, and a job I was assigned, was entering Spanish language school book orders for scholastic for the city of New York. And I was just the form of data entry was so disorganized and inefficient that I made it better and rearrange the spreadsheet and then before you know it, I'm managing the room full of temps, you know, and I just like I can't help myself and so there's just a way that that's happened over the years and from a young person. I often felt really frustrated with modern machinations of life with technology and money systems and inequality is in in those things and frustrated by it and always wondering, like, why can't people just exist? Why does it have to be complicated? And as I got involved in my most recent relationship, marriage, and my eyes opened to growing food and we decided to buy this farm I there's just something about landing at the farm that was like, right this is it. This is this is living like working living there the same thing growing food for myself and for others, and I don't have to do anything else just live to exist and exist to live. And so that's kind of the very short version of how I landed here on a farm.



Paul Zelizer 07:56

Then, spurred you know, decades you're doing teamwork and still do and we'll put a link to that and you know your integration of the practical and really nuanced you just like you said you just have such a incredible ability to see how things can flow easier and work more smoothly. I've always admired that about you and and you brought that skill set with understanding people and then your spirituality you're already doing this incredibly holistic and beautiful job of that in your business coaching and then boom, you landed on a farm It was like it was fun to watch you admit listeners if you don't know this, Missy and I don't even know how long we've known each other



Missy Singer Dumars 08:39

long asked.



Paul Zelizer 08:44

Totally. Yeah, yeah. In the in the world of online, you know, relationships, which is maybe only like 1520 years old. We've known each other for a good portion of that. To watch you already have this whole list mindset and business acumen and then landed on the fire is like, Whoa, yeah. All right. So we will put a link to Mrs. business coaching work here. And there's a lot of richness there and go check it out. And our topic today is a little bit more about this newer iteration your work. So you land on this farm, you're in upstate New York, I still live in upstate New York, if you don't know this place, we're talking like as green and wet, especially for a guy who used to live there, but now lives in the desert retirement just like rolling hills and this incredible tradition of food and place and communities feeding themselves. So what was it like after years of being, you know, significantly online, not exclusively, so but business coaching and wellness and all that, and then boom, you land in a place and you landed on a farm and how did that start to influence your thinking?



Missy Singer Dumars 09:57

Oh, my goodness, it First of all, I have to giggle a little cuz you talked about upstate New York and anyone here would cringe cuz we're technically, people here get very particular about it being Western



10:10

Western New York.



Paul Zelizer 10:13

Born in New York City, my anything I



Missy Singer Dumars 10:16

know everything out of the city is considered. Right? In truth we're really far west. Yeah, I mean, it's nine hour drive straight across to the water to give people an image. So, to the ocean. I can see water actually from my window as I sit here of the Great Lakes. But yeah, I'm really far west. And I think the biggest thing is having been in a number of sacred traditions, whether it was more Earth based spirituality or even my Jewish roots that has a lot of awareness to seasonal cycles. I paid attention to that and the turn of seasons and honoring secret On holidays for those things, and yet, living on a farm and then turning to growing food and raising animals has insanely deepened my understanding of what those things represents. So there was a way that I lived in talked about, say, a Solstice or an Equinox and the meaning of that time, but when it affects my day to day life, there's a different understanding that comes through. And every day I'm out on the farm, touching soil, touching plants, watching animals and all their silly antics. And they're, I feel like every day I receive a lesson that's applicable to life, whether it's business or relationship or any other aspect of life. And so being on the farm has just brought a deeper, richer layer. To my business coaching and how I see the inter like there's a few places one would be the inter relatedness of all things and the inter relationships, which then comes back into how I look at business and business partnerships and all the different moving parts of a business and how you know, adjusting one dial of your business really has a rippling impact in a different way. That's one place where nature on the farm has really influenced my coaching. And another would be that the farm cycle is a massive slowdown. I went from doing a lot of Internet Marketing. I was Infusionsoft certified consultant and so I was building a lot of online digital marketing systems and platforms and launches and that that whole lifestyle It was like now now now go go go you know and tech industry Have connection to tech industry and agile philosophy where you put something out you get feedback, you iterate, you do it again you do it again you do it again with really short timeframes. And the farm is a different pattern and cycle it's longer it's slower, I've got like one shot a year to implement my plan and then I had to wait a whole year for the season to return to try again. And that slowed down and that awareness to larger broader cycles and phases has really come back into how I look at business and how I support my clients to look at their business and to slow down also and relax into the broader cycles and phases within their within their business and their work. Like it's almost like I could hear the gears changing right like you know California is Missy used to live in California and you know in future



Paul Zelizer 14:00

soft and that kind of incredibly precise marketing pathways and you know, that whole world to like farm in western New York not upstate New York Western New green and if anybody hasn't yet you gotta go check out Mrs Instagram photos, you know, pictures of cute ducks and his giant things that grow in the lushness of Western New York I'm going to teach you this



Missy Singer Dumars 14:32

taken me a long time to get used to



Paul Zelizer 14:36

and like rows that are being you know, put have compost added and like one of the offerings that you will get into it some of the nuances of what you're doing but like I was looking at your women's Solstice journey circle, which is very spiritual offering on the farm and, and how it was like to anything you could say about being a spiritual person in a very kind of special In one iteration of spirituality in that more like coaching and marketing and online business world, and that has depth and value, I don't mean to, in any way, say anything bad about that. But then I could like hear the gearshift of Missy leading women's journey circle on summer solstice from the farm and I could like literally hear and feel it. And I wonder if there's anything you could say about doing spiritual work in this having had both of these experiences being in the marketing and online world and now being on the farm?



Missy Singer Dumars 15:36

Yeah, I mean, I think the biggest thing goes back to your very first question and my response in that what I mean, when I lived in San Francisco, I was in a 400 square foot apartment, right on the edge of the tenderloin two blocks from Civic Center. You know, all night, a traffic light was changing color in my Studio window, and there was noise and dizziness and that kind of energy all the time, we never knew what kind of person was screaming on the street or car honking or whatever. And I would still do this kind of spiritual work, like the women's circle is something I've been was gifted to me when I lived in Vegas, so early 2000 2001, and two, somewhere in there 18 years ago or so. And I've shared it in a number of places around the country wherever I've lived. But in those times, it was like, spiritual practice was something separate was, you know, I would step away from life to go on a retreat, and deeply connect in those kinds of ways and then go back to busy life. Whereas here on the farm, that perspective that I spoke About the beginning

with your first question of mindful practice weaves into every day. I'm much closer to that. And so to have a spiritual women's circle just seems natural. And now as I say that I'm thinking about, you know, when I used to lead a lot of retreats, or co facilitate a lot of retreats, and community gatherings, you know, out in the woods for three days and ceremony and circle and drum and fire and healing and all that kind of stuff. And I was always wondering, the question of how do we take that ecstatic experience and bring it back into our lives, you know, when I would often facilitate the workshop at the end of the event that was that discussion. And so there's something about being on the farm. Now that it's not there's less separation between those things, and I think that's something I want for people is to find a way to bring Sacred awareness in whatever traditional form works for you into, into the everyday, you know, I think about things on the farm, I talked to the plants and honor that they're living beings and they have a lifecycle and they do things and I thank them every day for their gifts. I think the chickens every day when they when I collect their eggs, and even little things like I did a bunch of research recently about the Jewish traditions around animal care and animal slaughter and all that. And one of the things that I learned was in Jewish tradition, you don't take eggs from underneath a chicken because you would never remove a child from its mother site. And so I won't collect eggs if a chicken is sitting on them or I'll move the chicken to another Nester encourage her to go eat and wait till she's not looking to to collect the eggs and those little details really make a difference.

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Paul Zelizer 19:04

It's a beautiful story. Thank you. So another thing that's integrated in this new iteration, it's like, there's the farm as we haven't talked about all the different things going on there, but there's like, see, because there's a lot, right? There's like a CSA, community supported agriculture. Missy and her collaborators grow food. And you can buy it in various ways, including a way that you get a box delivered with awesome food. And every week in a CSA, there's events that were happening, we'll talk about COVID-19 and how you know, but there were like weddings and women's gatherings and all kinds of things happening in this physical space. There's the intentionality of business and continuing to help values based in spirit based business owners grow and thrive. And then there's this like justice part, particularly food justice and economic inequality and how that shows up. And some people just can't afford to buy really good food and others really struggle given the system we have. And again, the way that's all integrated, but I just like, tease that thread out a little bit and talk to us a little bit about your passion for food justice, your passion for quality, like talking, having a whole series about women and food in western New York, right? Like, it's about that part of Missy, Missy, the activist, or at least Missy the person who cares deeply about equality.

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Missy Singer Dumars 20:39

Well, it's interesting, Paul, because I think I've always had an activist pardon me and as a high school student, I was very active in Jewish use group and always held roles in the social action realm. You know, we would take trips to Washington, DC and lobby our senators and representatives on all the time. topics and things that were important to us. And I wrote letters and you know, started programs did a lot of work with homeless people in my county where I lived and like, just on and on a lot of social action and advocacy as a young person. And as I got into college, and I went into entertainment, lighting and went into relationships and life and all that stuff that fall by the wayside, in terms of action, I always kept in mind and an eye to what was happening in the world, but I wasn't taking action. And I often would realize that that was a piece that was missing. And earlier I mentioned as I got into business coaching, having a sense of purpose, but not knowing what to do with it. And the sense of purpose was in its broadest form, I would say with unconditional love that I was here to be a representation of unconditional love and to be unconditional love and to give it and In, over the years in my own maturing, boiling that down and understanding more of what that means for me, that it was about that it is about that every single person is, you know, honored and wanted as exactly who they are. And that's something that which is a form of unconditional love. So it's a more tangible form of unconditional love. And as I got more into exploring food, which really started from a place of nutrition and health and wellness, and my passion for growing for foods started with health and wellness, and then from that to loving to cook and seeing how those two things came together, and then oh my gosh, I could grow the food too. It became this understanding like all people should have, like food is basic as beyond basic. It's the basic most basic thing There is and people should have access to that. And when I look at the relationship of food and health and wellness and in my own journey with food relationship, and I've tried every kind of dietary choice imaginable, or I've had cooked for friends who have and explored a lot, and in the more recent years, right before moving to this farm, learning new information about food and really diving deeper into how food is grown and created and processed and made and change, changing my own choices around what I choose to put in my body, to feel better and to feed my body what it was designed and made to eat and process. I just started to see that there's a circle that most people, particularly in America are stuck in that is a self perpetuating circle of what I would call non food, food, illness and poverty. And I've thought about that circle for a number of years and, you know, I still sit with the question of how does someone get out of that circle? How do you break it? What is a step and being on the farm and learning to grow food and understanding food diversity, and understanding skills to preserve, grow, maintain your own food, sustain your own food. I started to see that perhaps growing your own food, I mean, really just planting one seed in one pot of dirt on your windowsill is a step to getting off of that circle and being empowered With your own food, and you know, as I learned about seed saving and plants, it was just, I mean, abundance is natural.

abundance is present and natural and waiting, you know, it's like you plant one seed, and a plant grows, they have pepper and you get a handful of pepper plants, and each of those will feed you but then each of those has hundreds of seeds. And each of those makes a bunch of peppers and on and on and on. It's like abundance is right there and available from one seed. And so that's where my passion around that has come from. And I still struggle with it. You know, to be real, I still struggle with the question, because I know that the food I grow and the methodologies I choose to grow it create expensive food. So there's a way that I still struggle with the fact that I'm perpetuating Food for wealthier people. And I'm still in the inquiry of how to flip that on this farm and create a different reality around that, but here in the Buffalo area, there's so much food active advocacy and amazing people that I've met and that is shifting and changing slowly and surely. And that's where what I've been doing this year with the free classes for women, not for women, but of women in food comes into play a little bit because it is accessible information on how to grow how to cook. prepare food that anyone can have access to.

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Paul Zelizer 26:44

I'm so glad you said something about that one part, right that it's really funny actually Missy like you went from like busy city downtown life in a 400 square foot studio to a farm. I moved to New Mexico and 1993 and bought a farm with some friends my daughter was born there and studied permaculture and we grew a half acre garden together we weren't so much selling it but you know I was the kid from the suburbs who really didn't understand where food came from and learned how to grow and chickens the first time ever slaughtered a chicken. Yeah, you chicken comes in a in a plastic thing, right. Like, like I had to learn how to do this if I that that was seven and a half year. And now I live three blocks from downtown Albuquerque and a 480 480 square foot tiny house, right. And I moved here because I was being called into social entrepreneurship circles that are more active, but I brought that with me I recently I did an exchange with a friend and I did some consulting with them on their podcast idea and they gave me a word box, right? Anybody doesn't know what that is. It's a very easy these variables. ticular worms called Red worms that help you compost in a very small area. And he's like we designed it and like so and I have a little kitchen garden outside my door and I try to buy from you know, it's like brought, it doesn't have to look like moving to a farm is what I'm trying to say. Although I love that you live on a farm Well,

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Missy Singer Dumars 28:20

yeah, yeah, and I mean my farm is 13 acres but truthfully, I feed 18 people vegetables and another 20 not 18 people 18 households vegetables, another 20 households, eggs of one form or another. My gardens are maybe 3000 square feet of garden space. So it's a really

it's not even a quarter of an acre, let alone a half. Right so I have 13 acres here on this property. I'm not growing I'm most of that I'm not a big scale farm and actually that's, you know, that's part of the advocacy on the farm side is around Soil and tending the farm and staying away from, you know, the larger scale you get. The harder it is to I think the harder it is to use sustainable methods and techniques. So, you know, plus I'm one person and I'm not willing to burn myself out. You know, there's only so much I can do this year I've been blessed to have what's called a woofar on my farm, which is a organization that helps organic farmers and volunteers find each other and they volunteer in exchange for room and board so I have an amazing Wallet for and so it's like the weeds are managed and everything gets watered and I can actually do some pest management more mindful pest management this year. Usually I just let whatever happened happens because I'm one person and I can't do it all. So So it's been a gift to

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Paul Zelizer 30:00

Well, let's do this. Let's take a break and hear word from our sponsors. And when we come back, I want to hear the very specific things that you're doing in terms of the programs and the offerings you have. First, I just want to say thank you. We're not like most podcasts that have like a meal delivery service or website service as their sponsor, we have hundreds of sponsors. It's called the where printers community and the way it works is, it's based on science. Science tells us let's use changing your eating. Since we're talking about food today, if you in some patterns, and it's not serving you and you want to make some changes, now, certainly you need enough resources by decent food and not everybody has that. But if you do, it's still can be easy to kind of not follow through and just get busy and you know, kind of slip into some old patterns. science tells us that the biggest predictor of whether somebody stays with the changes they want to make in their lives is what they call socialism. Part A, what a 12 step program is built on, or you join the gym because you want to work out with other people. And there's research that says you're more likely to actually stick with it and hit your goals. Same is true business. We have some people that you can say, Wow, today's Fridays, we're recording this and we have a tradition in the aware printers community of what we call celebrations and acknowledgments what happened this week that was either really hard and you want to just kind of lean in and tell us about it. Or something awesome happened, you got that new client or your book just was published or your new course went live right, the ups and downs of people who are on a similar journey, who understand these kind of businesses that have nuance and desire to have positive impact depth, all woven together in a beautiful example of what Missy is doing, for example. That's what we do in the entrepreneurs community. So if you could use some more support for that kind of a business, go check out the aware printers community at aware printers comm forward slash community and thank you for printing. for sponsoring this podcast. So Missy, let's put

on our entrepreneur glasses, right? Like there's a very there's one or two things here we could unpack because you only offer one thing right now. I'm joking. Yeah. One of the reasons people listen to this podcast, they're always saying, hey, Paul, make sure you ask like, how do you pay your bills? What are you offering, and particularly one of the things I would love to start with? We're going to talk about the actual offerings, but one of the things Missy is, you are might we call it a multi passionate entrepreneur? You got a few things in the air, right?



32:34

Yeah.



Paul Zelizer 32:37

Talk to if I'm a listener, like Wow, she's got a lot going on. How does she balance all that? I can't imagine a listener not asking that question. Anything you could say about like, what you've learned about balancing and maybe some balls you've dropped and having a bunch of things in the air.



Missy Singer Dumars 32:56

Yeah, I mean, I think the biggest thing is a lot of friction. Support. Like before the break I had mentioned having a woofer or in turn on the farm and even when I had a Infusionsoft consulting business, I had a team. And I think one of the things to consider is how to be creative with with getting support, because, you know, I always thought, oh, and you know, I don't make enough to hire employees and bla bla bla bla bla, but it's really simple. You work their cost into what you're charged because it's a cost of doing business. Right? Um, you know, so I would have I had a couple of team members that would help with the digital implementation. And so when I created package pricing, I included how many hours I think it would take them for that package to have their Their work on it and their eyes on it. And not only that, whatever fee they told me, they were going to charge me I added 10 to \$20 an hour and build that into the price because it was important. It's important to me always to value people as best as I can, for what they, you know, for what they do, most people undervalue themselves in their rates, I find, and so I would, you know, I had one person who said, \$60 an hour, I'm like, Alright, well, I'll charge my client \$80 an hour, and maybe the first couple of projects you do with me, I'll pay you \$6 an hour, but my goal is to get you to a quality that's \$80 an hour and to pay you that. And so, that's, you know, that's one thing I thought of and so even now on the farm to have support, now I have a volunteer support. And I make sure she has, you know, I don't just give her a 10th

platform to live on and A spigot with cold water. She's here in my nice beautiful farmhouse and do my best to provide, you know, whatever food she asks for in good quality. And not only that on our her time, and space and time parameters and her time off parameters and not work anyone into the ground, anything like that, except maybe myself, although I try not to do that too. And so, you know, I talked about understanding the impact and the interrelationships of all things. And that goes for not just plants and animals on the farm, but it goes for people supporting me. It goes for vendors, I work with partnerships, I work with all of the above and honoring who they are and actually I just I was just listening to an interview. with Danny and I can't think of his last name, who is the founder of the Shake Shack chain. I was listening to a podcast with him. And he was talking about the mindset shift he had with COVID. Because before COVID, he tried to be a really good employer, and he realized, during COVID, he was gonna have to let go of a lot of people owning a hospitality and restaurant business, multi restaurant business, and he made a commitment to be a really quality on employer and take care of his people. And that's, you know, that's where it's at. It's like how, how can you know, take care, get support, which is really the beginning of the question you asked me, Paul. And then honor the people who are supporting you. And so for me, it happens a lot in social media in terms of other partnerships. As things have pivoted and changed In our current climate in the world, I found a lot of new partnerships business wise for the farm. And we do a lot of honoring each other publicly on social media and post and then cross post and then cross tag again and across tech again. And that's a point where I'm like, Alright, we got to stop cross tagging the same post. But, you know, there's just mutual love and care. And what I've found is that leaning into the community, leaning into the support, and recognizing it, honoring it, valuing those people, opportunities are showing up left and right, you know, somehow on Instagram, I met a new chef, his wife and their little one came to visit the farm a week or so ago. And like that night I got a message Hey, this other chef wants to know how to get this thing from you that I posted about. It's a chef I've wanted to get in with for like a year. You know, it's just collectively fading, those kinds of relationships and partnerships, whether it's your team, whether it's a vendor, whether it's a business partner, whether it's your product yourself. All those things. I don't even remember your initial question, but that's where I might

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Paul Zelizer 38:17

know that makes. The initial question was like having a bunch of different things in the air and one support team and yeah, I love that answer.

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Missy Singer Dumars 38:26

Yeah, yeah. And systems, which you and I have talked about systematizing things. So as

soon as I done something once or twice, and I see okay, this is what works and doesn't work. I systematize it. You know, we've referenced in this conversation a couple of times the women in food of West New York, which this year is an online series of live. I'm calling them episodes with women in food industry teaching, whether it's a cooking class or gardening class or some other kind of food related Learning and after the first two or three, it's like I've got a checklist every time I set up the next guest and you know, build the page, write the emails, copy and paste from the previous emails. And so I am naturally a systems thinker. And I think that helps me tremendously in juggling all the things because as soon as I can systematize something, look at the things I repeat the same every time, make them more efficient systematize them I do that. And that's a natural thing for me, but just asking yourself the question, What am I doing repeatedly? And how can I not do that over and over again? or How can I make it faster and more efficient? is a great place to start.

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Paul Zelizer 39:39

Nice. So that's just a little more specific on the women in food. Western New York, not upstate New York Western New

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Missy Singer Dumars 39:50

so we're gonna go there, this whole conversation

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Paul Zelizer 39:55

It's Friday morning, sorry listener falls in a weird mood. So the idea of that series is,

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Missy Singer Dumars 40:05

yeah, that's it started last year I started hosting some farm to table dinners here. It's amazed me meeting chefs who don't know seasonality of the products they work with. You know, I had a, I had a chef. So I wrote and said, hey, I've got rashes available, and they were like, Oh, I'm gonna wait for the cucumber so I could do something with both of them. And I'm thinking when the cucumbers are ready, the radishes are going to be done and gone. Do not know how things grow. And so I love farm to table dinners. I love attending them. I love participating in them and I'm naturally a hostess My grandmother was a hostess extraordinary. And I think I got some of that in my blood. And so I love having people here where they can touch and see where the food grows and then sit onto a table where it came out of the ground and when you know, got washed, cooked and went right on your plate. There's just There's no lightness to eating food that way. It's like just the

flavor and the energy of food when it hasn't shipped and hasn't been sitting out or wasn't picked too early, so preserves longer all those things. And so I was doing some farm to table dinners last year, and I met a couple of women chefs in the area. And you know, in general, I pay attention to the women farmers and the women chefs being identified as a woman myself. And I thought, oh, would it be fun to do farm to table dinner series next year where people can maybe buy in for the whole series for the season of women shops, women farmers, and so it's definitely on that path and talking to some of the shafts and lining up dates for them. And then COVID was like, Alright, well, no gatherings are happening here anytime soon. And I thought, How can I maintain this momentum and this interest in it and part of the interest also came from, you know, I pay attention in all respects not just food but, you know, media in general around the diversity or lack there of voices. And one of the things I would notice and get frustrated about here in western New York is seeing the same male chefs and male farmers, multi generation male farmers, featured in any article about those topics, or farm to table or any of those things. And unlike there are so many more people, men and women, but there's just so many more people in so many more rich voices and how can I elevate and make those voices more visible? And so that was part of the whole women, Chef women farmer idea as well as like, let's bring more awareness to the other people, the smaller scale farmers, not the big names and every restaurant features and every every newspaper in the region has, you know, there's certain farms that just every restaurant goes to automatically. And there's so many smaller farmers like myself who are doing really interesting things if you take the time to find out about it, and so that was part of it, and then right before COVID as well, I have a mastermind group. We've been together a very long time. We all known each other for many years. And we did in March, we had done sort of a quarterly visioning activity like a three hour call was super fun and deep and rich. And we spent some time visioning five and 10 years out and so I looked at my, my year this year and and asked myself will, will be a five year version of the farm to table dinners. Well, maybe it would be a whole conference of women and food and I was like, Alright, five to 10 years, maybe I'll have some kind of conference. But with COVID and now I'm bringing it online. And as I say this, I'm getting chills in my whole body. I realized this is going to be a one to two year vision. A five to 10 year vision, right. And so that's kind of what's happening. And that's been super fun. And it's still happening the entire season. probably at least through September, possibly through October. I do have one chef that wants to cook with October foods for everybody. And it's been fun and we get different people on each call. Some people come every time some people come and go, the the chefs and farmers join each other's calls. And it's starting to get some traction and interest and visibility through a variety of means I've connected with Yelp, Buffalo and they're gonna sponsor next month, and the owner of one of the local markets here that's kind of a bigger local market. That's opening a new building in the city of Buffalo and then there's his original market is here closer to where I live. He's like, I know I'm an old white dude, but whatever. I continue to

support this, let me know, as you you know, if you want to use our parking lot for the conference or whatever, let me know. And there's a startup that I work with here that that helps bring farmer's food to the chefs and restaurants. And, you know, they're interested in sponsoring things whenever they can, as well. And they're a husband and wife team. And so the wife was going to do one of the episodes as a woman in a different part of the food system here. So there's a lot of things like that that have come to the front. And what's been really interesting and enlightening is to ask my guests about their experience as a woman in the food industry and whatever part of the industry they're in either what their experience has been as a woman or what they feel bad being a woman brings to their work both and or and those responses have been really interesting and enlightening to me and have actually solidified the mission and purpose. And so when I get to the time of actually having an in person conference, there will be part of part of the purpose of the conference is to bring more visibility to the women in food in this region. And part of the purpose of the conference is to bring the women in food together and create a network for each other as well as a way for us to enjoy food together and with each other. So the conference vision, as it stands is partially for the public with classes and tastings and whatever else comes up and then part of it is to have at least one day for the women in the food industry to just cook and enjoy food with each other relax network, get to know one another and and You know, build our own network. And between the two parts, I see my role as helping publicize and bring visibility to the richness of people in food in this region because there is a richness of product here as well.

P

Paul Zelizer 47:20

Love it and congratulations. Yep, sponsoring it. That's a nice feather in your cap. Congratulations. Yeah,

M

Missy Singer Dumars 47:27

yeah, it's been fun. And, you know, it happened because I, they, they partnered with an organization that I'm involved with that I love called creative mornings. And if you're listening creative mornings has chapters all over the world and it's super fun. Community founded on the idea that everyone is creative and everyone is welcome. And they usually as a speaker topic each month and I spoke in May and Yelp happened to sponsor May, and did us and then sponsor co sponsored with creativemornings follow a series of cooking classes and I taught one of the cooking classes and so that started that relationship. But you know, all like what I've talked about everything's into a relationship and fostering and nurturing those connections and those relationships and taking the time to let those relationships reveal themselves and how they want to unfold that night. That's wisdom. I feel like I'm still in the learning process personally in my personal life, as well as

you know, super important in business and has its ups and it's downs.

P

Paul Zelizer 48:38

So we've talked about your actual growing of food and in CSA, as you've referenced, selling to restaurants, to the business coaching, we'll have a link to all these things in the show notes including creative mornings. You have a bounce got disrupted by COVID-19 starting to do some That online like the solstice gathering that happened not too long ago put a link to the only thing I would really love to make sure we cover Missy, we have not talked about your Patreon. I love Patreon.

M

Missy Singer Dumars 49:18

Well, you're my inspiration on Patreon really, you as well as this amazing fiber farm that I follow, who ended up being a great advisor for me she Tammy White was an amazing advisor to me my first experience with a little baby lamb this spring, which was a great gift and once again a testament to community and I think there's something about farm community and food like food and farm community is about sharing information. And in fact, you'll see sometimes a farmer will sell a course in farming and there's a lot of upward Because for generations food wisdom has been handed down generation to generation neighbor to neighbor, Farmer to Farmer, and collaboratively. And so sometimes there's uproar in that community about charging for those things. But that's way off topic. The Patreon I, especially in the time of COVID. And I find more and more every day people are constantly asking me questions, whether it's how to prune or trellis their tomatoes, or what's the recipe for this thing that you just posted a picture of. And it's just gotten to a point where I don't have time to answer things all the time to write but I want to because of that collaborative spirit, like I want to share information I want to help people enjoy food and be in relationship to it and you know, not see cooking as a chore or just something to get through and just Joy, the experience of nourishing themselves. I've like I mentioned earlier I've cooked for every kind of dietary need possible. And I just feel like because you have certain allergies or things you do or don't eat doesn't mean food can't be enjoyable and delicious and pleasing to the eye. And so I always want to help people figure that stuff out in any way I can. And so Patreon was like a way to bring it all together and centralize it and still be really accessible is what it came down to. And so I have Patreon. Set up and there's a lot of different tiers. It's also a little way that I can keep things really accessible at different levels, right so having a \$2 a month level, which I feel like is barely a cup of coffee anymore these days. But you know, a month as well as higher levels of sponsors. ship, our ways that help me It supports the farm helps me feed the animals and everything like that, but also supports me to be able to take time to answer all those questions. And so there's opportunities for live q&a is with me and there's

opportunities to just receive, how to use in, in all things food and nourishment. At the higher levels, there's opportunities to be a little more involved in the farm by naming some of the farm animals or sponsoring a farm animal and things like that, which I've had a lot of fun with. I have actually a classroom of ESL students in California to a virtual farm class back this spring, and they asked if they could adopt a chicken and they named one of my baby chicks. And then every week I would send the teacher pictures that she would share with the class until the end of the school year and so, so I love that kind of adoption. any animal thing as super adorable because it's an orangey yellow chicken but they the class named her snowflake. cracks me. It's not even a white chicken. So cute. I had to keep the name snowflake even though it's never a name. But it's just so adorable. And they sent me like a huge pile of handwritten. All the kids hand wrote thank you notes which was just so sweet and they're just precious to my heart adorable. But through Patreon, there's ways to be more involved in the farm and even to receive gifts from the farm. Because besides fresh produce, I make soaps I dry herbs, I preserve things. make soap in the winter. So certain levels can get little little gifties from the farm farm make gifts as well which is you know, ways to be part of the the food and farm community. totally adorable.

P

Paul Zelizer 53:57

nithi I want to be respectful of your time and our listeners, if there was something that you were hoping we were going to get to on this topic of women food and spirituality that we haven't yet gotten to or something you want to leave our listeners with as a final thought, what would that be?

M

Missy Singer Dumars 54:19

My gosh, that's such a big question. I think what leads me on my life journey is curiosity. And my encouragement to everyone listening is to get curious for me my curiosity led me on this journey to relationship with food, and a relationship with the earth and my wellness and my body. But whatever it is for you. My invitation is to stay in curiosity and ask questions. And and then be our choice with what you learn through that curiosity.

P

Paul Zelizer 55:09

Well, Missy, thank you so much for being on the show.

M

Missy Singer Dumars 55:12

Thank you, Paul so much.



Paul Zelizer 55:15

That's all the time we have for today's episode. Thank you so much for listening. Before we go, quick reminder, we do episodes now, twice a week, every Tuesday and Thursday. So if you have an idea about a topic or a fabulous thought leader who can, you know our community can learn from please just go to the wire printers website, go to our contact page. Tell us your idea. For now, I just want to say thank you so much for listening. Please, please, please take really good care of these are very, we really appreciate all the positive impact that you're having.