

# DEAR MINDFUL CHANGEMAKER,



HOSTED BY  
MEICO MARQUETTE WHITLOCK



## Dear Mindful Changemaker Podcast

### Episode Five – Jason Shim Transcript

#### Podcast Intro

**Meico:** As a changemaker, you're dedicated to making a positive difference in the world. You love what you do, and you're good at it. But here's the thing. With all the things on your plate, you may struggle with finding the right balance between work and having a fulfilling personal life. And as the world becomes more complex, it may seem change, disruption, and uncertainty have become new norms in your life and work.

**Meico:** But it doesn't have to be this way. I'm Meico Marquette Whitlock, and I'm on a mission to help changemakers like you improve your well being while increasing your well doing and changing the world without burning out. In every episode, my intention is simple, to share practical wisdom about the inner and the outer work required to take care of yourself while building a better world, especially when it feels like work doesn't love you back.

**Meico:** So, let's get started.

#### Part One

**Meico:** I am joined today by Jason Shim. He is the Chief Digital Officer of the Canadian Center for Nonprofit Digital Resilience, also known as CNDR, and he is an experienced nonprofit professional, and he provides help to organizations that are looking to stay ahead of the technology curve. He

has successfully championed organization wide digital first approaches. And has developed and implemented strategies that support operations, marketing, fundraising, as well as program delivery. He's also a respected educator. So he has a passion when it comes to this intersection of nonprofit work and digital technology of empowering others to understand the power and the potential of digital technology.

**Meico:** He's also been recognized for his work over the years, including being recognized, for an award for his contributions to the nonprofit technology community through NTEN or the Nonprofit Technology Network, among a host of other award and recognitions. So with that being said, Jason, welcome to the podcast.

**Jason:** Thanks for having me

**Meico:** And I am excited to have you here. And so we're going to go ahead and dive

**Meico:** into the conversation here. I know that I've given people a brief sketch of who you are based on the formal bio, but I love to kick off these conversations just by asking a really fun and simple question, which is, who is Jason and what do you want the folks who are listening to this conversation to know about you?

**Jason:** Yeah, so I'll start with a story, , from my high school days. , And it's, happened in the ninth grade. And, so I was sitting in geography class and I remember very distinctly it was, first period, first thing in the morning. And you know those, little agendas that they hand out, that, you put in all the, your day to day tasks and things. And so this particular agenda had a prompt. And, I remember reading it and it said, what is your dream? And I remember sitting there mulling it over and eventually wrote down that my dream is to help others fulfill their dreams. And for some reason it stuck. I, I still have that agenda today stored somewhere in, in, deep storage. But I came back to it, many times over the years, and I think that, that statement has been very much a driving force for much of my life and where it's, taken me. More broadly, who is Jason Chim? I'm passionate about, exploring possibilities of how technology, can be a force for good. And Along that thread of, helping others fulfill their dreams, I've spent much of my life, at the career,

**Jason:** my career at the intersection of, non profits and technology, and that's where I've occupied, a lot of, , my, my, my life, bandwidth. I would say I'm also, insatiably curious, constantly, reading, learning, or, tinkering,

to better understand, how stuff works. So that sometimes can take the form of bringing home random electronics or things that I find that people have left out on the sidewalk. And, sometimes, bringing it home to see if I can, make it better, fix it up and then, also, passing it along. So that's, yeah, that's a, a brief overview of, who I am and how I, how I move through the world.

**Meico:** And there you have it. So someone who is passionate about helping others fulfill their dreams. And it sounds like you've done a lot of this, most of your career using technology in the non profit space to

**Meico:** help folks do that to advance missions. And it sounds like there's also an insatiable curiosity about the world how and how things work. And I can see the thread already between all three of those things in terms of how they have shown up at least in terms of the work that I know you for and so I'm excited to really thread those needles there.

**Meico:** So why don't we start at the beginning of the journey, and maybe one of the starting points for your professional journey. And let's talk about your first real job that you ever had, if you can remember what that was and however you are defining the words real, we can put that in quotation marks.

**Meico:** Can you take us back to that first real job that you had?

**Jason:** Yeah, so my first real job, and I define that as, my first full time job after I finished university, was in a role as a Community Content Producer at an organization called the Center for International Governance and Innovation. And so the role of the Community Content Producer, was one in which, I would help to manage online communities. There was a technical component to it, as well, helping to build the websites, working on integrations, forums. This is dating myself, but, when Twitter first came out testing that. Figuring out what was going on, and such. And, I learned a lot in that role. And it was a fascinating, place to be, because it was in that role. So the organization was focused on global governance policy and, up until that point, I, that wasn't an area that I was particularly, super familiar with at the time. And, being in that space, helped me really appreciate the role that governance and policy plays in large, systemic change.

**Jason:** And, in particular, I remember being fascinated by the projects around data residency and governance, which are being, which are one of the topics that were being discussed at the time. And, that was actually

my first introduction to NTEN as well, and I'm grateful that through that job, I had the opportunity through professional development to attend the Nonprofit Technology Conference, or NTC. And met a whole new network of people and learned a lot in that regard. And so that, that first job was, one that, I, it was insightful to me too, because it was my first introduction to office culture. And, I grew up in a household where, my, my father is an electrician and, I was used to going to work with him, during the summers and, Fetching tools from the the truck and, being on site and, learning about, the basics of wiring and things like that. And learning about how things operated in an office was a lot of learning for me, I remember at the time. One, one particular, story that I'll share is I remember going to work and one of my colleagues, nudged me and was like, Hey, you're Wearing white socks. And I'm like, yeah. So I'm wearing socks, but that should be fine, and, so yeah, but you're wearing like black shoes and white socks. And dark pants. And honestly, at the time, I didn't see anything wrong with that. Like that was a perfectly normal thing for me, where it's it's, you're wearing the essentials, you have, the pants, the socks and the shoes, okay. And it was that additional layer of knowledge that. You know, , I didn't really notice that it's oh, yeah, typically dark shoes and dark socks. And I was like, oh, okay, thanks for the heads up on that. So it's the small little Unspoken things. But like up until that point, I typically read a lot before, preparing for a job and everything, but, at that time, I hadn't encountered any, anything that was written down about when places talk about dress code that they were talked about wearing nice, a nice pair of slacks or something and a button up shirt. But, yeah, I don't recall wearing, reading anything that said that, you, dark socks and dark shoes, so it was for me also an introduction to, the, some of the unspoken, rules, of workplaces too. And, and I remember those first few months were a bit of a crash course in that regard, but learning about all the conventions that are expected, but not necessarily explicitly explained.

**Jason:** But overall, as far as first jobs go, I think I had a great experience there, formed a lot of lifelong friendships there. Still keep in touch with many of the folks that I met during that role.

**Meico:** Awesome. So you had a crash course into office culture having come from a different type of work in terms of the work you were doing, tagging along with your father as he was doing his electrician jobs, and I can see the thread in terms of the curiosity piece in terms of how things work and how you were able to experience that, in the work you did with your father on the, with in a tangible way, with actual things and wires, for example. And then it sounds like you took that into your first real job, which was an office job in terms of understanding the ins and outs of

spoken and unspoken workplace culture. And I think that is it's such a fascinating story because I think it really underscores some of the ways in which we create inequities. And I guess in some ways, perhaps unintentionally perpetuate those inequities without even realizing it. So I think that's a really powerful story. So I appreciate you sharing that.

**Meico:** So why don't we bring it forward to, what you're doing now. So you moved from governance policy and content creation. Is that what you were doing?

**Jason:** Yes. Yep.

**Meico:** So you move from content creation, content management, in the area of policy and governance. And was this a non profit organization?

**Jason:** Yes.

**Meico:** Okay, in a non profit space to the work that you're doing now as Chief Digital Officer. So can you describe, your current role and, what are you able to share about what the organization actually does? Because that sounds like a mouthful.

**Jason:** Yeah. So in my role as a Chief Digital Officer of the Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience, or CNDR. So the organization is focused on growing a digitally enabled nonprofit sector, where Canada's nonprofits can use data and technology to advance their mission and multiply their impact.

**Jason:** So in my role, I serve in a variety of different capacities. And so one of the hats that I wear is certainly, around, acting as a technical lead for some of the projects in which we're bringing folks together to prototype solutions around how we can address sector level, issues.

**Jason:** So more concretely, it's, When we look at, some of the issues that are, facing the nonprofit sector with regards to, nonprofit like technology kinds of issues that, we act as an organization that can bring folks together, and really convene around identifying, what are some of the, the themes or the core issues, that are, happening and bringing the resources to bear around it.

**Jason:** And, when some of those solutions may necessitate a technical solution, that's where I come in and, with my experience in deploying, things on the tech side and managing, that part. It's, as part of the

prototyping process, potentially building out some of those MVPs, or scoping out what could that look like? Here is the problems that Presents and, the awareness of what technologies are out there as well. You know what technologies can potentially fit, the, the issues that are brought forward, Or what, sometimes the inverse, what, What should we not use, to explore them?

**Jason:** It's really providing like a national level lens for sectoral issues that. Are identified all in the service of helping nonprofits use data and tech better to advance their missions.

**Meico:** Excellent. And so, in terms of the type of organization, is this a government organization? Is it a nonprofit? Like, where does it sit in terms of the ecosystem of organizations?

**Jason:** So it's, it's a nonprofit, and it's It's, it's a project that is currently operating as a a fiscal sponsor and yeah, we it's, it was brought together by, many, individuals, and, co founder, , organizations, as well. Definitely, there's, not just an organization unto itself, but, many other partner organizations I've been involved in the creation, and, advancing, the work that we do.

**Meico:** Excellent. So it sounds like you have taken this, desire and this, energy that you have around helping other folks to fulfill their mission and fulfill their dreams, and you put it on steroids because now you're operating at a national level where you all can put in place, at least from your role in terms of the digital piece, of using digital technology and data to really not just help one organization, but to really help organizations across Canada.

**Meico:** And so, I'm wondering if you could very briefly give us a concrete example. So, for folks that aren't techies, folks that aren't data folks.

**Meico:** Maybe you're just in a bunch of gibberish, and so they're wondering, okay, that sounds nice and fancy, but what does that actually mean in terms of day to day? So, if I'm working in a nonprofit organization in Canada, what are some ways that I could potentially benefit? Can you give us an example?

**Jason:** Yeah, so in terms of, the organization itself, one of the ways is, that, if you sign up to be part of the kind of broader network for the organization, that there are events that are hosted where, folks are invited to, come and participate to, to learn more about all the, various, Yeah.

Projects that we're working on and also to open invitation to participate. Recently, cybersecurity report was just released by CNDR and, in the lead up to that, there was a lot of, consultations with organizations as well to identify, hey, what are, some of the challenges, and, potential solutions, that, are really facing folks with regards to, issues pertaining to things like cyber security. So that's just one example. There are many different themes that organizations are looking to address overall. So from a day to day perspective that, if folks are interested in really, folks do, the day to day work, but if they're interested in contributing the knowledge that they've gained from their day to day work to share with others and also building these, sector level solutions so that, that there may have been solutions that you have identified in the course of your work that can also be shared more widely and, and also hearing from others who are in their day to day work that may have an opportunity to cross pollinate in that regard.

**Jason:** I would certainly encourage folks who are interested, to check out the website at, [cndr.ca](http://cndr.ca), and there's an opportunity to also, join and be an advisor.

**Meico:** Excellent. So, people have an opportunity to contribute and, to contribute to this shared knowledge base that you all are creating. And, just so that folks understand more concretely, if an organization, for example, wants to, they're creating an app to, or they've created an app or website that is aggregating data on a particular population, for example, as opposed to different organizations that work with the same population.

**Meico:** Duplicating that effort. Is it something that like you all would facilitate? Okay. Hey, can we just come together and create one application and one set of data that everyone has access to? Is that the kind of thing that you all might play a role in?

**Jason:** Yeah, it's bringing organizations together around some of those, those thematic areas as well. So just as you said, if there are, organizations that are, in a similar thematic area, say, if they're serving a certain population as well, and they're all tackling the similar, issue that, the one of the things that CNDR does is, bringing these groups together to create that space to really talk about how can we do this in a more collective effort, to move this ahead and, it

**Jason:** it may, potentially, take the form of a technology enabled solution, or, sometimes, it may be simply, the start is having that conversation to advance that where, technology is certainly one tool that can be used for it. But, I think, the important thing is, really, the act of identifying and

bringing folks together, and, drawing those threads, across where there's a, a common challenge, that folks are looking to address.

**Meico:** I think that's awesome. There, there are so many, so I think there's power in, first of all, just convening people to share knowledge about process, what's working, what's not working, best practices, things along those lines, trends, people are seeing.

**Meico:** Then there's also power, I think, and also to share technology solutions, right?

**Meico:** I think if you were to ask any organization in the social sector, what are you using for case management? What are you using for fundraising?

**Meico:** What are you using for marketing? I'm a, you probably get, like, every organization would have a different way of responding to that, a different set of solutions, for that. So, I think it's wonderful that you all are bringing folks together. So, lots of folks that are listening are actually in the U. S. or in other parts of the world, and are folks and other parts of the world able to tap into some of the publicly available resources that you all are producing?

**Meico:** And then the second part of that is, are you aware of any similar types of entities in other parts of the world that folks might be able to tap into?

**Jason:** So certainly, the, the reports and things are available on our website. Anything that's on the CNDR website can be accessed globally. And, in terms of additional organizations that do similar work, the, the one that comes to mind would be, NTEN, does, does, work in the, on a global scale, In, in that regard, it is, hosted out of the U. S. Yeah. Tho, tho those are the, that's the one that immediately comes to mind, in, in that regard.

**Meico:** Okay, so that's NTEN, so that's, Nonprofit Technology Network, or NTEN.org for folks that are interested in learning more about that and also full disclosure, both Jason and I have had the pleasure of serving on the Board of NTEN. And I believe Jason, you're also a former Board Chair of NTEN as well.

**Meico:** So, actually, as we, move forward. as you think about just the entirety of your career so far, is there a particular experience, or project or



initiative that you look back on and you're like, I'm really proud of this work. And I'm really proud of how it moved forward.

**Meico:** What you said is a core to who you are, which is helping people to fulfill their dreams. Is there anything that stands out to you that you want to share with folks?

**Jason:** Yeah. At a previous organization, I was at, and this, was a national, organization that was focused on helping youth who are living in low-income communities to graduate from high school and reach their full potential. I had a chance to change up the donation form on the website.

**Jason:** And I know that in, saying that, in that short sentence, it's oh, it's a donation form on the website. But for anyone who may have been down this road before, in that, the existing donation form had been there for years and years, and it's the type of project that, it does, acquire a significant amount of buy in from folks because it integrates with so many things. And so, when we looked through, the various, groups throughout the organization, and, chatting with the fundraisers, it was that, one of the pain points was well, typically when a donation is made that, we may not, see it. The donor managers may not be aware of it.

**Jason:** for a couple of weeks because of, or a week, because of the, the reporting, that, it goes into finance first and then it goes appears in the reporting. And being able to develop a workflow that it would still go through that reporting process, but having an integration that would provide a real time update, pipe through, into slack. And the moment that a donation was made within a few seconds, it would just pop up in a real time feed, and allow a donor manager to reach out to, someone who, had been assigned to them to, thank them almost, immediately, if they so wished.

**Jason:** And being able to provide that. That level of experience where, you make a donation on a website and, are able to get acknowledged, not just in the, the kind of autoresponder form, but also, a personal outreach, from, someone that, you may have cultivated a relationship with, that helped, better deliver on the overall experience there.

**Jason:** And that was just on the fundraising and on the marketing and there was, better data reporting, better overall experience for folks. And the overall experience for the person experiencing the form was that it was much smoother, much faster. There was integration into, things like

Google Pay and Apple Pay, which didn't previously exist on the previous form.

**Jason:** And we saw significant uptick in in donations. And, there was a significant uptick in recurring donations as well because of the interface that kind of encouraged that. And at the end of the day, it really meant that there was more funds, to advance the mission of the organization. I was really proud of what we were able to accomplish as a team in that, that implementation.

**Jason:** And it continues to this day where, you know, that it serves as a core piece of infrastructure that was able to unlock a whole bunch of other possibilities. And when I think about the projects, I'm quite proud of, it's a lot of those, on the surface that may present as like a boring infrastructure thing, but the excitement comes from the outcomes that can, that can be produced as a result of that.

**Meico:** Yes, and I love that for a couple of reasons. One, there are lots of folks that are listening that aren't forward facing or front facing, right? They aren't doing front facing work. They aren't doing the work that gets the recognition that, when we associate folks being celebrated in the public sector or nonprofit or other parts of the social sector, they aren't in those roles, right?

**Meico:** And so I think what you're doing is giving a really concrete example of how folks that are working behind the scenes, maybe you're working in operations, but that the work that you're doing actually makes a huge difference in terms of the helping the organization meet the mission. So I think that's one really exciting thing.

**Meico:** The other is, I think it really points to what you can do with limited resources as well. So I don't know in totality what it took for this particular project, but I had a similar experience with an organization that I work with. And what's coming to mind It's the Pareto principle, right? The 80/20 rule, where if you think about, as opposed to trying to do all the things. If you realize that you have a finite amount of resources and a finite amount of time, okay, what 20 percent of things can we do really well that is going to yield, 80 percent of the outcome that we want to get to, right?

**Meico:** And it sounds like you all identified your 20%. Which is okay, if we can optimize the donation form, then this can make so much more possible. For folks that are listening, particularly if resources are scarce, if talent is scarce, time is scarce, in the type of work that you're doing an

organization, in terms of how it's set up, think about that one thing or those two things that you can really focus on that if you did those things really well, they would make a tremendous difference, across the board

**Meico:** in a really significant way. I appreciate you, you sharing that. And I was also thinking too about your current role at CNDR, I think this is another example where convening folks to share an example like this, for example, and to share, what worked and to see other people being able to actually replicate the impact that you all have made, right?

**Meico:** Because you've already done the work, right? So theoretically, you could give someone else a road map and they would have to spend less time and effort and resource actually getting it up and running to have a similar outcome. So, I think that is so amazing.

## **Sponsor Break**

**Meico:** All right, it's time for a break. We'll be right back after a brief message from our sponsors.

**Meico:** Changemakers like you are driven to do more and more, often with fewer and fewer resources. But there comes a breaking point where your passion dwindles under the weight of pressure, the mission suffers, and you feel like you love the work more than it loves you back. That's why I wrote the book *How to Thrive When Work Doesn't Love You Back*.

**Meico:** A practical guide for taking care of yourself while changing the world with a forward by Beth Kanter, author of the "Happy Healthy Nonprofit." This book is a succinct, practical, and action-based guide for changemakers seeking to make an impact without burnout. Learn more and order your copy at [mindfulchangemaker.org/books](http://mindfulchangemaker.org/books). That's [mindfulchangemaker.org/books](http://mindfulchangemaker.org/books). The reality is, if you really want to make a difference, you must start by taking time for yourself right now because you can't change the world if you're not around long enough to make that happen. This isn't about working harder and smarter, it's about making a commitment to work differently so you can take care of yourself while making an impact for the long haul.

**Meico:** In "*How to Thrive and Work Doesn't Love You Back*", I share practical strategies grounded in the well being while well doing change framework. And I wrote this book after experiencing more than my fair share of burnout and overwhelm in the name of saving the world during my previous career in government and non profit work.

**Meico:** I share what I've learned to be the most impactful strategies for my personal practice and my experience helping changemakers around the world just like you create lasting balance in their lives. These are the same strategies I teach teams and organizations through my live trainings, self-paced courses, coaching programs, and tools like the Intention Planner.

**Meico:** Each chapter has a summary of key ideas and a checklist of practices you can start implementing right away. I know you need practical strategies and resources to help you create sustained balance in your life and work so you can lower your stress level. And focus on getting the important things done right now.

**Meico:** So, this book isn't about theoretical concepts. It's about what to do and how to do it. Learn more and order your copy at [mindfulchangemaker.org/books](https://mindfulchangemaker.org/books). That's [mindfulchangemaker.org/books](https://mindfulchangemaker.org/books).

**Meico:** All right, let's get back to our conversation.

## Part Two

**Meico:** So let me ask you this as we talk about your professional journey. One of the things I remind people of as we have these conversations is we know that it's not all sunshine and roses, right? That there are inevitable ups and downs on our journeys that is a part of the beautiful challenge of life. So how do you stay inspired and motivated through those ups and downs? And I think about even how long it may have taken to get this donation form optimized the way that you wanted it and testing it out and so on and so forth. Just having managed technology products, I know that things never go 100 percent as you have it planned out in the project plan. So how do you stay inspired and motivated? When those inevitable ups and downs come your way?

**Jason:** Yeah, I'll answer that in two parts, because I think that the answer has been different at various stages of my career. So the first part is that, in the first job that I mentioned, I worked with a colleague who is a very close friend of mine. And I remember that the approach that I took at the time was very, just heads down, grind it out, and just, do the work all the time. And he would encourage me to take breaks and, it was something that I found challenging at the time. Because it was just something that I wasn't used to or, or hadn't learned how to pace myself, at that time in my career. And there, there was one thing that he said to me that, that really had an impact and he said, the work will always be there.

**Jason:** There will never be a shortage of work. And, you can either put in that extra time now or, you still have to eat lunch, so come get a bowl of pho with me and that particular conversation really had an impact around just taking the time to enjoy those moments.

**Jason:** Because those are the moments that I think help keep me inspired and motivated that, those, being able to take a step back and enjoy the moments with friends.

**Jason:** And, now, I have a little one at home and, I, I keep a small kind of Polaroid, in my direct line of sight. So it's that, that small reminder to where, I have a, a little, baby and, when I need a kind of a burst of inspiration, just glance up and, remember that happy moment.

**Jason:** I never used to be the type of person that had a lot of, personal ephemera around my desk and things, but, I think that, I've reached the stage of my life where now that, that, that is part of, what I do and who I am. And, it's having, those, those reminders of inspiration and motivation and, again, just helps me return my focus to what's important.

**Meico:** Yes. And thank you for sharing that. What I hear and what you shared are a few things that I think are really valuable. One, which is, you mentioned that your strategies for staying connected, staying motivated, staying inspired have changed over the course of your career.

**Meico:** And I think that just points to the fact that, we don't necessarily have one thing that works for every season, right? We go through different seasons of life and work, which may call for different things and it's okay to change things up. It's okay to change how you do the thing, even if it's the same thing.

**Meico:** And the concrete examples that you gave taking breaks, right? Very simple, right? But often we take that for granted. Because we're in a rush to, to do all the work. And as you mentioned, that it was your mentor that shared with you that the work will always be there, right? There isn't going to be a shortage of work.

**Meico:** And what I add to that is that if you are doing good work,, there will always be a demand for what it is that you have to offer to the world. And you have to make space to nourish yourself. You have to make space to rejuvenate and to recover because we're not automatons, we're not robots. And if you don't do that, and you're not able to do the work in a sustainable way.

**Meico:** So I love what you shared there about taking the breaks. And I also love what you shared too in terms of having the memento, right? Having the Polaroid of your little one on your desk. I have something similar. I have a picture of my family that I keep. And actually, it's one of the things I, I travel a lot, in terms of living and working in different places.

**Meico:** And it's one of the things that I take with me. I also have a visual vision board, which includes a part of my family on it, on my tablet and on my phone. So every time I open my phone or my tablet, like it's there and it's visible. And so I love how simple and accessible those two things that you shared are. So I think maybe somewhat connected to this, just making a guess here.

**Meico:** But I wonder if your undergraduate work in religious and cultural studies, is connected to this in terms of what you shared, because of how you, how your, how your practice for staying connected and inspired, has evolved. And I guess more broadly, I'm curious, what impact, if at all, has that had on your professional career? Because it seems like a stark contrast between, studying religion and cultural studies, and then you're, now you're doing this, highly technical techie digital stuff in the nonprofit sector. So can you speak to, that and the connection that there, if there's any.

**Jason:** Yeah. So when I, when I was taking, religious and cultural studies in university, what drew me to the, this kind of line of coursework and inquiry was really around exploring the human condition. And, It was one particular course that I found quite inspiring that led me into a whole bunch of others, but it was called love and its Myths. And it was about really exploring, the concept of love. How do we articulate it in, the stories that are told and, deconstructing, different conceptions of it. And where that led me was I eventually wrote my, undergraduate thesis on how people experience, love in online environments. And in this particular case, it was Second Life. Which is, an online, virtual world, that has been in existence for, I think, just over 20 years at this point now. And, so my specific area of focus was, how do people understand, the marriage ritual in Second Life? Because there was many instances of folks who would stage these very elaborate virtual weddings, and, building these virtual churches and, or environments or, where they chose to celebrate, their, their marriage together. And it was through that research and work that, I think really helps solidify for me that what I came away , from that research with was that, that Second Life was simply a conduit for which folks express their love. And the example that, I grew to appreciate was, when we say things like I love you over the, , the phone that we don't

necessarily question its meaningfulness. Because, it's a very common way of, expressing it over, a mode of communication and same with zoom calls and such.

**Jason:** And so the argument that I was exploring was, what's different about, this virtual space that if everything is socially constructed and, people are choosing to live in this particular embodiment of their human experience, that who are we to judge or to say that, this, this is not, authentic. To, to the people who are participating in this, like this is authentic this is their lived reality.

**Jason:** And so when spending a lot of time, thinking about those things, like I, my. My thoughts have often returned there over the years because when we think about building things like online experiences, or how do we construct these kind of multimodal type experiences for engaging with folks on our, in the missions of our nonprofits, that, a lot of things are online now as well.

**Jason:** And, this debate sometimes about is it better than or is it less than and it's no, maybe it's really part of I think a broader mosaic of how we construct and define meaning and really set the intentionality of it. Where I have been involved in some groups where, I have not met any of the folks in real life necessarily, but the relationships and the conversations, feel just as real or, it, it's just as meaningful as some, quote unquote, real life interactions. And yeah, the work that I, I did as part of my studies, that, that research and, broader kind of explorations around, big questions around, what is, what is the real, what is the true, what is beautiful?

**Jason:** And all those things, have factored in over the years, when considering things like how do we use technology to deliver better outcomes and better experiences for folks.

**Meico:** Yes, and I'm seeing the thread here to what you said earlier, which is in terms of who you are at core, a part of it is, you have this insatiable curiosity about the world and how things work. And when I bring this forward to what you just shared about your undergraduate studies and religious and cultural studies and what you wrote your thesis on, right?

**Meico:** So you, you took that curiosity to explore. There's a technological aspect of it, right? But I also see a little bit, too, of helping people to... fulfill their dreams, right? I feel like that's the love piece, right? And that's like the, what I would describe as love in action, if you will, the work that you're doing is, a form of love in action. Because I believe that love is a verb,

right? And I find that so fascinating. So that's one aspect of it that really stands out to me. Many people have about placing a different value on connection and experience based on the modality, right? Based on whether we are in person or based on whether it's facilitated via phone or zoom or some other, some other tool or platform.

**Meico:** And in the midst of this post pandemic world, we find ourselves in, we find ourselves having the same conversation, right? And we see it play out on a larger scale in terms of how government agencies and how companies and non profits are thinking about what does the workplace look like? And what does it mean to bring people together?

**Meico:** And there seems to be like this either or, right? That on the one hand, there's this idea that hybrid and remote are competing with in person and in person, you can't replace, right? You hear that, there's no substitute for in person, and hybrid and remote is just not good enough. And what I hear you saying is that it's not an either or, it's not a comparison, it's a recognition of what is, right?

**Meico:** This is, these are ways, these are different ways of... showing up and being present and to your point about having had connections and relationships with folks that you haven't met in person. I've had a similar experience. Even before the pandemic.

**Meico:** One of my roles when I worked in the federal government here in the U. S., I worked with contractors all over the country, and our primary basis for connection was simply by phone. This was before video chat and Zoom became a really big thing. We would have conference calls, and phone calls, and I only knew them by voice. Or by email. I have, even with my current work, I have one partner that I work with that I've only met one time in person, and we've worked together for many years before, before that happened. And I think we had one initial phone call. But other than that, all of our communication has been through email. But nonetheless, it's still been a fruitful connection in terms of the type of work that we're doing together. I don't know. Do you have more to say, to share about that? In terms of, bringing what you shared forward in terms of how you think about that in today's context when we talk about. hybrid remote and in person and this mosaic that you described.

**Jason:** Yeah, I think that there's no one size fits all solution. And, going back to the 80, 20, for Pareto principle, that you mentioned, I, I think, when we really delve into, let's assume that 20 percent of the actions in any given organization are going to drive 80 percent of the connections



or, that the feeling of closeness. I think it's more the process that's important. It's by simply jumping to, okay, the model or the solution itself. It's, I think it's more important to, to take a look at it's Hey, what are those things that really, help our organization function really well?

**Jason:** And what do we want to focus on? Because I think there are certainly examples of organizations that have done remote really well. There are organizations that have done hybrid really well, or in person really well. But at the end of the day, it's really more about what works for that particular, organization or group of people. And, and so I think that sometimes, it's certainly faster to simply apply like a, a preset model to things, in, for, in the name of, expeditiousness, but it's the, identifying what needs to be done.

**Jason:** I think takes a little bit more time. And, really figuring out, what are those things? And I think that when folks really take the time to think about, what are those particular actions that make people feel really connected? I think that's where the magic is. Like when we think about, what are the day-to-day things that give us energy? When you're, speaking earlier about the recharging and rejuvenating, what are the 20 percent of actions that we take that give us 80 percent of our energy?

**Jason:** And I think when sitting with some of those broader questions, that's where it can yield some significant insights about not only organizations, but our individual lives, too, where there are some, likely very high impact things that are just waiting to be uncovered or to be focused on a bit more to have more impact. But it sometimes could be, in front of us, too.

**Jason:** It's just requires a little bit of process or analysis to put it into action.

**Meico:** Yes. I love that. So, what I heard you say is that the magic is in the connectedness. The magic is in the sense of belonging that we have. And the process that we use to get there is secondary, it sounds. And one of the ways that I think about this is thinking about it in terms of organizational culture. So, your organization culture consists of your mission or your why, like why you do the work thing, what is the shared mission that you all have and what brings you together to do the work. And we know that tends to be very strong in the social sector, that lots of people driven to do the work they're doing because there's a strong overarching mission for the organization or for the work that they're doing.

**Meico:** But then there are also the rituals, right? And in terms of how we do certain things, how we have meetings, how we celebrate people when there's an anniversary or when there is, you mentioned having a little one, so when someone has a, welcomes a new child into the world, how do we celebrate that?

**Meico:** How do we recognize that? And then also our values, right? How do we treat, one another? How do we disagree, right? How do we have conversation? How do we problem solve together? And one of the things I remind organizations about is that some of those things we took for granted before the pandemic, right? Because to your point, we fell into what was expedient, right? And what we already knew. And part of the challenge with hybrid and remote work for many organizations, it's not so much the technology piece. That's certainly one aspect of it. But there's the thing of, okay, how do we bring what we took for granted when we were in person. into a hybrid and remote way, right? How do we bring that mission? How do we bring those rituals? How do we bring that the way that we treat each other? How do we disagree, and problem solve, when. There are different things we have to take into account when we're hybrid and remote. So, I appreciate you, you sharing that.

**Jason:** If I can jump in there with

**Meico:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Jason:** Yeah, you mentioned rituals and that's just part of memory that I would love to share, around, we, when I was working in an organization, there was a lot of projects that we had to get out the door. And I, one of my favorite courses that I had taken was, Ritual Studies. And, every time a project was completed, I picked up a, a container of marbles and, and a little kind of, vase type thing. And every time, a project was completed, myself and, my, my colleague, we would ceremoniously, make a big spectacle of it. And take a marble and, drop it into, the vase with a satisfying clunk and then have a, a high five moments like, yes.

**Jason:** And it was a silly little thing that we did, just between the two of us, to mark the occasion, but it was also, that physical manifestation of that visual representation of the work that we had done and knowing that, there's that small little celebratory moment.

**Jason:** Every time we finished the project and over the course of a year, that pause fills up and it becomes this living artifact of the work that had been completed and, became something to quite look forward to.

**Meico:** Absolutely. I think the, the opportunity that we have with this new world that we live in is to figure out how we can create new rituals.

**Meico:** How, can we expand on the ones that we have? And I'm just really marinating right now in this idea that there is no hierarchy between the different ways we show up. Right? They simply are options. That we have available to us. They're not competitors. They're simply options that are available to us.

**Meico:** To your point, there's no one size fits all. There isn't, there's no one right way to do it. The only right way I think about this is, and I tell folks, the only right way to do it is the way that works for you. And that's the right way. And that might change, what works for you now might change over time, right?

**Meico:** Based on the season of life and work that you find yourself in. And so, speaking of seasons of life and work and really balancing this new world that we're in what we are for some of us balancing between hybrid and remote as well as in person and really just adapting to this new world of more uncertainty that perhaps we've collectively experienced before.

**Meico:** How do you balance that with who you are, when you're with your little one, when you're with your family, when you're doing the things that you love to do outside of your professional work and identity. And I'll frame it as work life balance because that is the, I think that's a shared language that we understand, even if we don't agree with that framing or have a different way of thinking about it. So how do you approach this particular aspect of life and work?

**Jason:** Yeah, I am a big fan of time blocking at this current stage in my life, and I have a lot time.

**Meico:** what is time blocking for folks that are interested in knowing about that? Oh,

**Jason:** yes. So, it's really just blocking off time in your calendar to, to do specific, things. I think, but, before I started using time blocking, there would be a general kind of list of, tasks, that I would need to get accomplished, in a given week.

**Jason:** And with time blocking, like you're actually, taking a task or a recurring task and blocking off time to complete that thing. . And it gives a much better sense of, what you actually have time and space to do and

makes it easier to reconcile. If there simply isn't enough time in the foreseeable future to do a thing that it, the priorities may need to shift.

**Jason:** And so, what that looks like for me is that, I have a dinner time block and that is something that, is, that doesn't change because I have to eat. And so does my family. And, because I quite enjoy cooking, I, I have to make sure that I abide by that time block because if I don't, then, that means that my family eats, later.

**Jason:** And, with a little baby and everything that you want to make sure that, we, I'm leaving enough time to cook dinner, get it served all the cleanup, and things, and making that time for bath time and story time and those things. And I think what helps keep me on track for that is just the awareness and the reminder that there's a finite amount of baths and story times that I'll have available to me to enjoy together as a family. And I think what also really hits home is that i, there, there's this chart that, you may have seen, that, indicates the amount of time that one spends with their, parents, through their, through their lifetime.

**Jason:** And I think between the ages of zero to 18 or something is that I forget the exact number, but it's something to the, like, you you will have spent something like 90% of. your time together with your parents, between those ages. And then, the rest of life is that the remaining kind of 10%. And so, I think, in, in terms of, balancing, those things, yeah, it's a lot of time blocking and, really trying to stick to it the best I can.

**Jason:** And the motivation is the awareness of that, that very finite amount of time that I have.

**Meico:** Yes. And so, it sounds like they're on the front end, there are some priorities that it's that sort of duplication of what your priorities are, right? Based on the motivation that you described, right? You mentioned, okay, have a finite amount of bath times and story time.

**Meico:** And so that's going to be a priority. But when you're prioritizing the way that I describe it is you're saying yes to one thing. So, you have to say no to something else if you have more things than you have time for. So how do you decide where you're going to say no to? And how do you deal with what are sometimes the hard trade offs. Or sometimes there are hard trade offs, sometimes there's disappointments. How do you manage that as You're prioritizing the things that are important in the moment, but there are other things that, as a consequence, don't get down or they get down later?

**Jason:** Yeah, I think that, there's certainly the occasions when, you may need like a, a one off, type thing where it's something's come up that needs to be attended to, and, when a time block needs to be, reshuffled because something urgent has, come up, certainly. However, I think it's important to pay attention to the bigger picture, of, what is it that, you're trying to achieve, longer term or, collectively, as a family, as well. And I think it's also the awareness that, you, you know.

**Jason:** If I miss, too many of those, dinner times that will have an impact on, the relationship that I have, with my family. And I think I often return back to the, the concept of opportunity cost. I used to work at an economics camp, in a previous life. And the concept of opportunity cost being what is the next best thing?

**Jason:** So if you weren't doing this particular thing at this moment in time what would the next best thing be?

**Jason:** And I think for me, that has helped bring a lot of clarity around, it's not a question of what are all the things that I could be doing with, this hour or half hour, whatever the time block is. It's examining that question of, what is the next best thing that I could be doing with this time. And, to go back to your question of, how, how to prioritize it, I, I think that really goes back to a question of values. And, in an exercise that I found really helpful many years ago, was, I was working, with a coach, and it was really getting clear on,

**Jason:** what values, I wanted to live my life by and, really regarding that as the prism for which, I shine, the the light of action through. I think that, it's constantly looking at and evaluating, when you shine that light of action through that values prism, how well does it compare to the projected ideal with what's happening in the here and now.

**Jason:** And those constant kind of readjustments for, looking at what needs to be reprioritized to get closer to that ideal. And it's a work in progress. That's why it is an ideal, that it's something to shoot for. And I try not to beat myself up over some of the inevitable shortcomings. And that arise along the way. But I think what's more important is that forward movement and progression towards, towards that.

**Meico:** Yeah, and I think that's really important what you shared in terms of recognizing that it's not gonna be perfect and that you're not gonna always get it a hundred percent right. But to stay really focused on what those core values are and being flexible and agile enough to make those

adjustments. And one of the ways for folks that are listening that you can make those adjustments is, sometimes we don't always have control over our schedule, especially depending on the type of role or what level you are in your organization or the type of work that you're doing. I think this is where consistent open communication comes into play. And I think at an organizational level, going back to what we talked about in terms of organizational culture, does your organization have a culture where you are clear about your values, you're clear about your priorities at an organizational level.

**Meico:** And you give people permission and autonomy to adjust their work, accordingly, right? And, you have a healthy culture where you are you're in constant communication, right? And you have a process of healthy conflict, right? And healthy negotiation of a boundary. So I appreciate you sharing that or reminding, reminding me about that particular point when it comes to organizational culture because we're many of us are doing this context in that particular, that particular frame. Let me ask you this as we begin to wrap up here, yeah, about our work together. So, we have worked together over a number of years as colleagues.

**Meico:** We mentioned earlier at the Board level for NTEN, the Nonprofit technology Network, and we have also, co presented a number of times on topics related to technology and how you can use it to really advance the mission in the social sector.

**Meico:** And I'm curious if you can speak to the impact of that work that you've seen? Anything that you might have experienced personally in terms of ahas, in terms of our work together. And I also know that you use the Intention Planner, so I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about that and, any impact at all.

**Jason:** Yeah.

**Meico:** that you experienced as a result of that.

**Jason:** Yeah, I'll start with, serving on the Board with you together is that I really enjoyed serving with you on the on NTEN Board. And, I've served on a number of Boards and I think that the experience of serving with you was quite special in that, the the times when, for the Board Sessions where, we, you had facilitated, some of the mindfulness, sessions was something that was really grounding, In the work that we did.

**Jason:** So, I think that, I hadn't experienced that on other organizations. Up until that point where because I think typically, you jump in and, start, doing, all the Board business, but I think that it actually made things more effective in that it was taking a moment to really, ground and reflect on, where people are at and just, taking that moment of space to really focus. And I again, going back to that, that 80 20, it's when we think about, some of the, small actions that are taken, even just taking a few moments to do that can have a tremendous impact on, the, the tone, the culture, the approach, and that was something that I'm quite grateful for to have experienced, and grateful to you for also facilitating those moments, and as well, just serving with you on the board is general in general, and you know how thoughtful you were about, the work that you, you did.

**Jason:** In terms of, things like presenting, together, I learned so many new tools from you over the years, where, you know, I think that where my mind goes is that I, I see a lot of life hacking a productivity tool things and that's generally where I, have tended to, to gravitate in terms of, the tool sets that I find and bookmark.

**Jason:** And, the tools that, I learned from you, were the, some of that, the immediate ones that come to mind where are things like, the, the inbox, focus, One or inbox pause, the, newsfeed eradicator, are a couple of them like, the, these are tools that were completely new to me and I, I still use to this day, and, have really helped, hone in on my focus in terms of, being able to, have that tool, Fulfill that overall intention or, spending less time on, Facebook or social media and, and those things.

**Jason:** All those are just a couple, I could go on, but there's a ton of tools that you introduced me to around the, on the focus, side of things and, Also, some additional, the video recording tools, I, I think, Bonjour was new to me, as well.

**Jason:** And the, the intention Planner, that. I found really helpful because it was a very structured ritual in a way to think about the week ahead. And it became the steady rhythm of being able to write down, what. Was on my mind, for the week ahead and then that steady, what do I need to put in the parking lot?

**Jason:** What do I need to reflect on, and so I think up until that point, I had been doing it quite manually. And, as, someone who is, try to journal on and off over the years, you know that is a challenge because it's very, free form journaling and things. So having something very structured was helpful and being able to keep that. that steady rhythm. Thank you for all

that you put out there into the world because I know that I, it has had a direct impact and benefit to, my day to day life, as well.

**Meico:** Awesome. I'm happy that I've been able to be of service and to have, anything that I've shared be impactful and helpful for you and anyone else. I appreciate having you on the podcast. Really quickly, can you tell folks a little bit about what might be next for you and where people can go to learn more about you and stay connected?

**Jason:** Yeah, so in terms of what next for me, I'm quite enjoying the work that I'm doing, now, and we'll continue on this track for, connecting, technology to, to make an impact in the world and, to help folks really help navigate that space in general.

**Jason:** So, I'm always keen to, to learn and connect with folks around that. In terms of where the best place is to connect with me, I would suggest LinkedIn is probably the best place to stay updated whenever I find neat stuff online, I usually post it there. And, as soon as I, I find those things, I put it on there and, I'm always grateful for if folks find interesting stuff as well to send it to me that way as well.

**Meico:** Awesome. There you have it folks. That was and is Jason Shim, Chief Digital Officer, Canadian Center for Nonprofit Digital Resilience, also known as CNDR. Jason, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast.

**Jason:** Great. Thanks, Meico

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**Meico:** That's [mindfulchangemaker.org/retreat](https://mindfulchangemaker.org/retreat).

## **Outro**

**Meico:** Thank you for listening to this episode of the Dear Mindful Changemaker podcast. Are you ready to finally prioritize your well being so you can increase your impact in changing the world? Join the Mindful Changemaker community and take the next step on your journey to increase your well being while well doing.

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