

Life Changing Music

Jason Campbell



Life Changing Music

Rebekah Kelley: Welcome to the Humanized Podcast, all about personalizing your health. I'm your host, Rebekah Kelly, and today our topic will be Life Changing Music with Jason Campbell. Before I introduce Jason, I want to remind everyone to subscribe and get all the other varieties of casts and audio, video and transcription at HumanizedHealth.com. I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor Village Green Apothecary at MyVillageGreen.com.

So Jason's journey into meditation, music, and wellness began 46 years ago at age eight, when his teacher told him to never listen to notes, but instead to listen to the space in between the notes. An accomplished composer and pianist, he's released over a hundred albums and has been number one on multiple billboards and Amazon charts. Jason's unique perspective on music, health, wellness, and spiritual growth comes from his lifelong study of both music and the ancient arts of Eastern health medicine, meditation, and enlightenment.

He is a 7th-degree black belt, he's a co-founder of Zen Wellness, teaching meditation, Eastern Medicine, Taiji, Qigong, Sword and Enlightenment, at their 400-acre ranch in the mountains of Arizona. He works as the director of music for GeniusX Virtual Reality and created the first breathtaking course in virtual reality. His music is also found on performance-based apps, such as ChiliSleep, Focus at Will, FigTree, The Breath Source, GravyStack, and he composes the sleep and meditation music for professional sports teams, the Vatican NFT launch and others. His signature program is Breath Mastery for Entrepreneurs as a co-owner and sheriff of the town of Cleator, Arizona, he is combining Western culture with Eastern wisdom to create a community committed to the uplifting of the human spirit. Jason, thanks for being with us.

Jason Campbell: Rebekah, thank you for having me.

Rebekah Kelley: So that's quite, I got to tell you, that's the most varied bio I think I've ever read, um, about one of our guests. So I'm very intrigued to jump into this and hear how this story all comes together, that is you. So let's just start off though. Tell me, um, what do we know about the health benefits of meditation?

Jason Campbell: Okay. So let me, I'm going to oversimplify. So if we take a snow globe and I shake a snow globe, the snow globe becomes turbid. If I make the snow globe still, over a period of time, the turbidity settles, and then we have clarity. So it's estimated we have, oh, 50 to 80,000 thoughts a day. 99 percent are the same thoughts we had yesterday. So we get into this like skipped record. And the simplest version of meditation is to have a pause or a gap in the incessant stream of thinking. Because the mind goes blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And even there's a good chance right now, I'm going to talk to the listener, that you're having an internal conversation based on our conversation right now, and it just goes, and sometimes it's called the "monkey mind," "the incessant stream of thinking," you know, sometimes it's called the, the very mean person that lives inside of my head. It has many different names, but when we can turn it off just for a pause and just for a moment, it opens up to a whole other world of insight, of creativity, of intuition, um, and inner peace.

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Rebekah Kelley: And so, of course, my little monkey mind was thinking, um, prayer. I pray a lot and it feels like it does kind of the same thing for me for meditation. Would you put prayer in the same category or similar category for meditation?

Jason Campbell: Yes, and there's there— see, there's many forms— there's many ways to getting there. Because sometimes we think, "Oh, meditation, it's the monk on top of the hill." And then, or, or we will think that, "Oh, I don't have time to meditate. I have too many things to do." Or I work with a lot of entrepreneurs and you think, "Oh, high level entrepreneurs meditate, maybe I better do it too." And so you sit down and you try and meditate. And after a few seconds, the mind starts going, Oh, wait a minute. I think I have an email to do. Oh, I have this. Oh, I'm wasting time. Oh, I have to do with my kids. And the meditation session becomes more stressful when it does the opposite of what it's supposed to do. And that's so common. Like when I work— I'll be in a room and I'll say, who here has, you know, tried to meditate and fail— feel like you failed at meditating? And, and like, you know, half the room's hands will go up.

And so there's a very, very simple solution to that. And it's to reframe how we're thinking of meditation. And again, it's just the stop and incessant stream of thinking, because the word *human being* has a wonderful teaching in it. There's the *human* part. And then there's the *being* part. The *human* part, Rebekah, is different than when you and I were eight years old, from today. The *being* part, that which observes your thoughts, it's completely the same. So that doesn't change. And so you activate the observer of your thoughts and just start to watch your thoughts because you are not your thoughts. You are that which watches your thoughts. And then when you can slow it down and have a little space in there, there's many, there's many ways.

I mean, I've—, there's three types of meditation, sitting, standing, and moving. So for some people and don't have the ability — it's just a muscle — but if you don't have the ability to sit and be still and turn off the mind, well, then sometimes you can go for a walk. Or sometimes intense physical activity, or sometimes it's something really intense that you need to do, some like extreme sport of some type, and that's how you get to that point. Ultimately, it doesn't matter how you get there. When I was— I just turned 54. And so when I was eight years old, I started this process, and as you said in the bio, you know, my teacher said to me, she said, "Never, ever listen to notes. Idiots listen to notes, masters listen to the space in between the notes." Because when you listen to a note, your mind is turbid, you hear nothing. When you listen to space, or listen to the silence, or the gap, then your mind becomes clear — you hear everything. So my entry point into music, we'd play one note, we'd go, cling, and we'd listen to it, cling, cling, and dial into the space. And then years later, when I said to her, I said, "oh, what happens if you're playing so many notes, and it's so fast, and there's no space in between the notes?" and she's like, in her deep Russian accent, "oh, you're such an idiot. How come you asked me such stupid questions?" That was the training back then. And she said, "find the space underneath." Oh, so you can have all this noise in this activity, and you find the silence underneath. You see, if I take a pen and I wave a pen any 20 times per second, up to 20, 000

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times per second, you and I will perceive that vibration as sound. If I do it 50,000 times a second.

Your dog will hear it as a sound. We won't. 85,000 times a second, your cat will hear it. A 50–150,000 times per second, your plants will hear it, but you and I won't. And down to seven times per second, an elephant will hear it. So we have this, only this small audible range of vibration that we perceive is sound, but the vibration range goes on really to, you know, I could say to infinity or more than we can count, because, you know, two million times per second, if I vibrate a pencil or vibrate my finger, we will perceive that vibration, this light.

So then we get into the age old saying, "when a tree falls in the forest and there's no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?" And the answer is no, absolutely not. It makes a wave. It only turns into a sound. If there's someone, a person or a surrogate or something there to perceive it and translate it back into sound, but back into meditation. Okay. I'll give you another personal story. Then when I was a teenager, I said to my martial art master, I said, "Hey, Hey, what is Zen?" He looked at me. He smiled and he sidekicked me – hard. He hit me hard. He's cracked me, and I went flying across the dojo, hit the wall and he smiled. He said nothing. He just walked away. That was my answer. That was my, what was Zen? And you know what? He put me in the moment in that one moment when I was flying across the dojo, there was no past, there was no future. There was only now.

I was a dumb teenager, so I deserved it. If I didn't deserve it, I was about to deserve it. So, it was okay. But so ultimately Zen is presence. You see, there's a giant, giant– I'm going to say mistranslation. Because when you– a lot of the culture will use the word mindfulness. Okay. Mindfulness is completely wrong. Not what it's pointing to, but the word is wrong because we don't need mind-full. We need mind-*empty*. It's "okay, we need to put more things in your head so you can be happy." No, it's the opposite.

Rebekah Kelley: There's no more room up here. Honestly, Jason, there's no more room...

Jason Campbell: When I researched that word, I think it was– I used to think it was like an evil Taoist master that was trying to trick everybody, but I think it was an honest mistake around the 1910 or so there was a Buddhist scholar who mistranslated the word *Sati* for mindfulness and it started to stick, stick like in the seventies or so. So a better word for *Sati* is *awareness*. Or, I like to say *subtle awareness*. Ah, that's different. But even a more simpler word is *presence*. And you can't work on being present. That's impossible. You can only be present. The mind will trick you and try to say, "Oh, you need to work on being more present." What does that even mean?

No, there's only one time you can be present and that's right now. Everything else is just a mind trick that happens. And so then that we come back to circling back around, how do we get

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there? Okay, well, I'm probably not going to come to your house and sidekick you. Let's maybe not do that, but there's many ways to stop the mind.

And what I find with— sometimes the lowest hanging fruit is breath. Because let's even back up here. They say, what are we made of? There's an old Taoist concept, Eastern medicine is called the three treasures. Now, if you Google the three treasures, once you get past Pirates of the Caribbean, you'll get to this concept and it says, we're made up of three things.

I'm going to tell you the word, but you don't have to remember the word. Jing, Qi, and Shen. And it's right here. And it means we're made up of matter, energy and consciousness. So if I have H₂O, it's very simple, solid, liquid, vapor. Everything is H₂O, but it shows up in three different ways.

The matter is everything we can see, touch, and feel. The chi is the energy, the bioelectric energy, the ki, the gi, the prana, the breath. The emotion hangs out in here because you can't see emotion, like you can't hold emotion in your hand. But emotion is very real, so we feel it, so that's the chi, the energy. And the shen – we can think of that as the consciousness, or that's the being, or we can say that's the eternal I am, the little dollop of the divine, or whatever words we want to use, use for that.

So what's the lowest hanging fruit for wellness? Breath. Hands down, it's breath, and it's breath mastery. Because, okay, how many breaths do we take a day? Between 20 and 30,000. How long can you go without food? How long can you go without water? How long can you go without sleep? And how long can you go without breath? We take in the majority of our energy for our body, comes in through the breath. We expel the most toxins, actually, through the breath— 70%-ish of cellular waste comes out through the breath. And so, when you learn to master the breath, it affects all things. Ultimately, at a higher level, we do all three. So for example, if you go to the gym, if you just do physical workout at the gym, that's great. It works. But if you add the breath, it works better. Like as you push, as you push out, you exert, you breathe out. As you come in, you breathe in. Then if you add mind intent or consciousness, close your eyes. Put your mind into whatever part of the body you're working. Then it works even better. So I could, like, clone you, you know, one just does the work. The other one adds the breath and the intention, and you're going to get a better benefit if you do the breath and the intention, and then that becomes a form of meditation. Can you meditate in the gym? Absolutely. Can you meditate going for a walk? Absolutely. Do you need to sit and be still and meditating? Well, it's better if you do, and if you can, but in the beginning, if you can't shut off your mind, go do other things to shut off your mind.

Rebekah Kelley: Why is it better? Why, why, when you say that, what does that mean?

Jason Campbell: Okay, because go back to the snow globe analogy, because when you— because we can move and move around and you become very, very present, but at the very

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end, when you can drop the turbidity and just be now, because it's always you, you're always here. And it's always now. Those things are never not true, those three principles. And so when you can be still, and if we really go down the rabbit hole, and we only have— we have a limited time here, but if we go down the rabbit hole, what it does is we have this pineal gland right in the center. And we can think of the pineal gland as – oversimplify it – and think of it like an antenna. Ooh, an antenna to what? Well, that's a deeper question. We can say an antenna to God. We can say an antenna to the universe and intended to the infinite. whatever reference you want to use. So we have this antenna that can listen to all things. We were talking earlier about intuition, but the problem with it is we have these two big lobes of interference to go blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's the monkey mind. And so when we can drop the incessant stream of thinking, the antenna can listen. And then we can have clarity and the stuff that comes in through the antenna.

That's how I am able to write so much music. I don't write anything. I just channel it. It runs through me like, like every, every great artist since the beginning of time. And I say, you know, great artists we can think Michelangelo, or we can think you made a great meal, you know, something like that. At some point you get into a flow state. And when you're in a flow state, it's not really you, it's you, but it's not you. And it's moving through you. So every great artist since the beginning of time, when you've finished a project has had some variation on the saying "where the hell did that come from?"

And I know where it didn't come from. It didn't come from you. It came through you. And so that's part of the meditate— we can call it meditation. We can call it flow state. We can call it channeling. See there's many words that point to the Same thing. We don't want to get caught up in the words. Just use words that work for you.

Rebekah Kelley: So I have a question then, you know, and this wasn't necessarily on our agenda, but you know, when you said you were channeling, right, that's how you write your music, and that it's not necessarily us. Like I know a lot of times if I have a problem I'm working through, whether it's work or, I mean, it could be something as simple as I'm reorganizing my closet, right, and I'll go to sleep, and while I'm sleeping, I'll dream a dream that will solve my problem. Is that related?

Jason Campbell: 100%. Yeah. And that's, I write a lot of music in my sleep.

Rebekah Kelley: You do?

Jason Campbell: I do the same thing intentionally. Yeah. Because I don't have time during the day, I'm doing too many other things. I'm running a town.

Rebekah Kelley: Yes, you are. So then, share then, like, music, meditation, channeling, I'm not exactly sure what to call it.

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Like, talk about that, how that enhances, um, and provides benefit to our life. I kind of know, but you're so articulate. Like, I would love to hear you describe how you see that as a benefit to us, right?

Jason Campbell: Yeah. Okay, so back into the vibration and back into music. And see, everyone at some point in your life got chills from music. But the interesting thing is, it's a different song. It's a different time. It's a different place. And so you have 100 people, it will be 100 different stories. So we all respond to it. It's like every part of our body has a vibration, almost like a tuning fork. So if I have one tuning fork, and I go, "ding," and hit a tuning fork, and there's another tuning fork that's tuned to the same vibration, I can activate the tuning fork without touching it.

I can say that even simpler, if you have an acoustic guitar and so you just hold the acoustic guitar and go, "mmm," okay, that, "mmm," it's about 110 beats per second, which will be the A string. So you can look at the A string and if you sing an A, the string will start vibrating without touching it. So it's another way of saying like attracts like, water seeks its own level, you know, our thoughts and our frequencies attracts— the law of attraction is what it is and it tends, it tends to— it tends to attract.

So what music can do, different types of music, can just bring you into the moment. The thing, if you're doing music for meditation, don't have music with lyrics in your native tongue, whatever that is, because that creates a— that creates a sound. Because, you know, most pop music is, I want you, I need you, I miss you, let's party and social commentary. So it's one of— it's like variations of the five, which has to do with the five elements, wood, fire, earth, metal, water, which is just a metaphor for the repeating patterns that we find in life. There's a magic thing, you know, form tends to be a five numeric and time it tends to be a six, you know, in a six numeric.

And so what music can do, if it's designed to do it, it can start to turn off the incessant stream of thinking. Now it's usually music that's designed to do it, and that's kind of how I engineer my music to do it. So it just kind of drops you down. And if you're active in it, you listen to either the space in between the notes or the space underneath the notes.

And that's when using music for, you know, meditation or for peace— I mean, I do a lot of music on, you know— I do, I have a lot of music on YouTube. That's just like three hour tracks, just kind of for background. You put them on in the background while you're doing something else. And then we'll just slowly start to drop your heart rate, drop some of the mental turbidity, and it's designed for that, but it's okay if you, you know, have music that makes you happy with lyrics and the story and all that. Well, of course, listen to that too, because whatever works for you.

Rebekah Kelley: Talk to us about what is unique about the music you compose. If you do a three hour, you know, something on YouTube that, I mean, what is the purpose of that? Like,

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how are you and why are you creating it? What's driving you? Obviously you've got a very thoughtful bio. You're very driven down, you know, a certain path. So what do you— what are you creating for us?

Jason Campbell: You know, you say driven down a path. I figured out what I was put on earth to do at a very young age. Write music and teach. And that's it. Everything else is just fun and I have all these auxiliary projects and those are just fun, appy projects, you know, that I do. But that's like at the core of what I do.

Rebekah Kelley: But they also probably feed and inspire your music in a lot of ways, right? Because you're exposing yourself to the human condition, especially if you're a sheriff.

Jason Campbell: You know what? 100%. I had this a— couple of decades ago, I had this old Taoist master say to me, you know, we're talking the robes, the top knot, the sword in the back and everything, you know, full, full dress and everything. He said, "Jason, don't worry about being at one with the universe. You have death and all of eternity to be at one with the universe. Enjoy your separateness."

Rebekah Kelley: I like that. That's great advice.

Jason Campbell: Hey, I'm not dead yet. You know, some of the things, some of the things we might find annoying or something, well, you might miss them when you're dead. So, so don't be, don't be so— don't be so concerned about being at one with the universe yet.

So, okay. So this is kind of a vast subject here. Let me, let me simplify it. So back to the vibration. So if we say different things are vibration, they figured this out thousands of years ago that even our different organs in our body have different vibration. And, I'm going to put on my eastern medicine hat now, we have different emotions that hang out in different organs. For example, anger tends to hang out in the liver, grief tends to hang out in the lungs, worry tends to hang out in the stomach and spleen, shock and neuroses tends to hang out in the heart, and fear tends to hang out in the kidneys and bladder.

And we kind of know that, you know, we kind of know. Oh, you're so scared, you pee yourself, you know, kidney and bladder. Or you worry too much, oh, you get a stomach ulcer. Or like grief hangs out in the lungs, it's like breathing, you know, it's like when we feel grief or grief, also, we can put it into the same categories like depression or shame. Those are all like in the same, you know, vibrational frequency. And we can use one word for all of those and we just say metal element. Why do we say metal element? Cause it's heavy. Cause like shame and depression. It's like grief. It's like having 10,000 pounds on your chest. Okay. Maybe we can have another conversation about what to do about that and how to purge grief from energy, generally heat and breath. That's the oversimplification. You got to get really hot and you got to breathe really, really deep and do different types of breathwork.

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But if we say we're all vibration and everything is a vibration, well, then how do you take these vibrations and turn it into music and turn it into something artistic? You know, using the science of the vibration to put you into the now and making it interesting music. Well, you know, the answer is very carefully, how do you do that? And so I have a whole series of different tracks. You know, I have some of them— you know, I have some music for sleep or, you know, music for study which is a different type of music or just general background music, or some of it is music for breath, which there's like a five element teaching component in it. And there's a bell every four seconds. So, you know, it's kind of, it's like, it's like reverse engineering, you know, what's the purpose.

And I'll tell you a little story about that. A few years ago, I was commissioned by a sleep company to write all the sleep music. It's like, okay, so Zen Piano for sleep. So my normal process is what I said earlier. It's like, I dream about the music. So I get all the microphones set up. I get everything, I have this big grand piano. It's over a hundred years old that I record on. I work everything out. I dream it. I sleep it. The next morning I stumble out of bed, roll the tape and start recording. I've been doing that forever. That's my process.

So, okay. Sleep music ready to go. So everything, get up, you know, turn on the recorder, ready to go, okay, go to play the first note. I couldn't play the first note. Why not? It was the morning time. And what I learned is you can't record sleep music at 5 a.m. You have to record sleep music between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Because that's the sleep time. Because the energy, there's a rising energy of the sun. That's coming in. And if I put that energy into the note, it won't work. It doesn't work. Had to be like completely still. I had to be like almost dead-tired to record all my sleep music. It's like, Oh, wow. Okay. I didn't know that.

Rebekah Kelley: Brilliant. That's brilliant. So interesting. Wow. But it makes so much sense.

Jason Campbell: It makes total sense to me now. It is funny, but I had to go through that process to learn it. And so even when I do, like, a sleep meditation, when I do a voice meditation of, of the sleep meditation, same thing between 11 PM and 1 AM. Cause that's like, the stillness and we want that energy of the stillness. And it's a different vibrational frequency, you know, sun rising, sun setting, you know, high noon and midnight. It's like four different energetic patterns that we have.

Rebekah Kelley: So how can we access this music of yours? And, not only how can we, but like, how would we make choices about it? Cause it sounds like almost in a way it's a choice. Like for instance, as you're talking about the sleep music, I really am one who like, I wake up with a lot of energy, right? So I like energy in the morning. And then I really like to wind down. Like it starts to be 5:30 as the sun starts to set, I definitely wind down on preparing myself. It seems like some of the stuff that you create actually can be very beneficial for that.

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Jason Campbell: Yeah, that's right. Well, ZenPiano.com. is the, is the website. So you can go there and then from there it has, you know, different links of stuff you can go to. You know, there's Spotify, Apple and all that, but then there's like a YouTube channel, that I have that you can find Jason Campbell's Zen Music. And I do a new three hour meditation every week. And usually you can just search through there and maybe find some, there's like study music or there's sleep music. Then, you know, I do a new album the fourth Friday of every month. And which is a translation of the, what's called the I Ching. It's a 6,000 year old language of symbols. And I do that all with solo piano. But so you can find all of it there, you know, you can get on the— I think we have a mailing list and some other stuff for it. So that's the general hub for everything.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. So Jason, is there anything you'd like to leave with us today? Like you've, you've shared so much, you've opened your heart and you know, I look forward to hearing some of your music. I can't wait to go check it out. But is there anything you'd like to leave with us today?

Jason Campbell: Well, here's a reminder. You're always here. It's always now. And you're always you. And so anxiety, stress come from past and future. And so when you can just dial into the present moment, and it's a discipline and you go in the moment, you go out of the moment, we say, there's an old saying, "chain the monkey to the tree." And what that means – the monkey mind – just shut the monkey mind up, chain it to the tree, but let's remember the monkey is a master locksmith. So the monkey's going to escape. We know that. And it's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when. And so, okay, just come back. Just come back to one moment. One moment. One moment.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. Thanks, Jason. Those are helpful insights.

Jason Campbell: Hey, thank you, Rebekah.

Rebekah Kelley: Jason Campbell can be found at www.ZenPiano.com. Let me remind you to subscribe and get access to all Humanized videos, podcasts, and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders on personalized health at HumanizedHealth.com. Thanks for being with us. Jason. Definitely come back.

Jason Campbell: Thank you, Rebekah.