

Episode 13 - 2 Ways You Can Benefit From a Virtual Summit **An Interview with Laura Diehl**

Hello everyone this is Jason Owens welcome to Episode thirteen. Tell you what, it is a beautiful day here in the thriving metropolis of Perkasie Pennsylvania.

I hope it is great where you are and you are in for a really, really good show here today.

We're going to be talking with Laura Diehl of G.P.S. Hope. And G.P.S. here stands for 'Grieving Parents Sharing', so Grieving Parents Sharing Hope. This is an outreach of Crown of Glory Ministries.

What I love about one of the early things that Laura says in this interview is: that this whole effort that she has started from some very humble beginnings.

This didn't start out as a million dollar empire.

It didn't start out as a six figure business, right?

This started out as a support group at her church and she started this support group because she couldn't find what she was looking for in her time of need.

And I tell you, that, to me, speaks about the true heart of somebody who is very entrepreneurial in their pursuit. I know many of you have that same heart where you are looking out across your landscape, whatever that landscape is for you, and you see a need.

You see a need that is out there, and, most of the time, I'm going to have a guess here that most of you listening to this, you are in this bucket where you feel a call to go take your message out to the world.

You feel something on the inside of you, whether it is a message or it is a prompting, there is something out there that is guiding you to go take your message out to the world.

And I tell you what it is; it's not always an easy path, right? That's what this episode and that's what this podcast really is all about. It is trying to help make those first few steps a lot easier.

It's about finding best practices, things that are working for people right now and sharing them and really doing our best to make sure that we're all in a positive headspace when it comes to, really, just kind of striking out and doing this, right?

So, I love the tenacity that you all share as a group.

I love your willingness to give it a go.

I love your continued tenacity to just keep going and taking your message, and I'm always encouraged when I hear from people who are out there on the road taking your message out to people.

So, very encouraging stuff. Tell you what, I had a person write in to me this week on Facebook Messenger and had this this question for me. And really the whole gist of it was, “Hey listen, I have this background...”

This person has had some really good media attention, very good media exposure and the person was expressing some unhappiness with...

“Hey, listen, I've tried X, Y and Z. I really want to be on more stages. How do I make that happen?”

And I tell you what I thought I believe I found an answer to that in Laura's podcast that we're going through here in this episode where she's with us.

And I'll tell you about that answer as we get into the back side of the interview here. So let's listen to some great insights here from Laura Diehl of G.P.S. Hope and let's dive into the interview right now.

Jason: Laura thank you so much for being with us here today really, really, really appreciate it.

Laura: Thank you for having me. I'm excited to talk to you.

Jason: Good stuff, good stuff. So when I start out my interviews here when I'm talking with somebody who is an expert in a field, somebody who is on stage somebody has written as an author.

And I usually ask this question first because I want to give the audience a real quick high level broad brush look at really what it is that you offer.

And then we'll get into more so the message. So can you tell us about the products, the services whether it's a book, a coaching program that you offer.

Laura: Right well we're kind of multifaceted the actual... who we are is G.P.S. Hope -- grieving parents sharing hope. And so within that we want to find ways to reach out obviously to grieving parents.

Parents who lost a child. And so one of the ways we do that we have a website, I have a Facebook page where I put on words of encouragement each day.

I have written some books and I have a blog that I put out every three weeks or so. I have a weekly YouTube little short video that I put out every week.

We do conferences G.P.S. Hope and healing conferences. And I just got done actually doing a virtual summit, an online conference. So that's kind of a big picture view.

Jason: That's perfect, that is perfect. So I said earlier that will do the overview first then we'll kind of get into the meat.

Tell us here in the audience just a little bit more about how you came to be in this business. A little bit of the back story.

Laura: Well I actually had for a good ten years I was an international children's minister. Did children's ministry and trainings internationally and our oldest daughter had a lot of health issues.

When she was three she had cancer. It's a big long story but on it causes heart damage and so at twenty nine years old she passed away from the heart damage. She needed to be on heart transplant list and that didn't happen.

And so that threw us into a very, very dark place that I didn't even know existed. And within that I didn't know anyone who'd lost a child and couldn't find anyone to really give me hope and other than God himself living inside me. And so that's what I had to grab hold of.

And so in my going through this journey of grief of burying your child I realized that I didn't want people coming up behind me facing the same darkness alone like I did. That I wanted to be a source of hope that I was having a hard time finding in in people who was who were on this journey as well.

And so actually we kind of reached out to people in our community and we started a support group for just a little while and called it G.P.S. Hope -- grieving parents sharing hope. And then I woke up in the middle of the night with a book title in my head and all these ideas for chapters.

And I got up and started writing that down and just through a lot of divine connections and things that were not me, I ended up with a publisher Morgan James publishing out of New York was really put in my lap.

And so that was kind of the springboard to what became the ministry of G.P.S. Hope grieving parents sharing hope and it's just kind of grown from that.

Jason: And that's fantastic it's a very, very interesting story as far as getting that the lack of a better term download there at the early hours of the morning of hey here's a book title and the outline or some of the details behind it.

Can you tell us a little bit more about what happened to those notes that you took that day?

Laura: Well yeah I just I started writing and I just ... The book what happened was it kind of morphed as I started writing and I got about three chapters.

And it was really difficult to write because the subject is so difficult and it throws you back in deeply into the emotions of the grief. And I was taking a lot of I did a lot of journaling through that and so I was looking at a lot of what I journaled.

I would talk to God, I would write it out and then I would listen and I would write out what I was hearing God tell me about this journey. And so that's kind of what I based the book on and I had like three chapters done when I ended up meeting up with David Hancock from Morgan James and he asked me to send what I had.

And when I was offered a contract then it put me on a deadline and that made it really, really difficult because I couldn't step back from it at that point if it got to have a year or two deep. I had to just keep plowing through it.

Jason: And so that was; that became the rather than an internal imposed deadline it was an external exposed deadline, and it sounds like that helped.

Laura: It did help because I you know, because it is such a deep have the subject I don't know if I'd be done yet right. Now so in that sense it did. I you know because of the subject I did have to take a recovery time after that.

But the interesting thing that happened to me was as I was writing that book, a second book; it was almost like it started writing itself. So I ended up writing two books simultaneously. This first one is called 'When Tragedy Strikes Rebuilding Your Life With Hope And Healing'.

After the death of a child and it ended up being like building a house, like rooms on a house, like pulling into the garage of tears. You know sometimes you sit in the garage and you're not ready to go into the house. Talking about the kitchen of usefulness.

How we have to allow God to flow through us to reach out to others. The bedroom of the rest; how it's okay to rest and we've got to rest in our grief and looking out the window of fear in the roof of hope.

And so it began, the foundation of forgiveness was huge and the pillars of trust. And so I found myself building a house with that book and all the different pieces that have to be rebuilt in our lives after the death of a child. This other book that was kind of writing itself.

I began connecting with some Facebook groups of grieving parents and I would see so many things that we talk about that people around us don't understand.

And so we can only talk to each other about these things because people around us just don't understand the depth of our grief. They don't understand why it takes so long to get past it and all that stuff.

And so I found myself writing the second book simultaneously writing out things that kind of I wish people understood about us in our grief. And so that when and I

actually ended up writing five books total in thirteen months time on the other four books are self-published.

Jason: Wow, wow! That is an amazing period of productivity of pulling a lot of thoughts and a lot of emotions out and getting them down on paper that's, wow! Did you find that process therapeutic?

Laura: I would say yes it was very much so. Yes definitely.

Jason: Amazing, amazing. Let's turn to ... you mentioned that you do conferences. I imagine you also have some public speaking.

So let's first talk about the G.P.S. conferences that you have run in the past. Tell us about what the format looks like. Is that out like a full day, a week and a half day?

Laura: Yeah it's actually one full day. On the first one we did we kind of got some feedback that they felt like it was a little bit long and so the second one we just completed last week and as a matter of fact I'm so we shortened it up a little bit.

And you know I think for all of us who are learning how to be entrepreneurs it's a learn as you go kind of thing and which can be frustrating.

But it can also be exactly what we need because I can take what works for you and find you know and have to kind of work my way through it and make it work for me.

And so the conference's what we have come to discover is that for us personally; my husband and I we do this together is that we have the first one I brought in some speakers and obviously the virtual summit I brought in speakers.

But as a whole what we've realized is our G.P.S. Hope conference's is basically Dave and I. And we talk about forgiveness, we talk about grace in grieving, we talk about you know where is God in my grief and when all of this happened?

And so we do the sessions Dave and I lead the worship. I play guitar and piano not professionally but enough to you know, lead us in into the Lord's presence. And we have lunch provided at the venue because it's just too stressful of a day to try to go out and find something to eat.

And then we also break up into a group where Dave takes the dads and I take the moms and so we can talk separately because we do seem to grieve differently for the most part men and women.

And so we struggle with that as a couple and so we will separate for a session and then we take communion together because communion has such an incredible meaning to me now as a bereaved parent because of what Jesus did.

I know that I will see my daughter again and then we end with a balloon launch in the places that allow balloons to be released and there's something that's just unexplainable about releasing writing a message to your child and releasing that upwards.

And so that's kind of how we end the day so it goes from like 9 to 3:30.

Jason: Wow, that sounds like a very, very powerful day. Let's talk here from a minute. Two questions here that I'd like to ask.

So you mentioned that these conferences as well most of us pretty much all of being an entrepreneur is to try something you learn from and you try to get and you learn some more. What would you say went well about this most recent G.P.S. conferences?

Laura: I would say the support of the host that was having us was very strong, was very good. I think that's crucial. The communication was good.

Any time that we felt like there might be a breakdown in communication we were able to easily correct that which is ... One of the things that happened because it was local for us there was some miscommunication on the marketing.

And my first agreement we thought they were going to market it and they thought since we were local we were going to market it. I had spelled that out but apparently it wasn't read thoroughly or something so.

So there was kind of a last minute scrambling for the marketing aspect of things. And so I'm guessing your next question is what didn't go so well. I would say that piece of it was probably the disappointing piece.

But for me when I pray and put something in God's hands I have to believe it's his

way and you know all the pieces are his pieces. And so it was very small it was seven people. First one we had in August.

We had twelve to fifteen I can't remember exactly. So this one was actually smaller instead of bigger you expect are going to grow right not right smaller. But I do believe that the people that God wanted there were there.

Jason: Right those were the right seven for that room and that day and that's fantastic. And you did anticipate my question.

I was going to say would you do differently so good, good, good looking forward there. What's turn now to the virtual summit.

This topic intrigues me the most because of all of the people I've interviewed up to this point I haven't interviewed somebody who has actually hosted a virtual summit.

So you put this all together. Can you explain to the listeners what a virtual summit is?

Laura: Yeah a virtual summit is when you get speakers, people who are known in the field in the area that you're working in. For me it's parental grief.

And so you get a bunch of people together, you interview them. Some people do it live. I did recordings and so we recorded.

We just sat like; we used a program called Zoom but you can use Skype, we will hangouts whatever. And interview recording that person or record interviewing. I said that backwards.

And so I had fifteen sessions and then I also had three bonus sessions and what we did was we made this available for free for forty eight hours. And if people wanted lifetime access and then they were offered if they paid \$49 which is a very small price actually.

For \$49 dollars they could purchase lifetime access to this summit.

And we had bonuses for people who pre-registered, we had bonuses for people who signed up early for a life time access; give them incentives to jump in on that

and now it has now become a product for us as a ministry that we now sell for \$69 dollars.

I know of people who are you know their calling is marketing or business itself that sounds very, very small. But for us the purpose is to get it into people's hands and grieving parents are ...

This is one thing that I have learned as we go along is everybody; people talk about oh, you can do this in any niche. You can do this works in any niche.

And I'm finding that grief doesn't ... there are things that work for any niche that do not work for grief. I'm sorry it's don't because we're so fuzzy headed, we're so confused, we're so discombobulated.

It's a whole another world and so that's been a big piece of the whole figuring out what works with a group of grieving parents who have buried their children. So for us to make that a low price for these people to be able to really afford it is something that we want to do, we choose to do that.

Jason: Right, right. Now did you like that process of finding and experts and interviewing them and then productize in that interview. Did you like that process?

Some people do and some people.

Laura: Yeah I actually loved. It was a of work, I'm saying a lot of work and I gave myself a short deadline. I kind of went out there and found some people to follow who are known for their summits and I've been on the other end of some virtual summits.

And so I gave myself a very short deadline because I know for myself I work best on deadlines and also we have a personal situation. We're heading to Uganda in a couple in the next couple weeks and so I didn't.

I wanted to have that done and off my plate before I left the country. So it made it extra difficult because I gave myself such a short deadline but I actually absolutely loved it.

And any other think did was it built my own credibility and authority in the field helping grieving parents because I was able to secure people who are known in this area right so kind of put me up that their level.

Jason: Very good. very good. Let's turn now here for the last few minutes of the interview. I want to go through a couple things that I've noticed about your site that I really like and I just want to point these out to the listeners.

Went into your blog which you're located at G.P.S. Hope.org. And by the way all the show notes for this, all the links that we will talk about here you can find in the show notes.

And the show notes will be at JasonROwens; it's my middle initial 'r' last name Owens with an S. JasonROwens.com/13. So what I want to point out here is inside the blog.

Went head into that and what I'm looking at is one of your blog articles. And by the way your blogs are very well written. I love the sharable images that you have here.

This is very high quality. The most recent blog that I'm looking for; the title is 'I'm So Angry About My Child's Death'. It looks like it is; well actually it is an excerpt of an interview.

So there's kind of this back and forth here between you and the person that you're interviewing. And then at the tail end of this article and I love this I actually love what you've done here.

There's a double call to action here. The first call to action is to hear the full interview which ended with my guest praying a beautiful prayer over all those watching, just filling your name and address below.

So there's an opt in that you can get the rest of the blog article is actually a teaser for the rest of the interview there. I really like the way that you've done that certainly would recommend that.

And then at the bottom here's the second call to action. We're talking about expressions of hope is written by author and speaker Laura Deal and the long story short is hey, if you want to contact Laura as an author or a speaker click here all right.

So you click here and it actually takes you over to your speaking site which is a completely separate site in your universe that so to of speak; so you have the site where your blog lives and where you're talking about your company.

But then you have a second site here that's really about how to engage you as a speaker so I like that.

How do you find that is having those two pieces in or having those having that information in two different sites is that is that working for you in helping you accomplish what you're looking for?

Laura: Yeah I think it does. The ministry itself G.P.S. Hope has so many pieces to it. That to just add a speaker little blurb just doesn't feel like it's enough.

And I really, really feel like that's really my heart is face to face ministry and going out there to the parents and out there to people who want to know how to help parents who are grieving.

That's a whole another huge topic that we're branching into. Even like corporate businesses, our culture does not handle grief well at all.

Jason: Yeah and we need to know what do you say, what do you not say; what do you do, what do you not do; to someone who's just come back from leave from grieving someone deeply that they've lost.

And so do they have it separately it allows me to list the topics, it allows me to talk about the conference, it allows me to talk about you know, we minister to both grieving parents and those who want to help them.

We also minister to people who just plain face tragedies in life because when you've lost a child it seems like while you face the worst of the worst maybe you can help me get through my issue here.

And so having a separate website just allows or it just feels like more windows of opportunity for people to understand that we do speak and we do come to you.

Jason: Got, got it. I notice here on your blog. I scrolled moment back to your blog scrolled all the way to the bottom and it says that you are using the rainmaker platform. So that is a web hosting service.

Looks like it's kind of an all in one where you have the e-mail built into the blog, built into kind of a shopping cart. How do you like the rainmaker platform?

Laura: We actually love it. We invested in. There's a man named Ray Edwards who is very good at what he does.

He's one of the world's best copywriters. He copyrights for like Tony Robbins and John Maxwell and we invested in mentoring under him.

And this is the platform that he set us up on and so we're very grateful you know he said it doesn't very professional and that's because of the rain maker site.

The speaker one is done on Homestead. That was kind of when we first started dabbling into ministry back when I was crown of glory that was we started on.

It was cheap, we could afford it and so when we made the shift into G.P.S. Hope we chose the rainmaker for that and then we turned the crown of glory website into what became my speaker author website.

We really do like rainmaker. It is a form of Wordpress.

Jason: Got you, okay got you good stuff. So last couple questions here and then we'll wrap up.

Tell us about your e-mail list building. Can you give us an idea of the size of your list that you currently have and what is working for you as you're growing that list?

Laura: Yeah my husband is my technique and my numbers guy.

So I might not be totally accurate on all of this. But last I looked at our list I think it was. OK I'm getting fuzzy here.

Is either six hundred eighty six or eight hundred sixty something. So it's over five hundred anyway between five hundred and a thousand that I know already. You mention the opt in for the blog.

That has been one of our biggest... I guess one of our most consistent ways of adding to our e-mail list has been Matt opt in.

I just recently started doing that within the last six months and it feels like there is just a continual story not yet but there are people that will opt in.

And the wonderful thing is someone can read a blog I wrote three months ago and opt in for that whatever was that they get. And so it's just a continual thing that's just out there that brings an email addresses.

The virtual summit was brought in the most. We had over about two hundred people signing up for that virtual summit. So that gave us about two hundred emails on our list and into it.

Jason: Wow! Good for you, good for you. I was going to ask about the summit thank you for that. Back

What this is called, is called an after post opt in. So it appears of course after the post right you do the blog posts include on the bottom that's where the opt in page lives.

And it looks like you're doing several flavors of this. It's not just the same thing so each post kind of has a different flavor here I just scroll down.

Down at several posts and I found one for the Triple Crown transformation audiobook. There was another one that looks like you were giving up while you're talking about the, Hope and Healing virtual summit.

And I think the last one I scrolled through here very quickly was you were giving away a copy of the inscription that is on the back of your daughter's tombstone. Was it a poem or something on the back tell us about that.

Laura: Something she wrote.

Jason: That's right okay brilliant. So you have the after post opt in. So I'm a huge fan of those. I use them on my site and highly, highly recommend listeners out there to go ahead and get that turned on. Do you happen to know what system you're using for the after post opt in? Are you are you just copying and pasting the code there or is there a tool that you using.

That would be my husband's department I know he does H.T.M.L. so I'm not sure but I know we started out with lead pages. We use a Weber right now. But I think the rainmaker has ins or some of these options built into it.

Jason: Okay, okay.

Laura: I'm not sure he goes out to a weber or H.T.M.L. demander or what he does.

Jason: Great stuff, great stuff. Well as you build your list; we'll say this in parting here because we're getting close to our time being up.

One of the things that I like about what you've done with the virtual summit is that you're very savvy whether you realize it or not. You are savvy in recording that and not doing it live.

Now there's a bit of a draw to doing it live but personally for the long jeopardy of what you have, that content recording that was brilliant because of course you have the virtual some of that you can sell as a package now.

What usually happens with these at some point is okay, let's go ahead and take the interviews again back. I ask hey, did you really like doing the interviews imagine kind of just being on a drumbeat of maybe it's doing one interview a month, one interview a month.

So it's not this huge pressure of having the event coming but you just you're always feeding one interview a month into this library and you can turn the whole thing into a monthly subscription service for nine or ten bucks or whatever the dollar figure sounds like.

So the virtual summit could be its own product but you could also make that content available as just part of the video library. So anyway lots of things you can do with that.

Laura: I was turning into a blog or news individual. Yeah, I mean there's so much you can do with it and that to me the other thing was trying to get everybody schedules.

This was a big enough project I was taking on much less trying to coordinate everybody schedules to do something live. I was trying to cut making it easy on myself not having to jump that hurdle

Jason: That's brilliant and the list growth you got out of it sounds fantastic too. Good for you, good for you. All right well again thank you so much for being on today's show.

I really, really appreciate it. And again love what you're doing with your blog, love the after post opt ins, love the fact that you're growing your list through the virtual summit.

Hats off to you really looks like you have a lot of your processes in place and things going well with the ministry.

Laura: Thank you Jason I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to share.

Jason: Take care and best of luck. You said you're going to Uganda?

Laura: Yes, actually my daughter's getting married. I've done a lot of ministry over there I said I do be international children's ministry and she went with me back in 2009 and met a young man there and finally you know what. It's time for them to do this seriously make it permanent so.

Jason: That's good.

Laura: Exciting personal trip.

Jason: Well congratulations to that and look forward to keeping in touch with you take care.

Laura: Thank you Jason.

Tell you what I do love doing this. I love interviewing people. I got a lot out of my time when I was on the line with Laura.

I tell you what I really do recommend you check out the show notes here at JasonROwens.com/13; that's for Episode thirteen. Again that's my first name, middle initial, last name Jason R. Owens with an S. dot com forward slash thirteen.

Now in the intro I alluded to kind of having this aha moment where I'm coming trying to come up with an answer for a person who wrote in to me about hey listen, I have a great story.

I have a great background and I've had some good media exposure and me and I'm just not able to get on enough public speaking stages. How can I get more?

And as I'm sitting here thinking through this whole idea of the virtual summit I'm wondering if that's not the answer right. And yes that is completely going to flip the script on what you would think of a traditional public speaking venue being right.

So rather than you going to a whole bunch of people in a room how about having a whole bunch of people come to your room, right. Again completely flip the script why not have that happen?

Okay, so in this model what Laura ended up doing was interviewing a bunch of people right. So if I were a person being interviewed, wow that would be great to have a copy of that.

Okay now of course in this model Laura is selling that and certainly kudos to her for doing that. But I mean think about that right. If you are able to get on a virtual summit right or host your own virtual summit where of course you can be a guest.

Wow right; I mean essentially what you're doing there is an affiliate model okay because I'm going to assume in this virtual summit model where you have all these people who are going to be your guests.

They are going to be reaching out to their people inviting them to come listen, inviting their people to come listen to where ever the person is be interviewed right.

So if you have ten other people that you are interviewing for this virtual summit well you would think that you're going to get the respective networks of ten other people invited into this event.

All right so you heard Laura say that this was a very good list builder for her at two hundred new e-mails added to her list.

I'll tell you what if you are just getting started if you're in that first year or so or first couple years and you're looking for something to really catapult your list growth I tell you what two hundred e-mails that's not shabby right. I mean that's good.

So I mean think about that really would you like to stand in front of a room right now you and give a talk to two hundred people. I would, I mean sure. Now of course the revenue side all right that's all going to depend upon the draw of your topic and your market and your audience and what not.

And I tell you I'm really intrigued by this whole idea of a virtual summit. Now of course I've seen these summits before advertised online when it's always with these mega colossal big names, right.

People that I don't circulate in that orbit and they certainly don't circulate in mine, right. So I've never really thought of myself being somebody who's on one of those virtual summits, right. And I quite frankly have never I've just never thought of participating in one.

So anyway what Laura has done here for me is completely shift that into hey listen, you don't have to have Colin Powell on your virtual summit for it to be a success right.

I'm really think that there is something to this tell you a check back with me on this or if you're interested by all means go ahead and drop me a line. I'm going to be doing some more research on my own about how I can well leverage a virtual summit for me.

And if you're interested in learning more about that want to drop me a line on my Facebook page go ahead an instant message me from there. And by the way my Facebook page; I never talk about it.

It is obviously going to Facebook and you search for Jason.Owens Speaks so that's essential in the U.R.L. So you do the <http://Facebook.com/Jason.Owens.Speaks> and you can put a period in between each of those.

So Jason and then a period Owens and then a period Speaks and you will find my page. Go ahead there join my page inbox me and I will do my best to go ahead and reach back out to you with what I've learned up to this point.

All right so we're going to wrap up here. Before I do I want to say a special shout out to my new followers who have discovered the feed over here on stitcher.

Major props to you guys big shout out to you and also want to talk to my new friends out in the Google Play audio. So thanks so much for joining me over there.

So you are now able to find the Jason Owens podcast on three networks right which is fun kind of cool. All right so iTunes of course and stitcher and of course now Google Play audio. So again thank you so much everyone for listening.

Really appreciate this. Would love to get any reviews that you would like to leave on any of those three networks and by all means please reach out to me through Facebook and the Facebook Messenger and I look forward to hearing from you.

And remember everyone every day make sure you take your message to just one more person. Take care everyone.