

# David Kaczynski's Lecture on Ethics & Responsibility

David Kaczynski

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**ORGANIZER:** ... But he's also someone who has served as director of Buddhist Monastery in Woodstock, NY.

He's worked to end shelters for runaways.

He's been involved in the abolition of Capital punishment movement.

He's also worked blue collar jobs from Montana to Texas.

I've had the good fortune to spend a few hours with him talking and it's been just a delight.

I think you'll enjoy this this evening. Let's give a very warm welcome to David Kaczynski.

**DAVID:** Can you hear me?

OK, well I'm pleased to be invited here.

It's really an honor, I've never been here before, but it seems like a pretty amazing place with an amazing history and an amazing campus and so it feels special for me to be here tonight.

Unlike some of the speakers that come at your lecture series, I don't have a great deal of expertise.

I haven't invented anything, I'm not famous, I haven't written great books or anything like that.

But I have lived through a personal experience that you could only describe as painful, tragic and not just painful for my family.

But for a number of families across the country, right?

And at the very heart of this story, really, is what I would consider an ethical dilemma.

I think the saving grace for going through a tragedy is the hope that there are lessons that could be derived from it that in the future people might.

Young people especially might hear this story.

And draw some lessons from it, and I'm not going to tell you what those lessons are.

You're the ones that can figure that out.

I could tell you some ideas I have about the lessons and what my thinking was at the time.

Sometimes I like to talk to the kids in school and say what would you do if you saw somebody doing something wrong and they're saying like, well, can you give me a little more context on that?

And I say, well, well, what if it was something really wrong like?

You know not just breaking a rule, but actually going out and harming someone, hurting someone, another human being, and then of course there's thinking well.

Of course you you, you do whatever you can to stop that person and then let me ask the question.

Well what if that person were?

A close friend of yours, someone you had a bond with.

And what if the consequences of stopping them of going to some authority would be devastating for them?

It's a little more difficult.

And then finally, the situation that I found myself plunged in.

What if that person was a family member?

Your own brother, someone you love and at times had adored and admired?

So that's kind of how I want to frame this as an as an ethical dilemma.

But like every situation in life, it has things that went on before and things that went on afterwards.

So let me start at the beginning.

I I grew up in a suburb of Chicago.

There there were just four of us in our family.

There was mom and dad.

Mom was a stay at home Mom.

Dad made sausages at his uncle's deli, so we were a working class family. There was my older brother Ted. 7 1/2 years older than me and finally I come along.

And and I always thought of our family as being a very stable family, a very happy family, a very hopeful family and and from the time I was a little kid man, I thought I had my brother up on a pedestal.

Our family was one, maybe like some of your families that really emphasized education.

The idea was that, you know by by going to school by learning things you develop not only you know knowledge but also wisdom.

Not only a chance to advance yourself in life, but a chance maybe to make the world a better place.

Nice and this was kind of the hope that ethos, the culture of our family and my brother Ted.

In my eyes, his little baby brother just thought he embodied.

But he he was really smart.

He he skipped 2 grades.

So I think he skipped 4th grade and then he went through high school in three years.

So he graduates from high school, uh, less than a month after his 16th birthday.

At one point, the guidance counselor at school said.

Let's figure out.

How smart this kid is and she gave him.

I don't know if they still do this anymore, but they gave gave him an IQ test.

IQ stands for intelligence quotient.

And to me it's a little bit funny because I think we now know that there are many, many different kinds of intelligence.

There's not just one number you could put on how smart someone is, but back then they seem to think well. If you got 100 on an IQ test, you were like average. If you got 140 or higher.

You were considered to be a genius while my brother scored 165. He was like off the charts.

And sure enough, he got a scholarship to a school, but it wasn't just any school.

It was Harvard University.

So he enters Harvard.

As a young.

Boy of 16 and and he had great things.

I there's a picture in our family album of, you know, Teddy dressed in a suit, kind of like I am now.

Now, walking with a suitcase and his little brother David has his hand on the suitcase.

Like I'm going to help him.

'cause I want to be part of this this grand journey.

He's going to take going to college, going out into the world making a difference.

But you know?

I always know Ted was different.

Mostly I thought he was different in a very positive way because he was so smart.

But he was.

Also very kind to me. I'll give you one example of something that happened when I was about 3 1/2 years old.

Our family moved from a inner city neighborhood in Chicago out to suburbs.

It was first time we had our own house.

Yes, and it was like a safe community, not even a lot of traffic back then and I remember my parents said to me.

David, if you want to go outside, you could play in the backyard and you know just don't leave the backyard and man.

I had new freedom.

I would push my.

Way out through.

This little screen door we had in the back play around.

I met other kids in the neighborhood.

The only cloud on my horizon then was the fact that at the age of 3 1/2 I was so short I couldn't quite reach the the door handle to pull open the screen door and get back inside the house and so I used to, you know I used to be out there screaming.

It seemed to me like forever mom dad Teddy let me in.

I want to come in.

And and then one day, Ted, who was about 10 years old at this point at 10 or 11 showed up and I saw him fiddling around with something at the back door, and I was

always fascinated with the ingenious things my brother did, and I saw that he had taken a spool of thread from Mom sewing kit, a hammer and nail from Dad.

Tool kit in the basement he removed.

The thread so he's.

Got this wooden screen wouldn't wouldn't spool and he takes the nail and puts it, and he hammers it down to the wooden screen door.

And when he's done he says Dave see if this works.

And all of a sudden I realized what he had done.

He'd made this little makeshift door handle for me.

Needless to say, my brother was a hero, a hero because of how intelligent he was, but also because of how kind he was to me.

But there were ways in which I thought maybe something wasn't completely right with my brother.

I think I was like 8 or 9 years old.

I remember asking mom one day I said mom, what's wrong with Teddy?

And imagine apparent.

Faced with this kind of.

A question and.

I think her answer was you know her first shot at it was a pretty good one, she said David, there's nothing wrong with your brother.

What do you mean?

And I said, well, you know, I have lots of friends.

I mean, I play with people they come and over to our house.

Teddy doesn't have any friends.

Why is that?

And I thought.

Mum's answer was pretty smart. She said, you know, Dave, there's lots of different kinds of people in the world.

Takes all kinds of people to make a world everybody doesn't have to be the same.

You like people, people like you, that's wonderful.

Teddy likes to read.

He likes to work on things he likes to study and he likes to be by himself.

That's OK too.

But Mom, I think realized pretty quickly that I wasn't 100% satisfied and at that point she said.

Dave, sit down.

I want to tell you about something that happened.

Before you were born.

So mom and I sat down in this little couch where she used to read me stories and and she said, you know, when your brother was nine months old, just a little baby, he couldn't speak or understand language at this point.

He got sick and we took him to the.

Hospital and he had to be in the hospital for like 10 days.

Two weeks and my mom always resented the hospital because they only allowed parents to visit.

I think hospitals probably have changed this policy, but back then parents were only able to visit during regular visiting hours, which was three days a week for two hours.

So basically she handed over her infant son to the nurses and doctors, and of course they're poking him with needles and doing all kinds of things.

He's crying, mom and dad aren't there and she said, you know, when we took Teddy home from the hospital, he was different.

He didn't smile anymore.

He didn't laugh.

He didn't make eye contact.

It took a long time before we could get Teddy to recover.

Like the sort of happiness that he once knew.

And then mom used the word trauma.

It was the first time I ever heard the word trauma and she said, you know, trauma is like, well, you know, if your body is injured.

It maybe it can heal well with your mind, can be injured too.

Teddy probably doesn't remember what happened to him.

Was a little baby, but if he doesn't trust people if he likes to be by himself, you know.

If he's uncomfortable with relating to people, it might have something to do with this hospital experience.

And so I sort of filed that in the back of my mind, and if Ted was, you know, a little strange.

Sometimes I think I wonder if that was it to see on some some card, subconscious level.

Remembering this little hospital experience.

Well anyway, Ted, you know he graduates from Harvard with a degree in mathematics.

He gets a teaching assistant job at a, uh, another elite Graduate School University of Michigan.

While he's at the University of Michigan, I get this.

He's like 20 years old.

He's already publishing.

Original mathematical research theorems and I think it was.

Some some kind of theory that that had never been discovered in the field of mathematics before.

He was like brilliant.

He won an award as the best thesis.

In mathematics that year, and he was offered a tenure track job at University of California at Berkeley.

Another real top institution.

So on one level, Ted is like this rising star in academia.

Like if you could compare, say, mathematics to basketball.

He was like the Michael Jordan of.

Mathematics, do you guys know who Michael Jordan is?

OK, OK, just checking LeBron James, should I or am I out of date?

I can't.

I'm sure I am.

Anyway, so Ted was doing.

Great, but he was also very isolated.

He didn't have friends at college.

Never had a girlfriend as far as I know.

Oh man.

And then after he'd been at Berkeley teaching for about three years, he wrote a letter to our parents.

And he said, this is how we communicated.

It usually wasn't face to face, it was through some kind of letter and it would be a long letter like 20 pages long.

I'm not not a Twitter user.

I don't think he said I've decided to quit my job now you're probably going to be angry at me about this because you've prepared me all my life.

For this you know, being a professor someplace, but you know, I've come to the conclusion that modern technology

Is not a good thing.

Thing for the human race.

It's actually a terrible thing.

It causes environmental damage, loss of privacy.

I mean someday, the robots might become so intelligent that they will become our masters.

I think we need to stop technology, and in fact, because mathematics contributes to technology, I want to get us far away from technology.

As I possibly can.

Therefore, I'm going to quit my job and I'm going to move out to a little cabin in the.

Woods and try to live off the forest.

Our family had always loved camping and vacations, but this was somewhat different.

Now I'm his little brother.

I have him on a pedestal.

If you read Time magazine back, then there was a sort of a thing in the 60s about people sort of dropping out.

You know they prepare for a career and they say heck with it all.

I'm just going to live the way I want to.

So they moved to San Francisco or they do something.

Some people were moving back.

To the land, Ted was going to move to the forest, and for me this was fantastic.

This was my brother, the hero, not only someone who is very smart, but someone who is very principled.

How many people follow their principles?

When when there's a cost to doing so?

How many people have the courage to live a life that they choose rather than the life? That's sort of chosen for them by other people's expectations. I thought it was great.

Mom wasn't angry.

Mom and Dad weren't angry.

But I do remember vividly a conversation I had with my mom at that point in which she said.

You know, David, I don't think Ted's choice quitting his job has anything to do with technology. I really think it's because he doesn't know how to.

Be with people he doesn't know how to accept people or become accepted by people.

I'm afraid he's running away from a social world that he doesn't understand.

And and that might not be a good thing.

Well, time goes on.

Ted ends up living in the forest for about 10 years before the next sort of event takes place.

I would visit him sometimes.

My parents would go, our parents would go and visit him.

One one year he.

Kept his finances and had managed to live not quite independently, but.

An average of \$0.12 a day, he had a garden he forged. He hunted, he identified wild foods, et cetera, et cetera. And it was quite an accomplishment. Not many people could do that.

On the other hand, as we look back, it seems pretty clear that his mental condition may be deteriorating a bit.

One day our parents came to me.

And they showed me a letter.

They were very upset. I remember Mom weeping as she showed me this letter. It was 23 pages long and the letter began in this way, he said.

Mom and dad.

I have been miserable all my life.



And I've had a lot of time to think about this and try to understand why I'm so miserable.

And now I understand why it's because you never loved me.

Very, very difficult for a message for a parent to receive and to me it was like completely untrue.

If there's something I never questioned is that mom and dad loved us both unconditionally.

And I'm thinking, OK, you know, he's living by himself. He has nobody to talk to. You know people can say things they don't mean. I mean, 23 pages is a lot, but

You know, so I wrote him a letter.

I said Ted, I think you need to apologize.

You've hurt Mom and dad.

Terribly, you know they love us.

And we had.

A series of exchanges back and forth, but Ted got very upset.

He says, you know they were terrible parents.

If you keep trying to.

Defend them, I'm going to cut you out of my life and that will be it.

I won't, I won't see you or talk to you anymore, and at this point he also said he was cutting out our parents.

He refused to read their letters, write to them except to visit from them, see them at all.

So for the next of six or seven years I'm in this sort of awkward position, I'm the go between, you know.

I visit Ted or I'm writing to him and Mom is saying, gosh Dave, have you heard from Ted?

Is he OK?

Is there something we could do?

Is there some way we could apologize?

Remember, Dad wrote a long letter.

Of apology, saying the mistakes I made, I know I made mistakes and I'm really sorry about them. And Ted's reaction was, ah, see, he admits he made mistakes.

There was no reconciliation possible and no way for me to try to sort of bring about reconciliation within the family.

Yes it was.

A difficult situation for me to be in.

Now around this time in my life, something really wonderful happened to me.

When I was 11 years old in the 7th grade, I'd met a little girl named Linda.

And at that.

Point, you know, I thought she was saying she's very nice and I knew she was very smart a couple of years ago by we end up in high school in a chemistry class and were paired together as lab partners.

That's when I discovered what chemistry was all about.  
Unfortunately, Linda already had a boyfriend.  
I was kind.  
Of a geeky guy.  
Some of you guys know the story.  
I just but I felt OK if I she can't be, you know, like my girlfriend at least we could be friends and we maintained a friendship for a long long period of time.  
And we visited at times and, well, to make a Long story short around this time.  
Linda, uh, I visited Linda for two weeks in upstate New York and we decided at the end of the two weeks that I really didn't have to leave.  
So at this point I was writing a letter to my brother saying.  
Ted guess what?  
Please, I'm so happy I'm going to get married.  
It's the woman.  
I've always dreamed about, and finally, she's seeing that you know, she likes me too.  
Well, I got back a letter from my Ted brother Ted.  
17 pages long.  
And it started this way.  
Get this straight.  
You're no brother of mine.  
You know it's obvious even from your letter that this woman is a terrible evil person and and will you listen to me?  
No, you never listen to me.  
So let's just cut it off.  
This is too painful for me.  
Don't write to me, don't visit me.  
I don't want to have anything to do with with you ever again.  
And I'm reading this letter and my hands are like shaking.  
I'm angry, right?  
I mean, I'm thinking how dare he?  
He's hurt our parents now he's attacking the woman I love who he's never even met.  
What's wrong with this guy?  
And then another little voice came back and said, my God Dave, you're his only friend.  
If he doesn't have you, who?  
How could he live that way?  
None of which quite prepared me for what happened about five years later, Linda had been and I had been married about five years.  
At this point I'm working as a as a counselor at a runaway homeless youth shelter for teens trying to help families in crisis.  
Kids who are.

Having so much difficulty at home, they can't even stay at home and and I didn't even see the crisis that was sneaking up on me and my own family.

But but I got home from work one day.

I start walking from the garage to the house.

I look up and I see my wife Linda space in the in the window and I, you know, I've been married five years.

I figured, oh I'm in trouble.

She does not look happy.

Sure enough, I walk in the door and she says Dave, we have to talk.

All of a sudden I figured OK.

What have I done, you know?

OK, so she leads me to our couch in the living room.

She puts her hand on my knee and she says David don't get angry at me but.

Now I'm thinking OK, what did she do?

And of course I'm going to forgive her.

Love conquers all.

All, but then she says something that absolutely turns my world around.

She said, you know, Dave?

You think there's any possibility that your brother Ted might be this Unabomber that everybody is talking about?

Now this was before you guys were born. Your parents I'm sure would remember something about the case. It was big news at the time, but from the late 70s to this time in 1985 there was a mysterious bomber. The FBI called him the Unabomber, who'd sent 17 bombs through the mail.

Three people had been killed, including a business executive not far from here in Caldwell, NJ.

A couple dozen people had been injured.

He'd even put a bomb.

Through the mail and an airplane that went off, and fortunately they were able to land without serious injuries, but a really dangerous guy. He was like Public Enemy #1

If you watched America's Most Wanted back, then regular feature, who's the universe?

It was the longest running most expensive criminal investigation in the history of the FBI.

And here I am in my living room and my wife is saying, do you think it's your brother?

My first reaction was I I felt, well OK, she had reasons to resent him because of the way he talked about her and she knew about his opposition.

His concerns about technology, but I'd never seen my brother Riley.

Right?

I said it can't be, and Linda told me at that time well listen, the Unabomber has sent a manifesto like a long 78 page.

A philosophical thesis to the New York Times, and he says if they publish it, he'll stop killing people.

They're going to publish it if you would you at least promise me David, that you'll read this and tell me what you think.

And I said of course, of course, and I was very sure I'd read this manifesto and be able to tell Linda no, no way.

It's not him.

I know, Ted, I know how he thinks.

I know how he writes.

The day finally came when Lyndon I got to sit down with that manifesto that was published online first.

And at first we could only access the 1st 6 pages online.

And my heart sank.

I remember Linda saying, well, Dave, what do you think?

And I said, well, I still don't think it's my brother, but I think it.

Maybe remotely possibly could be my brother.

This upset Linda a lot.

Over the years, I'd gotten many letters from my brother.

He sent long, long letters.

A lot of them were on this theme of technology which he really hated, and so as time went on, I.

Every night after work, Linda is a college professor.

She'd come home from from, you know, teaching philosophy at Union College in upstate New York.

I'd come back home from the youth shelter. Would sit down together would be with letters. My brothers letters would be reading the 78 man page manifesto, trendy compare notes.

And I have to say it was like a roller coaster for me.

Sometimes I'd say to myself there's no way you know, it's just I'm worried about my brother Linda planted this little seed of suspicion.

It can't possibly be him.

Another day.

I'd maybe be reading a passage in one of my brothers letters and I get confused.

I'd think I was reading the manifesto.

They were that similar.

The night finally came I, I guess the morning actually I woke up one morning.

Linda had gotten up a little bit earlier as I woke up from sleep, I thought, gosh, this is the worst nightmare I've ever had in my life.

And then.

You know the cobwebs kind of melted, and I realized.

Not a nightmare.

I'm literally considering that my own brother is a serial killer most wanted person in America.

I remember going to the breakfast table.

Linda was eating some cornflakes.

I catch her eye and I said, you know?

I think it might be 5050 that Ted wrote that manifesto.

And then I mean from that point on, we really had to.

We really had to deal with this, uh, a few more steps that we had to go through.

You know there was an obvious ethical dilemma. I think there's a 50% chance that my brother's a serial murderer.

OK, so you got to make a decision.

Do we just say, well, let's hope it's not him or let's hope he stops.

Let's just hope it's not my job.

It's job for law enforcement, the FBI.

This is my brother.

After all, that's one side of it.

The other side of it is, Oh my God.

The next person who dies their blood will be on my hands if I don't do something.

But you know, in some ways the dilemma for us was.

I mean, think of it this starkly, no matter what choice we made to do nothing or to turn tedin, no matter what choice we made, there was a good chance that somebody would die as a result of that choice, right?

If we do nothing.

My brother might kill again.

If we turned him in to the FBI, he's killed.

Three people.

He's the most wanted person in America.

There's a death penalty in America.

My brother could be executed for his crimes if he's found guilty.

What would it be like to go through the rest of my life with my own brother's blood?

On my hands.

Sleep that sort of ethical question.

I'm not even gonna.

I'll tell you what we did I you know that's something to think about for yourselves.

Hopefully you're never in a situation.

That's quite that dramatic, but there are times when you're going to have to weigh your your loyalty against your sense of right and wrong, and you know where exactly does that play out.

Maybe it.

Will involve somebody health and safety at some point.

Hopefully not, but maybe it will.  
I want to.  
Ask you guys a question, just real quick.  
My father had passed away at this point, but our mother was 79 years old.  
For almost all her days since my brother's childhood hospitalization, she'd worried about her oldest son.  
So we have a decision to make.  
If you were in.  
My shoes, would you tell your mother?  
What you suspected, would you ask her advice about what to do?  
Anybody have a thought on that?  
Speak up, go ahead yeah.  
I would say no.  
Because I think.  
As a mother and her age it.  
Affects a lot of courage, decision making and I think that she would have yelled out please.  
Yes she wouldn't.  
Want to die knowing that her oldest son?  
Was this was it?  
Really, I think that that's something that you should.  
Let her die piece and I I don't know.  
That's a hard.  
That's a hard question, but.  
Honestly, I.  
Wouldn't I would have told her?  
Just because I.  
Want her to?  
I don't want her.  
To die down there, something something that she wasn't, but he grew up to be, something that of.  
Course she might find out anyway.  
If I you know she might find out, it may be better to find out from me than from someone else.  
I would tell my mom like.  
If it was my situation, I would tell.  
My mom 'cause I.  
Speak up loud 'cause I got old ears.  
Stand up.  
Stand up and speak loudly, please.  
I will tell my mom 'cause I think my mom needs to have time to say goodbye to my like to study 'cause you might go through that that penalty and I think.

The mom has.  
The right to say like last words that.  
If you wanted to finish that.  
You could make the argument too that maybe she has a right to know you know if I'm a like.  
I love my brother but ma'am, mom.  
Loves her children.  
Maybe she's a stakeholder who has should have a voice since part of the decision.  
As a mother, I would want to know because.  
You would also be my child and I would want to.  
Share with you the pain that you're going through, and maybe if you were like my children you would ignore.  
What I would say anyway.  
That needs to be involved.  
I I and I would be very very.  
If I found out that they went through all that deliberation and pain and everything.  
And told other.  
People before they told me.  
Fair enough, I.  
I mean, if you speak from the perspective of a mother, I've never had children, so I I don't know.  
I don't.  
I don't know if there's a right answer.  
To this question somebody up there, yes?  
Yeah, I.  
Could you stand up against the glasses so?  
Muffled in your voice.  
I feel like I found out from the news that one of my sons, like all my sons, are going through that and then like I find out that it happened like from the news.  
I'd be more upset if I found out from them.  
I want to know the truth.  
It's it's really good points.  
All and I don't know if there's exactly a right answer on this one.  
I I could tell you what I decided.  
I think what Linda and I jointly decided and that was not to tell Mom, and I think the reasonings that I had.  
I thought she might die of a heart attack, a stroke.  
I knew she wouldn't sleep until the matter was resolved.  
And again, I don't know what if we're wrong.  
What if what if Ted isn't the Unabomber and she worries so much that it affects her health now?

Maybe there's part of that is an excuse you know just to face my mother with this was too painful for me.

I'm not really sure.

The other argument I made to myself, how terrible it is for me as a brother to maybe have my brother's blood on my hands.

What if Mom was part of that decision to turn him in and then eventually had to see him executed?

Is that a burden that a mother should carry?

On the other hand, is that.

Is that right for me to make that decision without her knowing?

I mean, that's.

It's hard to say.

There's little more pieces to our investigation, but we basically got to the point where we realized we couldn't control the outcome of our decisions.

But we could.

We could, if Ted was the Unabomber.

One thing we could be sure of is that we could stop the killing.

By turning him in or reporting our suspicions.

To the FBI.

I I would tell them, you know he's he's got some mental problems, et cetera, et cetera.

I hope there might be some ways that we could argue that his.

Life should be spared.

The one thing we I mean, how could we live with ourselves if another person died and we knew that we could have stopped it?

I don't know if you ever heard the story of Kitty Genovese.

Has anybody heard that story used to be a famous story?

A lot of.

It has been.

Is I think it was in Queens, NY this woman was.

Dragged into a courtyard and stabbed multiple times the assault. Took like half an hour or she was screaming. It turned out that there were 26 identified witnesses and what made it a national news story is that nobody called the police. It's kind of like well, it's none of my business.

I've heard a.

More nuanced version of that story as people have researched it more, but at any rate I didn't want to be like one of those witnesses who would be responsible for someone's death by not doing the right thing, and Linda felt very strongly the same way. She also made this argument. She's a philosophy professor, remember, she said.

Letting Ted kill more does him harm.

It does him grievous psychological damage.

Spiritual damage.



You are helping your brother by stopping him because what he's doing is not good for him either.

Let alone the victims.

So we notified we found an attorney who helped us notify he had some contacts with the FBI, notified the FBI and nothing happened.

We waited two or three weeks.

And during this time I hadn't told anything to mom, but she got sick and I had to fly to Chicago from New York.

I was at her bedside at the hospital and then I went home and I found among her possessions a 23 page essay that Ted had written. That was like the short version of the manifesto.

I sent that to the lawyer who sent it on to the FBI and all of a sudden they were really interested.

So they interviewed Linda.

They interviewed me.

We went through about a week of this.

They asked us tons of questions.

They even took our fingerprints and then finally they asked the question.

That I didn't want to face, they said David, we really need to speak with your mother.

Do you think it might be?

Possible for you to meet with her.

Tell her what's going on, and maybe persuade her to talk with us.

So that was the day I dreaded.

I remember walking to Mom's apartment. She lived about 3 miles from US and we knocked on her door.

She opens her door and there she sees her son standing in front of her and of course.

It's Saturday morning.

She's happy to see her son, but then I she looks concerned and says Dave, what's wrong?

You look terrible.

And I said, Mom, I think you better sit down or something.

I gotta explain to you, but it'll take a little bit of while.

And where did my mom's intuition go like an arrow she said Oh my God, did something happen to Ted? Is Ted OK?

Anyway, I got her sitting in this little chair I'm, I'm like.

Pacing the floor back and forth, 'cause you know, I really don't know.

You know, there's it's like I want to maybe soften the blow, just leader into it.

Mom, have you heard of the Unabomber?

Have you heard this and that?

You know he's against technology and but you know Mom is a pretty smart person or she was she passed away a few years ago, she said.

I you know she's just looking at me like.  
With this look.  
Of of horror and disbelief on her face like she can't believe what she's hearing.  
And I I finally had to get to the point.  
I said Mom, I really think there's a possibility.  
Ted might be this Unabomber person.  
And her first reaction was this is a mother speaking.  
Don't tell anybody, don't tell anybody.  
And at that point I had to say Mom.  
I already have told somebody.  
I've I've gone to the FBI.  
I've shared my suspicions and they're currently investigating Ted.  
To see if he's the Unabomber.  
I really was afraid I I'd lost my mother's love that day.  
Like the disloyalty that you know I knew she loved Ted with all her heart.  
I knew she loved me with all her heart.  
What's her mother to do in this situation?  
She was a very short little woman under 5 feet tall.  
She walked up to me.  
She got up out of her chair.  
Walked up to me, reached her arms up around my neck and pulled me down.  
She put a kiss on my cheek, she said, David, I can't imagine what you've been going through.  
And then she said, what I really, really needed to hear, she said, David, I know that you love Ted.  
I know that you wouldn't have done this unless you truly felt that you had to.  
And like half the weight of the world came off my shoulders how my mother had the ability in that moment not to just react with hysteria or anger, but to to see what I needed and to give me what I needed in that moment was extraordinary.  
It was truly my defining memory of my mother.  
Her compassion for me.  
And her understanding.  
And then I said, mom.  
The FBI would like to talk to you would you be willing to meet with them?  
She said, well, David, I trust your judgement.  
I mean, I don't know anything about this, but if they want to talk to me, I'll.  
I'll talk to him.  
She said when do they want to talk to me?  
And I said Mom, they're waiting outside right now.  
Imagine her world is turned around and in an instant anyway, she comes walking.  
They come walking up the stairs.  
They introduce themselves.

And Mom is saying I don't know anything about this and they just saying Mrs Kozinski to help us really pleased that you're willing to meet with us.

Answer our questions.

Do you have any letters from your son?

Do you have any family pictures?

Anything that might be valuable to help us determine the truth here and?

Mom sent me to her closet.

She had a walk in closet and from that closet.

She had this old trunk.

That was filled with letters from Ted from me, souvenirs like some of our diplomas.

Even our baby shoes were in that trunk.

It was mom's treasure chest and she opens the cover of this trunk. She's down on her knees and she's showing look here are his letters. I've I've saved them all in in order and.

And at one point she pulls.

Up this little blue book.

She says this is Ted baby book.

Would you like to read this?

She wanted them to know what happened to him when he was a little.

Infant and my hearts breaking.

I'm thinking how you know this is a mother and a mother.

's love and a mother's understanding and compassion, but you know, in a court of law a baby book you know 50 years old. Is that going to mean anything? Is that going to saved a life?

Very poignant for me.

It was about a year and a.

Half our Ted Ted was arrested about 2 weeks later.

We heard out about it on the news.

News actually we got a call from our lawyer friend.

The FBI hadn't contacted us.

We didn't know Ted was going to be arrested.

But I called Linda at home and we met at my mom's apartment. We sat her down. We turned on the news and there's the the lead story.

A suspect in the Unabomber case has been arrested.

His name is Theodore J Kaczynski, living in Lincoln Montana.

There were photos of Ted being arrested.

I'd seen Ted, you know, like with this sort of.

Messed up clothes and stuff, but man, I wasn't prepared for what I saw.

His clothes were actually tattered.

He's filthy like he hadn't bathed in six months.

His hair was wild.

And then they said, well, something that I heard was not supposed to happen.

We've been promised that no one would ever know that I'd turned in my own brother, unless it maybe came out in court.

But they promised us confidentiality.

And the next thing I heard on the news, I said well, in an interesting sidelight to this story, Kaczynski was apparently turned in by his own brother.

David Kaczynski, who lives in Schenectady, NY.

It wasn't like 10 minutes before Mom's apartment was surrounded by media.

Trucks, cameras, people pounding on the door.

Or we ended up waiting until the middle of the night to get home 'cause we had to feed our cats and we had some food there.

We went back to our house with Mom and the.

The whole place was surrounded.

Parts of this were really painful.

It was like this was so personal and so painful it was like.

It's like what what could.

I say to anybody you know.

And then there were people wondering, well, why would a brother turn in a brother?

You know, maybe he didn't really love his brother.

Maybe he had resentment of his brother.

Maybe it was an advanced case of sibling rivalry, maybe, maybe.

I think there was a late night comedian.

I believe his first name was David.

I forget the last name, but he said.

I think I think he thought this was funny.

Think of this in one family.

You've got the Unabomber and the Eunice snitch.

Like wow that was cold.

I mean if you think of the process that we went through of heart wrenching, agonizing decision making, trying to sort out and feeling were impelled to do almost like jumping off a Cliff.

But feeling we had to do it because we were ethically morally obliged to.

And this guy calls it snitching.

Anyway, time goes on, Ted's trial happens.

While he's in prison, he gets officially diagnosed with a disease known as paranoid schizophrenia.

He attempts suicide at one point.

It's like wow.

This whole thing is ending.

There's no happy ending to this story. That's one good thing. When they went into my brother's cabin, lived in this little cabin without electricity or running water out in the woods in Montana under his bed, they found another package.

With a live bomb inside, ready to be mailed to someone.

So the realization was that if we had not turned him in, probably somebody else would have been killed or badly injured.

Eventually, Ted suicide attempt prompted the judge to order a competency evaluation, and this was the first time like an independent psychiatrist working for the government.

If that's independent, but neither for the defense or the prosecution had a chance to evaluate my brother and she said.

Yes, he's competent to stand trial by legal standards.

He's not insane, but she did diagnose him as having a very serious mental illness known as paranoid schizophrenia.

And in that sort of context, I think realizing you know our family was very active and saying, you know, don't execute this guy because if you execute him it would stop other family members from doing the right thing.

In the future.

The The government offered a plea bargain that gave my brother life imprisonment without possibility of parole.

So he is now.

We will spend the rest of his life in a maximum security prison federal prison called the federal supermax in Florence Co.

He won't talk to me.

He won't answer my letters.

He won't see me, he won't.

Allow me to visit.

So I really don't know too much about how he's doing, but I'd like to end here with something very significant to me.

I mean very, very significant to me.

I said I wasn't going to tell you lessons to draw from this, but let me tell you a lesson that I drew from this.

When the trial ended with my brother's life being spared.

We received a call from Mom and I had gone to Sacramento, CA for the trial. We received a call from a chaplain who was working with the FBI and she said that there was a victim's family that wanted to meet with us.

Would we be willing to meet with them?

I felt that might be too difficult for mom.

I always I underestimated mom a lot.

Made it.

You know, I.

I thought there might be hostility.

They had learned this very day that the man who murdered their loved one was going to die a natural death in prison.

There might be hostility. They knew how strongly going on 60 minutes and all kinds of interviews. We'd argued that Ted's life should be spared.

But Mom said if they want to speak with me, how could I say no?

So she agrees to come.

We both go together.

We come into this.

We're led by an FBI agent into this conference room and we sit down as we walk in the door.

We see there's five chairs arranged in a circle.

One chair holds the widow of somebody.

My brother had killed with a bomb.

Her sister is in the second chair, her late husband, sister in another chair, and obviously the two vacant chairs are waiting for me and mom to sit down.

You know there's only one thing we could be saying was we're sorry we're so sorry we're so sorry.

Mom was beginning to cry a little bit.

And we sit down with this victim's family.

And I'm sort of bracing myself.

I'm thinking there might be some hostility here and the widow spoke on behalf of the family.

She said we might not have another chance to see you ever again, but we wanted to tell you in person how grateful we are for what you did.

She said, I can't imagine how difficult it would be to turn in a family member in a case like this.

Life and death.

And I was thinking, I can't imagine how difficult it would be to, you know, to lose Linda or someone I dearly love.

With some terrorists, palm.

It was sort of like this, you know, in the courtroom where we're sitting on one side the other side, we're not even supposed to look at each other 'cause it could cause antagonism or be misinterpreted.

But now we're face to face, and all of a sudden it's like we have a lot more in common.

I wouldn't compare what we'd lost to, what they had lost.

It was more complicated in our case, but maybe not as severe.

I don't know.

We actually ended up crying altogether and hugging each other.

It was like amazing.

It was like my brother's bombs had blown apart so many different worlds.

But here was one one world beginning to heal beginning to come back together again.

What I didn't anticipate was that mom had come to the meeting with an agenda of her own.

I would have advised her against it had I known, but at one point she she began talking about Ted's mental illness and talked about paranoid schizophrenia.

She'd read about a lot about schizophrenia.

She's talking about schizophrenia and I'm looking at the victims and they don't like what they're hearing.

And they're hearing Mom make excuses for the man who murdered their loved one.

And finally, mom, just I think she crossed the line.

She said, you know, it's not my son that we should blame for this.

It's his illness that caused it.

And the widow at that point I.

I don't think she could restrain herself.

She she just blurted out he knew what he was doing.

And all of a sudden it.

Was like the the room was frozen in silence like what can we say?

I was thinking maybe this is more than human beings can handle.

Maybe we shouldn't have tried this experiment in reconciliation and.

And whatever we were trying to do and comforted in each other.

And when the widow said that he knew what he was doing, I saw mom kind of scrunch up.

It's almost like she was trying to disappear.

She was like a little woman, bunched up in a ball, looking down at her shoes.

And then she said something that I think exactly on her heart.

She said, I wish he had killed me instead of your husband.

I really wish he had killed me instead.

And when Mom said that I happened to be looking at the widow's face and I saw like there was a kind of hardness there, but then it started to soften, her eyes welled up with tears.

And she slowly got out of her chair.

She knelt down in front of my mother.

She tried to catch my mom.

She's putting her hand up on Mom shoulder, looking up into her face and saying, Mrs Kozinski.

Don't ever think we blame you don't this isn't your fault you don't deserve this.

Don't ever ever think that we blame you.

She was a mother too.

Maybe on that level she could relate, but I'm going to say that that moment for me was tremendously poignant and meaningful.

And here's the lesson, at least that I've drawn from it, but it's sometimes not an easy path to follow.

Violence looks powerful, right?

You can impose on somebody else something that will change their life forever or extinguish their life.

Violence looks powerful because people have no choice about what it does to them, but violence can never change the world for the better.

It can never change the world.

For the better.

The power of love of compassion, sincere compassion.

For your fellow human beings, it's quieter.

It's subtle, it works in ways that we can't see.

But I think in that moment I witnessed how violent, how love and compassion it just how powerful it can be.

I would invite you as a lesson to this that this story, for whatever else it might mean to you, but that the power of love is much, much stronger than the power of violence or hatred or cruelty.

I know I was warned that I shouldn't speak too long, and I think I've way overstayed my welcome.

But if anybody has questions.

What did you think about the documentary that was?

Made while back.

Was this the one that was on Discovery Channel Manhunt?

Was it called?

It was like 5 Series or something like that, yeah?

I'd heard about it and I was kind of warned not to watch it.

I'm I'm not going to comment too much except to say that we had nothing to do with it and it sounded to me like when certain things happen.

Maybe this particular FBI agent, I'm I, I shouldn't speculate about what was in his mind, but anyway, it focused on one agent who I never even met and why he was depicted as such a central part of the story.

I don't know.

How did you?

Learn to take what you like.

Take this.

In very important difficult experience.

With you, but not let it define.

You like how you?

Move on, but move with it.

Yeah, it's.

Yeah, how?

How was I able to?

Take this experience without letting it define me.

I think it.

Well, that's a really good question.

I think.

I would say this and maybe this is a little bit of an indirect answer.



We can't choose what happens to us.

I mean things in life happen to us that we have no choice over.

But we do have some choices about how we respond to those things.

There's a time when you're going through a really bad period, and you kind of pull into yourself and you feel like you're lonely and alone.

I was very, very fortunate to have a mother who loved me unconditionally.

It was much stronger than I ever imagined.

And a wife who had like a an ethical compass and a a love for me and a sense of you know, duty that I treasure to this day through the process of advocacy, working against the death penalty.

But also before that when I was working with.

Troubled kids in a youth shelter and disturbed families.

I've realized that.

We're never really alone.

We might feel alone, but we are interconnected in so many ways.

So through the process.

You know there was a point in which I thought I'm the I'm the person who's hurting the most in the whole world.

You know I was self absorbed and I remember my wife.

Linda heard it once too many.

I mean she she knew that I had, you know anger and pain but she said David think of all the other people your brother is hurt.

This isn't just about.

You, is it.

It's it's.

It's everybody.

We're all interconnected.

I mentioned that I worked at a Buddhist monastery at one point and one of the Buddhist exercises.

We were asked to do.

It's it's not a a spiritual practice, but a sort of intellectual practices.

What is the boundary of yourself?

Is it your body?

What is the boundary of your mind and you begin to realize?

Wait a second.

That's very hard question to answer.

We are so interconnected we're so much part of a larger world and I think that's the important thing is to remember that we're part of a world that's much larger than ourselves.

Let's end there if you have other questions come up front.

First, let's give him a big hand for tonight.

The Ted K Archive

David Kaczynski  
David Kaczynski's Lecture on Ethics & Responsibility  
23rd April, 2019

<https://youtu.be/tG5U0ZwpqHY>

David Kaczynski, brother of Ted Kaczynski (the Unabomber), gave a lecture as part of The James Youngelson '53 Lecture Series on Ethics & Responsibility, at a mixed gender private boarding school located in north-western New Jersey, called Blair Academy.

**[www.thetedkarchive.com](http://www.thetedkarchive.com)**