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Speaker Biography

Ron Suskind



Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author Ron Suskind has written some of America's most important works of nonfiction, framing national debates about presidential power, the U.S. economy and America's role in the world, while exploring complexities of the human experience.

In April 2014 Mr. Suskind published a memoir, *Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes, and Autism*, which details his family's twenty-year struggle with his son Owen's autism. Since the book's publication, Ron has advocated for better autism research and treatment, speaking to audiences at the United Nations, NIH, and many universities; testifying in front of the United States Congress; and appearing on numerous TV and radio shows, including *Good Morning America*, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *The Diane Rehm Show*, *Radiolab*, and *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

He has been working closely with the scientific community on "Affinity Therapy", an autism intervention that the Suskinds developed with Owen, and which Tom Insel, head of the National Institute of Mental Health in the US, calls "a complete reversal of the telescope." Ron has been collaborating with top researchers from MIT, Yale, and Cambridge University to fund new research studying the underlying neural mechanisms of Affinity Therapy. The expectation is that scientific studies like these can be shaped into improved therapies, educational models, augmentative devices and outcomes for those with ASD.

Mr. Suskind was the *Wall Street Journal's* senior national affairs reporter from 1993 until 2000, and won the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing. He is currently the Senior Fellow at Harvard University's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics and the Director of the Project on Public Narrative there. His previous books include the *New York Times* bestsellers, *Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President* (2011), a multi-layered narrative about the fall of the U.S. economy, the rise of Barack Obama,

and the President's battles to guide his White House and earn the confidence of the American people; *The Way of the World: A Story of Truth and Hope in an Age of Extremism* (2008), about the forces fighting the global "hearts and minds" struggle at a time when awesomely destructive weapons are available to the common man; *The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America's Pursuit of its Enemies* (2006), a signature work on how the U.S. government frantically improvised, and altered fundamental civil liberties, to fight a new kind of war after 9/11; *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House and the Education of Paul O'Neill* (2004), a sweeping tour of the inner workings of the American government in the modern era; and *A Hope In the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League* (1998), a critically-acclaimed narrative that has redefined national debates on race, class and achievement. He often appears on network television and is a contributor to the *The New York Times Magazine* and *Esquire*.