

# The Life of Ze Frank

**Specific Purpose:** Despite the large impact Ze Frank has had on our generation, many students do not know

**Central Idea:** Ze Frank is one of the fathers of modern web communications, and his ideas and communication style have had a large impact on our generation.

## I. Introduction

Today, I'd like to talk to you about Ze Frank. Ze Frank has been one of the men I've admired most ever since I discovered his web series, A Show, in 2006. Ze is a man who is committed to bringing a measure of humanity to our increasingly technological world. He's the man who convinced me time and again to keep going when all I wanted to do was give up, and hopefully I can share a little bit of that with you today.

## II. Body

### A. Who is Ze Frank?

1. Ze Frank is the current executive vice president of BuzzFeed
2. He is a humorist who came to fame when he sent an animated birthday invitation to his friends, which got millions of views on the web.
3. He is a public speaker known for his creative use of technology.

**Transition:** One of the things Ze Frank is most famous for, however, is his daily web-series titled, "A Show."

### B. The Show

1. The Show was a daily web show discussing current events and organizing projects among the viewers.
  - a) Reliability was a big deal back then, he was one of the first to commit to high-quality content every day.
2. The Show was a short, high-content, interactive video.
  - a) Father of the short-form (3 - 7 minute) video series.
  - b) Started the trend of calling your viewers by a goofy name (Sports Racers).
  - c) Wasn't afraid to talk about politically charged subjects due to web nature.
3. After the one-year run, it was followed up by a similar web series called A Show, which ran for eight months.

**Transition:** As A Show started to gain popularity, Ze Frank kept working to find creative experiments to interact with his audience and make people feel connected to one another.

C. What has he done?

1. Ze Frank was responsible for creating the first “Earth Sandwich”, where two pieces of bread were simultaneously placed on opposite sides of the globe.
2. He’s the creator of the well-known “True Facts About Animals” series on YouTube.
3. He’s given a number of TED talks addressing how we can be more human on the web and why that’s important.

**Transition:** Ze Frank has said that these experiments “[are] not about the technology. In an ever-changing technological landscape, where today’s platforms are not tomorrow’s platforms, the key seems to be that any one of these spaces can use a dose of humanity and art and culture.”.

D. Humans in Technology

1. Ze Frank has been known to conduct a series of Human Tests, making fun of those odd situations that many people share in common.
  - a) “Have you ever ended a text message with a period to express anger?”
  - b) “Have you ever woken up peacefully and immediately been crushed by the realization that someone you loved was no longer in your life?”
  - c) “Have you ever eaten a booger long past your childhood?”
2. He believes that trust is fundamental to the human experience, and that we especially need to learn to trust one another on the internet.
3. He often addresses topics such as bullying and depression, and a large part of his work has been focused on providing help to those in pain.
  - a) Pain Origami
  - b) Harry Video

**Transition:** Ze Frank has said that these experiments “[are] not about the technology. In an ever-changing technological landscape, where today’s platforms are not tomorrow’s platforms, the key seems to be that any one of these spaces can use a dose of humanity and art and culture.”.

### **III. Conclusion**

I'd like to leave you with an excerpt from one of my favorite speeches from Ze.  
The next time you have something you need to do, I want you to think of this invocation.  
"This is an invocation for anyone who hasn't begun,  
who's stuck in a terrible place between zero and one.  
Let me realize that my past failures at follow-through  
are no indication of my future performance.

[...]

Let me not hit up my Facebook like it's a crack pipe  
KEEP THE BROWSER CLOSED.

If I catch myself wearing a too-too (too fat, too late, too old)  
let me shake it off like a donkey would shake off something it doesn't like.

And when I get that feeling in my stomach  
you know the feeling when all of a sudden you get a ball of energy  
and it shoots down into your legs and up into your arms  
and tells you to get up and stand up and go to the refrigerator  
and get a cheese sandwich,  
that's my cheese monster talking.

And my cheese monster will never be satisfied by cheddar,  
only the cheese of accomplishment.

Let me think about the people who I care about the most,  
and how when they fail or disappoint me...

I still love them,

I still give them chances,  
and I still see the best in them.

Let me extend that generosity to myself.

Let me find and use metaphors to help me understand the world around me  
and give me the strength to get rid of them when it's apparent they no longer work.

Let me thank the parts of me that I don't understand  
or are outside of my rational control like my creativity and my courage.

And let me remember that my courage is a wild dog.

It won't just come when I call it, I have to chase it down and hold on as tight as I can.

LET ME NOT BE SO VAIN

to think that I'm the sole author of my victories and a victim of my defeats.

Let me remember that the unintended meaning that people project  
onto what I do is neither my fault or something I can take credit for.

[...]

There are few people who won't be disarmed by a genuine smile.  
A big impact on a few can be worth more than a small impact.  
Let me not think of my work only as a stepping stone to something else,  
and if it is, let me become fascinated with the shape of the stone.  
Let me take the idea that has gotten me this far and put it to bed.  
What I am about to do will not be that, but it will be something.  
There is no need to sharpen my pencils anymore.  
My pencils are sharp enough.  
Even the dull ones will make a mark. Warts and all."

#### **IV. Works Cited**

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