

Portfolio

TED Talks

Talk Summaries

Talk 1 - What You Can Learn from People Who Disagree With You | Shreya Joshi

Notes

- The speaker makes not of political polarization
- Mentions debate they had with someone about the death penalty
- Realised that their opinion was not based on their own research
- They ask how to foster a space that encourages conversations about what divides people
- They emphasize to have conversations with the intention to listen

Source <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71aysTMMNw4>

Talk 2 - The Habit That Could Improve Your Career by Paul Catchlove

Notes

- The speaker talks about there variety of careers they have had
- They mention that reflection was the through line between all there careers
- They advocate for reflection as a valuable skill, for learning and improvement
- They mention how professional sports players use reflection to improve
- They speak about building reflection as a habit to mimic the success of sports players

Source https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcKLNP8x_QA

Talk 3 - How to gain control of your free time by Laura Vanderkam

Notes

- The speaker mentions that they write about time management
- They criticise magazines for trying to find small bits of extra time by saving small bits of extra time
- They mention that people will find the time the need for things that they really need to do
- They emphasise that priorities matter more than not having enough time
- They recommend writing a letter to yourself describing what you did in the following year that made it so great (made up things)

Source <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3kNlFMXslo>

Talk 4 - There's more to life than being happy by Emily Esfahani Smith

Notes

- The speaker mentions that chasing happiness directly will prevent people from being happy
- They mention that the main cause for distress in the modern world is a lack of meaning
- The speaker talks about the fact that happiness is not the same as happiness
- They mention that there are 4 core pillars to meaning:
 1. Belonging: Bonds with other people
 2. Purpose: A reason to live
 3. Transcendence: Moments where you are taken out of the mundanely of live
 4. Story Telling: The way you interpret your own life
 - The speaker mentions that meaning can help people when they lose control of their lives

Source <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9Trdafp83U>

Talk 5 - How changing your story can change your life by Lori Gottlieb

Notes

- The speaker mentions that they run an advice column called *Dear Therapist* where they (a therapist) receive emails from various people
- They mention that they see all the emails they receive as stories from the perspective of the author and that there are always different sides to these stories
- The speaker mentions that the stories that people tell about their lives influence their lives not the other way around
- They mention that most peoples stories centre around freedom and change
- They mention that most people don't feel free when they are facing a difficult situation and they want other people to change instead of wanting to change themselves
- They encourages people to offer honest criticism when people share their stories
- They encourage people to try and create stories from other peoples point of view to try not to be as based

Source https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_MQr4IHm0c

Talk Analysis

Talk 1 The first talk has the speaker talking about the value of communicating with a wide variety of people, no matter if they share your view points. In fact, the speaker encourages talking to people who share very different opinions than as this will allow you develop your own ideas and ideologies. They also emphasize the importance of speaking with the intent to listen and not the intent to win an argument.

Talk 2 The second talk goes about how **reflection** can be the key factor that can improve your career. The speaker states that building the habit of reflecting on one's actions with the intent to improve one's self is incredibly powerful. To strengthen their point, the speaker draws comparisons to professional sports teams and how they reflect on their games after they are finished to learn from them.

Talk 3 The third talk focuses on how to use your time more effectively by setting strict priorities. The speaker criticises trying to squeeze out more time out of a day becoming exceedingly effective at doing chores and instead mention how even very busy people can find time if they have a strong enough reason to do so. At the end of the talk they mention writing a letter to yourself about what will happen in the next year assuming that the next year was a great success and then setting priorities in order to get to the situation described in the letter. They also reiterate the importance of not only focussing on careers *goals but also on personal and relationship goals*.

Talk 4 The fourth talk discusses the fact that there is more to life than simply being happy. The speaker emphasises the importance of **meaning** in one's life. According to the speaker there are four core pillars to meaning; belonging, purpose, transcendence, *and* story telling. Then they talk about the fact that people who are grounded by these pillars are able to face tough life situations head on.

Talk 5 The fifth talk is about how a person's story can affect the way they perceive their own life and the situations around them. They encourage critically thinking about your own stories and the stories of other people and considering the other side of those stories, the other person or opinion that is not included in that story.

How the information was presented The through line of all the talks was that every speaker seemed to have a strong desire to either improve themselves or to show other people how to improve themselves. The speakers usually had a critical but caring attitude when addressing the status quo. They realise that it is not easy to change but that various changes are needed to improve one's self and society at large.

Personal Takeaway Personally, I largely agree with the points the speakers made. The main point I will take away are is from talk three about active prioritisation. I think I can do quite a bit more without a massive investment setting clear goals for the future and then spending 30 minutes a week planning out how to spend the next week in a way to get closer to those goals. In summary I quite enjoyed the talks :)