**Speaker 1:**

Ted talks a recorded live at the Ted conference and produced with WNYC New York public radio.

**Speaker 1:**

This episode features author in New York times technology columnist David Broder Ted talks are made possible through the support of BMW here's David Polk.

**Speaker 1:**

Hello voice mail my old friend.

**Speaker 1:**

Called for tech support again.

**Speaker 1:**

Your my bosses.

**Speaker 1:**

On Monday.

**Speaker 1:**

I'm still on.

**Speaker 1:**

To this.

**Speaker 1:**

I don't think you understand.

**Speaker 1:**

I think your phone lines are.

**Speaker 1:**

I pushed every touch tone.

**Speaker 1:**

Eighteen hours on.

**Speaker 1:**

I don't know if you're constantly.

**Speaker 1:**

If you raise.

**Speaker 1:**

Now the knack.

**Speaker 1:**

From your.

**Speaker 1:**

You're fading string you call nine one one.

**Speaker 1:**

Trained and.

**Speaker 1:**

But you.

**Speaker 1:**

Welcome to spot the Ted presenter who used to be a Broadway company okay when I was offered the times column six years ago it was the deal was like this you will be sent the coolest hottest Lucas new gadgets every week it'll arrive at your door you get to try him out play within the evaluate them for until the novelty wears back for you have to send back and you'll get paid for it you can think about it if you want.

**Speaker 1:**

So I've always been a technology look not and I absolutely love it the the job though came with one small downside and that is they intended to publish my email address at the end of every con.

**Speaker 1:**

And what I've noticed is first of all you get an incredible amount of email I if you ever feeling lonely get a New York times count because you will get hundreds and hundreds hundreds of emails in the email I'm getting a lot today is about frustration people feeling overwhelmed there feeling like it's too much technology too fast it may be good technology but I feel like there's not enough of the support structure there's not enough help there's not enough thought put into the design of it to make it easy and enjoyable to use one time I wrote a column about my efforts to reach del technical support in within twelve hours there were seven hundred messages from readers on the feet backwards on the times website from users saying need so and here's my tale of woe I call it software rage the part of the problem is ironically as these things became easier to use a less technical broader audience we're coming into contact with this equipment for the first time I once had the distinct privilege of sitting in on the apple call center for a day the guy had a duplicate had set for me to listen to you know how they say your call maybe recorded for quality assurance.

**Speaker 1:**

Your call maybe recorded so they can collect the funniest dumb user stories and passed around on a CD.

**Speaker 1:**

Which they do and.

**Speaker 1:**

So it's some of the stories are just so classical and classic in yet so understandable woman called apple to complain that her mouse was squeaking making a squeaking noise the technician said well ma'am what do you mean your mouse is squeaking she's all I can tell you is that it squeaks louder the faster I move it across the screen.

**Speaker 1:**

In the tech is like ma'am you're you've got the most up against the screen here's what the message said click here to continue.

**Speaker 1:**

Well if you like that one.

**Speaker 1:**

Another one there a guy called this is absolutely true he is computer had crashed and he told the technician he couldn't restarted no matter how many times he typed eleven in the church is that what you are you typing eleven the message says error type eleven.

**Speaker 1:**

So.

**Speaker 1:**

We must admit to some of the blame falls squarely at the feet of the users.

**Speaker 1:**

But why is the technical overload prices the complex you prices exhilarating now in the hardware world is because we the consumers want everything to be smaller smaller smaller so the gadgets are getting tinier and tinier but our figures are essentially staying the same size so it gets more more of a challenge software is subject to another primal force the mandate to release more and more versions when you buy a piece of software is not like buying a vase or a candy bar or you own it it's more like joining a club where you pay dues every year and every year they say we've added more features and will sell it to you for ninety nine dollars I know one guy who spent four thousand dollars just on Photoshop over the years and suffer companies make thirty five percent of the revenue from just the software upgrades I thought the software upgrade paradox which is that if you improve a piece of software enough times you eventually ruin it I mean.

**Speaker 1:**

Microsoft Word was last just a word processor and you know the Eisenhower administration so but what's the alternative Microsoft actually did this experiment they said well we never complains of reading so many features let's create a word processors that's just a word processor simple pure does not do web pages is not a database and it came out it was called Microsoft right and none of your nodding in in a knowledge me because it diet tank no one ever bought it I call this the sport utility principle people like to surround themselves with unnecessary power right they don't need the database in the website but they're like will all upgrade because because I might I might need that some day so the problem is if you add more features where are they going to go where are you going to stick them you only have so many design tools you can do buttons you can do sliders pop up menus sub menus and and we've arrived at the age of interface matrices runner so many features and options you have to do two dimensions you know vertical and horizontal you guys all complain about how Microsoft Word is always bulletin your lists and underlining your links automatically the office which is in there somewhere I'm telling you it's there part of the art of designing a simple good interface is knowing when to use which one of these features Microsoft approaches simplicity tends to be let's break it down let's just make it more steps there there are these wizards everywhere and you know there's a new version of windows coming out this fall if they continue at this pace is absolutely no telling where they might wind up so what is the answer how do you pack in all these features in a simple intelligent way I believe that consistency when possible real world equivalents trashcan folder when possible legal things mostly but I begged the designers here to break all of those rules if they violate the biggest thrill of all which is intelligence know what I mean by that I'm going to give you some examples where Intel.

**Speaker 1:**

Agents make something not consistent but it's better if you are buying something on the web you're supposed to put in your address is supposed to choose what country you're from okay there are two hundred countries in the world we like to think of the internet is a global village I'm sorry it's not one yes it's mainly like the United States Europe and Japan so why is the United States in the use.

**Speaker 1:**

You have to scroll seven screens will get to it no it would be inconsistent to put United States first but it would be intelligent this one's been touched on before but why in god's name you shut down a windows PC by clicking a button called start.

**Speaker 1:**

Now I'm not saying that apple is the only company who has embraced the the calls of simplicity our poem is also especially older is wonderful about this I actually got to speak to palm in their flying high in the nineties and after the talk I know when the employees he's a nice talking to thank you would you do here is that I'm a tap counter.

**Speaker 1:**

Your what's yours will Jeff talking the CEO says if any task on the palm pilot takes more than three taps of the stylus it's too long and it has to be re design so I'm a tad counter so I'm gonna show you examples of a company that does not have a tap counter.

**Speaker 1:**

This is Microsoft Word okay when you want to create a new blank document in word it could happen.

**Speaker 1:**

You go up to the file menu and you choose new now what happens when you choose new do you get a new blank document you do not on the opposite side of the monitor a task bar appears in somewhere in those links by the way not at the top somewhere in those lines is a button that makes you a new document okay so that is a company not counting tap no I I want I don't I just in here make fun of Microsoft.

**Speaker 1:**

Yes I do.

**Speaker 1:**

Bill Gates on.

**Speaker 1:**

Forever.

**Speaker 1:**

The very first.

**Speaker 1:**

Together I got profits anything the long.

**Speaker 1:**

He's from everyone.

**Speaker 1:**

Garbage but.

**Speaker 1:**

Is snowed in.

**Speaker 1:**

Also because.

**Speaker 1:**

Every software company.

**Speaker 1:**

Microsoft marring T..

**Speaker 1:**

Good idea.

**Speaker 1:**

Even windows.

**Speaker 1:**

Based loosely on the mac.

**Speaker 1:**

We've answered.

**Speaker 1:**

The nation.

**Speaker 1:**

No choice.

**Speaker 1:**

I believe there are really two Microsoft there's the old one responsible for windows and office they would do they're dying to throw the whole thing out and start fresh but they can't they're locked in because so many add on's and other companies stuff locks in the old nineteen eighty two chassis so but there's also a new Microsoft it's really doing good simple interface designs I like the media center PC I like the Microsoft spot watch the watch wireless watch flopped miserably in the market it wasn't because it wasn't simply a beautifully designed let's put it this way would you pay ten dollars a month to have a watch there has to be recharged every night like your cell phone and stops working when you leave your area code.

**Speaker 1:**

So.

**Speaker 1:**

The signs might indicate that the complexity crunch is only going to get worse so is there any hope of the screens are getting smaller people are eliminating putting manuals in the boxes Cummings are coming out at a faster pace it's funny when Steve Jobs came back to apple in nineteen ninety seven after twelve years away it was a macworld expo he came to the stage that black turtleneck and jeans and you sort of did as the crowd went wild but I had just seen rumors scenes before I'd just seen the movie vida.

**Speaker 1:**

With Madonna in and I'm like you know what I I gotta do one about Steve Jobs I just.

**Speaker 1:**

It won't be easy you think I'm strange.

**Speaker 1:**

When I tried to explain one.

**Speaker 1:**

After telling the press apple's future.

**Speaker 1:**

All that you see is the.

**Speaker 1:**

Started out in a garage with only a buddy named why.

**Speaker 1:**

You try rhyming with garage.

**Speaker 1:**

You.

**Speaker 1:**

The tricks are.

**Speaker 1:**

Fortune.

**Speaker 1:**

Sandals.

**Speaker 1:**

Whether it's just that these days they're Gucci leather.

**Speaker 1:**

The job had always believed in simplicity and elegance and beauty and the truth is for years I was a little depressed because Americans obviously did not value it because the mac had three percent market share windows ninety five percent market share people did not think it was worth putting a price on it so I was I was a little depressed and put put it turns out I was wrong right because the I pod came out it violated every bit of common with other products cost less other products had more features their voice recorders in an FM transmitters other the other products are backed by Microsoft of an open standard not apple's proprietary standards but the I pod one this is the one they wanted the lesson was simplicity cells in their signs the industry is getting the message it's catching on I've got just a couple examples if physically a really cool elegant thinking coming along lately when you have a digital camera how do you get the pictures back to your camera I'm computer well you either all around the U. S. B. cable or you buy a card reader hall that around either when you're going to lose what I do is I take out the memory card and I fold it in half.

**Speaker 1:**

Revealing USB contacts I just stick it in the computer although the pictures put it right back in the camera I never have to lose anything this this call to doing things right is starting to spread so my final advice for those of you who are consumers of this technology remember if it doesn't work it's not necessarily you okay could be the design of the thing you're using be aware in life of good design and bad design and if you're among the people who create this stuff.

**Speaker 1:**

Easy is hard pre sweat the details for your audience count the taps remember the hard part is not deciding what features to add it's deciding what to leave out and best of all your motivation is simplicity cells.

**Speaker 1:**

That was David recorded at the Ted conference in Monterey California February two thousand six.

**Speaker 1:**

Ted talks are produced by WNYC New York public radio for Ted Ted talks made possible in part through the support B. M. W. for more information on Ted this is Ted dot com.

**Speaker 2:**

Ted talks a recorded live at the Ted conference and produced with WNYC New York public radio.

**Speaker 2:**

This episode features actor and playwright Julia Sweeney performing an excerpt from her one on the show letting go of god Ted talks are made possible through the support of BMW here's Julia Sweeney.

**Speaker 0:**

Then I should just start with the beginning of my show and I'll do eighteen minutes of from the very beginning of my show okay.

**Speaker 0:**

On September tenth the morning of my seventh birthday I came downstairs to the kitchen where my mother was washing the dishes and my father was reading the paper or something and I've sort of presented myself to them in the doorway and they said.

**Speaker 0:**

Happy Birthday and I said I'm seven and my father smiled and said well you know what that means don't you and I said yeah I have that I can have a party in a cake can get a lot of presents and my dad said yes.

**Speaker 2:**

Pourtant leaving seven means that you reach the age of reason and you're now capable of committing any and all sins against god and man.

**Speaker 2:**

No I.

**Speaker 0:**

Heard this phrase age of reason before sister meri Kevin had been banding about my second grade class at school but when she said it the phrase seemed all caught up in the excitement of preparations for first communion in our first confession everybody knew that was really all about the white dress in the white veil.

**Speaker 2:**

Anyway I hadn't really paid all that much attention to that phrase.

**Speaker 0:**

Age of reason.

**Speaker 2:**

So I said yeah yeah age of reason.

**Speaker 2:**

And my dad said well we believe in the Catholic Church that god knows that little kids don't know the difference between right and wrong.

**Speaker 0:**

But when your seven year old enough to know better.

**Speaker 2:**

So you've grown up and reach the age of reason and now god will start keeping notes on you and begin your permanent record.

**Speaker 0:**

And I said I'll.

**Speaker 2:**

**Speaker 2:**

Wait a minute you all time up till today all that time I was so good.

**Speaker 0:**

God didn't notice and my mom said well line noticed.

**Speaker 2:**

Before when they've been telling me all about being good and no real credit for it.

**Speaker 2:**

The ball.

**Speaker 0:**

Right now to realize this very important information until the very day that it was basically useless to me.

**Speaker 2:**

So I said well.

**Speaker 0:**

Mom and dad what about Santa Claus I mean Santa Claus knows if you're not a you're nice right and my dad said he would honey I think that's technically just between thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Speaker 2:**

And my mother said stop it let's just I mean she's seven Julie there is no Santa Claus.

**Speaker 0:**

Actually not that I'm sending to me my parents have this holy leverage story about Santa Claus how they had talked to Santa Claus himself and agreed that instead of Santa delivering our presents over the night of Christmas Eve like you did for every other family got to open their surprises first thing Christmas morning our family would give Santa more time.

**Speaker 2:**

Our house we're at nine o'clock.

**Speaker 0:**

Hi mass on Christmas morning but only if all of us kids did not make a fuss.

**Speaker 2:**

Which made me very suspicious.

**Speaker 0:**

It was pretty obvious that it was really our parents giving us the present presence I mean my dad had a very distinctive rapping style and my mother's handwriting was so close to Santa.

**Speaker 2:**

To save time by having to look back to our house.

**Speaker 2:**

Everybody else's.

**Speaker 0:**

One obvious conclusion to reach from this mountain of evidence our family was too strange and weird for even Santa Claus to come visit and my poor parents are trying to protect us from the embarrassment.

**Speaker 2:**

Humiliation of rejection by spam was jolly but let's face it he was also very judgmental so to find out that there was no Santa Claus at all was actually sort of relief I left the kitchen not really in shock about Santa.

**Speaker 0:**

Rather I was just dumbfounded about how it could miss this whole age of reason thing.

**Speaker 0:**

Was too late for me.

**Speaker 0:**

Maybe I can help someone else.

**Speaker 2:**

Someone who could use the information.

**Speaker 2:**

Two criteria they had to be old enough to be able to understand the whole concept of the age of reason.

**Speaker 0:**

And not yet seven.

**Speaker 2:**

The answer was clear my brother bill he was six.

**Speaker 0:**

Well I finally found bill about a block away from our house at this public school playground it was a Saturday and he was all by himself just kicking a ball against the side of the wall I run into into.

**Speaker 2:**

I just realized that the age of reason starts in your turn seven and then you're capable of committing any sins against god in man.

**Speaker 0:**

Bill said.

**Speaker 2:**

Soul soul yours six the whole year to do anything you want you want god what is it.

**Speaker 0:**

And he said.

**Speaker 2:**

Soul soul.

**Speaker 2:**

And I turned around I was so.

**Speaker 0:**

Angry with him but when I go to the top of the steps I turned around dramatically and said.

**Speaker 2:**

Oh by the way bill.

**Speaker 0:**

There is no Santa Claus.

**Speaker 2:**

Now.

**Speaker 0:**

I didn't know it at the time but I really wasn't turning seven on September tenth for my thirteenth birthday I planned a slumber party with all of my girlfriends but a couple of weeks before hand my mother took me aside and said I need to speak to you privately.

**Speaker 0:**

September tenth is not your birthday it's October tenth and I said.

**Speaker 2:**

What.

**Speaker 2:**

The cut off date to start kindergarten was September fifteenth.

**Speaker 2:**

I told them that your birthday was September tenth and then I wasn't sure that you are just going to go boy about all over the place so I started to tell you your birthday was September tenth.

**Speaker 2:**

You were so ready to start school honey you were so ready.

**Speaker 0:**

I thought about it when I was four I was already the oldest of four children and my mother even had another child to come.

**Speaker 2:**

So what I think she understandably really meant was that she was so ready she was ready.

**Speaker 0:**

Then she said don't worry Julie every year on October tenth when it was your birthday but you didn't realize it I made sure that you ate a piece of cake that day.

**Speaker 2:**

Which was hurting but troubling my mother had been celebrating my birthday with me.

**Speaker 0:**

What.

**Speaker 2:**

I was.

**Speaker 0:**

Standing about this new piece of information was not that I was going to change the date of my slumber party with all my girlfriends.

**Speaker 2:**

What was most upsetting.

**Speaker 0:**

Was that this meant I was not a Virgo.

**Speaker 2:**

Star in my bedroom.

**Speaker 2:**

Every single day and it was.

**Speaker 2:**

Believe me.

**Speaker 2:**

This meant that I was a leave.

**Speaker 0:**

So I took the bus downtown to get the new lever poster.

**Speaker 2:**

Posters a picture of a beautiful woman with long here sort of.

**Speaker 0:**

Lounging rice and water.

**Speaker 2:**

But the lever posters just a huge scale.

**Speaker 2:**

The time that I started filling out physically and I was filling out a lot more than a lot of the other girls and frankly the whole idea that my astrological sign was as Gail.

**Speaker 2:**

Right.

**Speaker 2:**

What I do leave a poster and I started to read my new.

**Speaker 0:**

Me bro horoscope.

**Speaker 2:**

And I was fine but it was also.

**Speaker 2:**

It wasn't until years later looking back on this whole age of reason change of birthday thing.

**Speaker 0:**

But it dawned on me.

**Speaker 2:**

I was seven when I thought I turned seven.

**Speaker 2:**

Once you do anything to do before god started giving is on me all white can be so cruel.

**Speaker 2:**

What day.

**Speaker 0:**

To Mormon missionaries came to my door now I just live off a main thoroughfare in Los Angeles on my block is well to natural beginning for people who are peddling things door to door I'm sometimes I get little old ladies from the seventh day Adventist church showing these cartoon pictures of heaven.

**Speaker 2:**

And sometimes I get teenagers who promised me that they won't join a gang and just start.

**Speaker 0:**

Robbing people if I only by some magazine subscriptions from them.

**Speaker 2:**

So normally I just.

**Speaker 0:**

Ignore the doorbell but on this day I answered and there's two two boys each about nineteen and white start short sleeve shirts and they have little name tags identify them as official representatives of the church of Jesus Christ of latter day saints and they said they had a message for me from god I said.

**Speaker 2:**

A message for me from god.

**Speaker 0:**

And they said yes.

**Speaker 2:**

Now.

**Speaker 0:**

I was raised in the Pacific Northwest around a lot of church of latter day saints people and you know I've worked with them and even dated them but I never really knew the doctrine or what they said to people when they were out on a mission.

**Speaker 2:**

I guess it was sort of curious so I said.

**Speaker 0:**

Well please come in.

**Speaker 2:**

And they looked really happy because I don't think this happens to the mall that offer.

**Speaker 2:**

Source.

**Speaker 0:**

Down and I got the glasses of water and after niceties they said do you believe that god loves you with all his heart and I thought.

**Speaker 0:**

Well of course I believe in god but.

**Speaker 0:**

No I don't like that word hearts because it anthropomorphic his god and I don't like the word his either because that sexualized as god but I didn't want to argue semantics of these boys so after very long uncomfortable pause I said.

**Speaker 2:**

Yes yes I do.

**Speaker 0:**

I feel very loved and they looked at each other and smiled like that was the right answer.

**Speaker 2:**

And then they said do you believe the Robb brothers and sisters on this planet and I said yes I do.

**Speaker 0:**

Yes I do and I was so relieved that was a question I can answer so quickly and they said well.

**Speaker 2:**

Then we have a story to tell you and they told me the story all about this guy named Lee high who lived in Jerusalem in six hundred BC.

**Speaker 0:**

Now apparently in Jerusalem in six hundred BC everyone was completely bad and evil every single one of them man woman child infant fetus.

**Speaker 2:**

And god came to Lee high and said to him put.

**Speaker 0:**

Your family on a boat and I will lead you out of here and god did lead them.

**Speaker 2:**

He led them to America.

**Speaker 2:**

I said America.

**Speaker 2:**

To America by boat in six hundred BC.

**Speaker 2:**

And they said yes.

**Speaker 2:**

They told me how Lee high and his descendants reproduced and reproducing over the course of six hundred years there were two great races of them.

**Speaker 0:**

Then the fights and the layman nights.

**Speaker 2:**

And then the fights were totally totally good.

**Speaker 0:**

Each and everyone of them and the late nights were totally bad evil every single one of them just bad to the bone.

**Speaker 2:**

Then after Jesus died on the cross for our sins on his way up to heaven he stopped by America and visited the knee fights.

**Speaker 2:**

And he told them that that if they all remain totally totally good each and everyone of them they would win the war against the evil Lehman.

**Speaker 2:**

But apparently somebody blew it because the late nights were able to kill all the fights all but one guy.

**Speaker 0:**

This guy named Mormon.

**Speaker 2:**

Who manage to survive by hiding in the woods and he made sure this whole story was written down.

**Speaker 0:**

In reform the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

**Speaker 2:**

Chiseled on to gold plates.

**Speaker 0:**

Which he then buried your pal Meyer in New York.

**Speaker 2:**

Well I was just on the edge of my seat.

**Speaker 2:**

I said what happened in the late nights.

**Speaker 0:**

And they said well they became our native Americans here in the US and I since so you believe the native Americans are descended from a people who were totally evil and they said.

**Speaker 2:**

Yes.

**Speaker 2:**

Told me how this guy named Joseph Smith.

**Speaker 2:**

They were both very gold plates right in his backyard and he also found this magic stone back there that he put into his hat and then.

**Speaker 0:**

Buried his face into and this allowed him to translate the gold plates from the reformed Egyptian into.

**Speaker 2:**

English.

**Speaker 2:**

One.

**Speaker 0:**

Point I just wanted to give these two boys some advice about their pets.

**Speaker 2:**

I wanted to say.

**Speaker 2:**

Okay don't start with this story.

**Speaker 2:**

I mean even the Scientologists noticed start with a personality test before they start.

**Speaker 2:**

Overlord.

**Speaker 2:**

Well they.

**Speaker 0:**

Said do you believe that god speaks to us through his right just profits.

**Speaker 2:**

And I said no I don't.

**Speaker 0:**

Because I was sort of upset about the flame and I'd story in this crazy gold plate story.

**Speaker 2:**

But the truth was I hadn't really thought this through so.

**Speaker 0:**

I back pedal a little and I said well what what exactly do you mean by righteous and.

**Speaker 2:**

And what do you mean by profits like.

**Speaker 0:**

Could the profits be women and they said no and I said.

**Speaker 2:**

Why and they said well.

**Speaker 0:**

It's because god gave women a gift.

**Speaker 2:**

That is so spectacular this one.

**Speaker 2:**

The only gift he had left over to give men was the gift of prophecy.

**Speaker 2:**

What is this wonderful gift god gave women I wondered.

**Speaker 2:**

Maybe they're greater ability to cooperate in the day.

**Speaker 2:**

Women's longer lifespan the fact that women tend to be much less violent than men.

**Speaker 0:**

But now it wasn't any of these gifts they said well it's her ability to bear children.

**Speaker 2:**

I said oh come on I mean even.

**Speaker 0:**

Even if women try to have a baby every single year from the time they were fifteen at the time they were forty five assuming they didn't die from exhaustion it still seems like some women would have some time left over to hear the word of god and they said no.

**Speaker 2:**

I didn't look so fresh faced in cute to me anymore they have more to say they said well we also believe that.

**Speaker 0:**

If you're a Mormon and if you're in good standing with the church when you die.

**Speaker 2:**

You get to go to your.

**Speaker 0:**

Go to heaven and be with your family for.

**Speaker 2:**

All eternity.

**Speaker 0:**

And I said.

**Speaker 2:**

Oh.

**Speaker 0:**

That wouldn't be such a good incentive for me.

**Speaker 2:**

We also believe that.

**Speaker 0:**

When you go to heaven are you get your body restored you in as best original state like if you lost a leg what you get a back or or if you go blind you could see I said oh now I don't have a uterus because I had cancer a few years ago so does this mean that if I went to have and I would get.

**Speaker 2:**

My old uterus back.

**Speaker 0:**

And they said.

**Speaker 2:**

Sure.

**Speaker 2:**

We would.

**Speaker 2:**

Gosh what if you had a nose job and.

**Speaker 2:**

Force it's your old knows.

**Speaker 0:**

Well then they gave me this book of Mormon and they told me to read this chapter in that chapter and they said they'd come back some day and check in on me and I think I said something like please don't hurry or maybe it was just please don't and they were gone.

**Speaker 0:**

Okay so I initially felt really superior to these boys and smog in my more conventional faith.

**Speaker 0:**

I thought about it the more I had to be honest with myself if someone came to my door and I was hearing Catholic theology and dog are for the very first time and they said.

**Speaker 2:**

We believe that god.

**Speaker 0:**

Impregnated a very young girl without the use of intercourse and the fact that she was a virgin as maniacal important US.

**Speaker 2:**

And she had a baby and that's the son of god I mean I would think that's equally ridiculous I'm just so you'll still backstory.

**Speaker 2:**

So I couldn't let myself feel condescending towards these boys.

**Speaker 0:**

But the question they asked me when I first arrived really stuck in my head that I believe that god loved me with all his heart.

**Speaker 2:**

Because.

**Speaker 0:**

I wasn't exactly sure how I felt about that question.

**Speaker 2:**

No if they asked me do you do you feel that god loves you with all his heart well that would have been much different I think I would have instantly answered yes yes I feel it all the time right.

**Speaker 0:**

I feel gods love when I'm hurt and confused and I feel consoled and cared for I take shelter in god's love when I don't understand why tragedy hits and and I feel gods love when I look with gratitude all the beauty I see.

**Speaker 0:**

But since they ask me that question with the word believing that somehow it was all different because I wasn't exactly sure if I believed what I so clearly felt.

**Speaker 0:**

Okay my religious history in a nutshell I was raised Catholic and for me it was all in all a great experience I know we can't stop reading about all of the horrific and abuse of experiences that people have had growing up in the Catholic Church recently in the papers but for me it was mostly wonderful.

**Speaker 2:**

I was.

**Speaker 0:**

Lucky to be a Catholic my parents were both from Catholic families that when as far back as anyone knew on either side.

**Speaker 2:**

My parents both went to all Catholic schools grade school high school college.

**Speaker 0:**

And my father even went to Catholic law school my father told us kids that when he was in high school the Jesuit separated out some of the boys and they were on the separate advance track and he studied Latin for four years and Greek for three years and out of the fifteen of his very special group eleven of them became Jesuit priests themselves when my father told us kids the story.

**Speaker 2:**

We thought he's going to be like this genius who was being groomed for the priesthood but lucky for us.

**Speaker 0:**

He chose to get married instead when I was old enough my father introduced me to his favorite writers which he pointed out we're Catholic writers G. K. Chesterton even one walk Graham Greene Flannery o'connor they were in a club that we were into and I felt lucky and privileged I think my favorite trying to be Catholic was in high school my first two years of high school I went to an all girls school top primarily by nuns and I befriended one sister in particular.

**Speaker 2:**

Sister and to nala.

**Speaker 0:**

And she often invited me to the convent for dinner and maybe because it was such a contrast my home life at the time I mean I was the oldest of five children very busy Irish Catholic home.

**Speaker 2:**

But to me the wife of the nuns just seem like heaven.

**Speaker 0:**

The convent was really quiet and calm and the women were dedicated to the education of their students and dinner discussion centered on theological debate.

**Speaker 2:**

Or.

**Speaker 0:**

What I thought was the logical debate maybe it was just a poem that everyone liked but it was just so civilized okay I have to stop.

**Speaker 2:**

That was Julia Sweeney recorded the Ted conference in Monterey California February two thousand six Ted talks are produced by WNYC New York public radio support.

**Speaker 2:**

Ted talks made possible in part through the support B. M. W. for more information on Ted visit Ted dot com.

**Speaker 1:**

Ted talks a recorded live at the Ted conference and produced with WNYC New York public radio this episode features majora Carter founder of sustainable self bronze Ted talks made possible through the support of BMW here's majora Carter.

**Speaker 1:**

If you're here today and I'm very happy that you are you've all heard about how sustainable development will save us from ourselves however we are often told a real sustainability policy agenda is just not feasible especially in large urban areas like New York City and that's because most people with decision making powers in both the public and the private sector really don't feel as though they are in danger the reason why I'm here today in part is because of a dog.

**Speaker 1:**

An abandoned puppy I found back in the rain back in nineteen ninety eight she turned out to be a much bigger dogs and I anticipated when she came into my life we were fighting against a huge waste facility the plan for the East River waterfront despite the fact that our small part of New York City was already.

**Speaker 1:**

Handled more than forty percent of the entire cities commercial waste a sewage treatment palatines in plant a sewage sludge plant for power plants the world's largest food distribution center as well as other industries that bring more than sixty thousand diesel cheap deal truck trips to the area each week.

**Speaker 1:**

The area also has one of the lowest ratios of parks the people in the city so when I was contacted by the parks department about a ten thousand dollar see Grannis should have to help develop waterfront projects I thought they were really well meaning but a bit naive I lived in this area all my life and you could not get to the river because of all the lovely facilities that I mentioned earlier then while jogging with my dog one morning she pulled me into what I thought was just another legal down.

**Speaker 1:**

There are weeds and piles of garbage and other stuff that I won't mention here but she kept dragging me and lo and behold at the end of that lot was the river I knew that this forgotten little street and abandon like the dog they brought me there was worth saving.

**Speaker 1:**

And I knew it would grow to become the proud beginnings of the community led revitalization of the new south Bronx and just like my new dog it was an idea they got bigger than I'd imagined we counted regarded much support along the way and the highest point Riverside Park became the first waterfront parts of the south Bronx and had more than sixty years we leverage that ten thousand dollars seed grant more than three hundred times in two or three three million dollar park but those of us living in environmental justice communities are the Canary in the coal mine we feel the problems right now and have for some time.

**Speaker 1:**

Environmental justice for those of you who may not be familiar with the term goes something like this no community should be saddled with more environmental burdens and less environmental benefits than any other unfortunately race and class are extremely reliable indicators as to where one might find the good stuff like parks and trees and where one might find the bad stuff like power plants in ways facilities as a black person in America I'm twice as likely as a white person to live in an area where air pollution poses the greatest risk my health I am five times more likely to live within walking distance of a power plant or chemical facility which I do.

**Speaker 1:**

These land use decisions created a hostile conditions that lead to problems like obesity diabetes and asthma why would someone leave their home to go for a brisk walking a toxic neighborhood out twenty seven percent obesity rate is high even for this country and I believe comes with it one out of four south Bronx children has as much with our asthma hospitalization rates seven times higher than the national average these impacts are coming everyone's way and we all pay dearly for solid waste cost health problems associated with pollution and more odious lake the cost of imprisoning our young black and Latino men who possessed untold amounts of untapped potential fifty percent of our residents live at or below the poverty line twenty five percent of us are unemployed low income citizens often use emergency room visits as primary care this comes at a high cost to taxpayers and produces no proportional benefits for people not only to still poor they are still healthy on healthy fortunately there are many people like me who are striving for solutions that will compromise the lives of low income communities of color in the short term and will destroy us all in the long term.

**Speaker 1:**

None of us want that we all have that in common so what else do we have in common first of all we're all incredibly good looking.

**Speaker 1:**

Graduated high school college postgraduate degrees travel to interesting places didn't have kids in your early teens financially stable to never been imprisoned besides being a black woman I am different from most of you in some other ways I watch nearly half of the buildings in my neighborhood burned down my Big Brother when he fought in Vietnam only to be gunned down a few blocks from the whole.

**Speaker 1:**

She's I grew up with a crack house across the street.

**Speaker 1:**

Yeah I'm a poor black child from the ghetto.

**Speaker 1:**

These things may be different from you but the things we have in common set me apart from most of people in my community and I'm in between these two worlds with enough of my heart to fight for justice in the other.

**Speaker 1:**

So how did things get so different for us in the late forties my dad's a Pullman Porter son of a slave bought a house in the hunts point section of the south Bronx if you years later he married my mom at the same at the time the community was a mostly white working class neighborhood my dad was not alone and it's others like him pursued their own version of the American dream white flight became common in the south Bronx in many cities around the country.

**Speaker 1:**

Red lining was used by banks where in certain sections of the city including ours were deemed off limits to any sort of investment many landlords believed it was more profitable to torch their buildings and collect insurance money rather than a cell under those conditions dead or injured former tenants not withstanding hunts point was formally walk to work community but now I'm president had ninety neither work nor home to walk to a national highway construction boom was added to our problems in your state Robert Moses spear had an aggressive highway expansion campaign.

**Speaker 1:**

One of its primary goals was to make it easier for residents of wealthy communities in Westchester county to to go to Manhattan the south Bronx which lies in between did not stand a chance residents were often given less than a month's notice before their buildings were raised six hundred thousand people were displaced the common perception was it only pens and pushers and prostitutes were from the south Bronx and if you are told from your earliest days that nothing good is going to come from your community that is bad and ugly how could it not to reflect on you sort out my family's property was worthless save for the hope that was our home and all we had and luckily for me.

**Speaker 1:**

That home and the love inside of it along with help from teachers mentors and friends along the way was enough now why is a story important because from a planning perspective economic degradation begets environmental degradation which begets social degradation the disinvestment that began in the nineteen sixties set the stage for all the environmental injustices that were to calm antiquated zoning and land use regulations are still used to this day to continue putting polluting facilities in my neighborhood all these factors taken into consideration when land use policy is decided what costs are associated with these decisions and who pays who profits does anything justify the look what the local community goes through this was planning and quote that did not have our best interests in mind once we realized that we decided it was time to do our own planet that's one park I told you about earlier was the first stage of building a green way movement in the south Bronx I wrote a one a quarter million dollar federal transportation crafted to design the plan for what if an astronaut with dedicated on street bike pass on physical improvements help inform public policy regarding traffic safety the placement of the waste and other facilities which I've done probably don't compromise the community's \*\*\*\* quality of life they provide opportunities for to be more physically active as well as local economic development the bike shops do stands we secure twenty million dollars to build first phase project and as we nurture the natural environment it's abundance will give us back even more we run a project call and Bronson mark ecological stewardship training which provides job training in the fields of ecological restoration so the folks from our community have the skills to compete for these well paying jobs little by little we're seating the area with green collar jobs that both the people that have both the financial and personal stake in their environment the start expressway is an under utilized relic of the Robert Moses era bills with no regard for the neighborhoods that were divided by it even during rush hour goes virtually unused the community creating alternative transportation plan that allows for the removal of the highway.

**Speaker 1:**

We have the opportunity now to bring together all the stakeholders to re envision how this twenty eight acres can be better utilized for parkland affordable housing and local economic development we also built the city's your city's first green and cool riff demonstration project on top of our offices cool roofs are highly reflective surfaces that don't absorb solar heat and pass it on to the building atmosphere green rooms our soil and living plants a both can be used instead of petroleum based roofing materials absorb heat contribute to urban heat island effect integrate under the sun which we in turn brief green was also retain up to seventy five percent of rainfall so they reduce the cities need to find a costly and a pipe Saluces which incidently are often located in environmental justice communities like mine.

**Speaker 1:**

Katrina.

**Speaker 1:**

Friday between at the south Bronx in New Orleans ninth ward had a lot in common both were largely populated by poor people of color both hot beds of cultural innovation think hip hop and jazz both the waterfront communities that hosts both industries and residents in close proximity to one another in the post Katrina era we have still more in common we're at best ignored and maligned an abused it worse by negligent regulatory agencies pernicious zoning and lacks governmental accountability neither the destruction of the ninth ward nor the south Bronx was inevitable but we have emerged with valuable lessons and about how to dig ourselves out we are more than simply national symbols of urban blight or problems to be solved by anti campaign prize.

**Speaker 1:**

Mrs of presidents come and gone it will be like the Gulf coast language for a decade or two like the south Bronx it or will we take proactive steps and learn from the home grown resource of grassroots activism and born of desperation out in communities like mine now listen I do not expect individuals corporations or government to make the world a better place because it is right or moral.

**Speaker 1:**

This this presentation today only represent some of what I've been through a tiny little bit you've no clue but I'll tell you later if you wanna.

**Speaker 1:**

I know it's the bottom line for one's perception of it that motivates people in the end I'm interested in what I like to call the triple bottom line to sustainable development can produce developments that have the potential to create positive returns for all concerned the developers government and the community where these projects go up at present that's not happening in New York City.

**Speaker 1:**

And we are operating within compound for has a Fuhrman planning deficit a parade of government subsidies is going to propose big box and stadium developments in the south Bronx but there is scant coordination between city agencies agencies on how to deal with the cumulative effects of increased traffic pollution solid waste and the impacts on open space and their approaches to local economic and job development are so lame it's not even funny but and I'm because on top of that the richest the world's richest sports team is replacing the house that Ruth built by destroying too well love community parks now having less than that stat I told you about earlier and all the less than twenty five percent of south Bronx residents own cars these projects include thousands of new of new parking spaces yet in terms of mass public transit that was missing from the larger debate is a comprehensive cost benefit analysis between not fixing it help on healthy environmentally challenge community verses incorporating structural sustainable changes my agency is working closely with Columbia University and others to shine a light on these issues now let's get this straight I am not any development ours is a city not a wilderness preserve and having an and I've embraced my inner capitalist and but I don't have.

**Speaker 1:**

We probably all have anything happen you need to.

**Speaker 1:**

I don't have a problem with developers making money there's enough president out there to show that a sustainable community friendly development can still make a fortune I do have a problem with developments the hyper exploit politically vulnerable communities for profit that it continues it's a shame upon us all because we're all responsible for the future that we create the one of the things I do to remind myself of greater possibilities as to learn from visionaries in other cities this is my version of globalization let's take Bogota.

**Speaker 1:**

Latino surrounded by runaway gun violence and drug trafficking a reputation not unlike that of the south Bronx however this city was blessed in the late night in the late nineteen nineties with a highly influential mayor names and make a manual so and he looked at the demographics few Bogota news on cars get a huge portion of the city's resources was dedicated to serving if your mare you can do something about that his administration narrow key meniscal thoroughfares from five lanes to three outlawed parking on those streets expanded pedestrian walkways and and bike lanes created public plazas created one of the most efficient mass transit systems bus master offices of the systems in the entire world anyway for his brilliant efforts he was nearly impeached.

**Speaker 1:**

But as people began to see that they were being put first on issues reflecting their day to day lives incredible things happened people stop littering crime rates dropped because the streets were alive with people his administration's attacks several typical urban problems at one time in a third world budget that we have no excuse in this country I'm sorry but the bottom line is there people first agenda was not meant to penalize those who could who could actually afford cars but rather to provide opportunities for all the time used to participate in the city's resurgence that development should not come at the expense of the majority of the population is still considered a radical idea here in the US but Bogota's example has the power to change that.

**Speaker 1:**

You however are blessed with the gift of influence that's why you're here and why you value the information we exchange use your influence in support of comprehensive sustainable change everywhere this is a nationwide policy agenda I'm trying to build and as you all know politics are personal help me make green the new black help me make sustainability sexy.

**Speaker 1:**

Make it a part of your dinner and cocktail conversations help me fight for environmental and economic justice support investments with a triple bottom line returns help me democratized sustainability by bringing everyone to the table and assisting the comprehensive planning can be addressed everywhere click on a little tough to listen when I spoke to Mister gore the other day after breakfast I asked him how environmental justice activists we're going to be included.

**Speaker 1:**

In this news marketing strategy his response was a grant program.

**Speaker 1:**

I don't think he understood that I wasn't asking for finding.

**Speaker 1:**

I was making him an offer.

**Speaker 1:**

What troubles me was that this top down approach is still around.

**Speaker 1:**

They don't get me wrong we need money.

**Speaker 1:**

But grassroots groups are needed at the table during the decision making process of the ninety percent of the energy that Mister gore reminded us that we waste every day don't add wasting our energy intelligence and hard earned experience to that account.

**Speaker 1:**

From so far.

**Speaker 1:**

To meet you like this.

**Speaker 1:**

Please don't waste me.

**Speaker 1:**

By working together we can become one of those small rapidly growing groups of of individuals who actually have the audacity encouraged to believe that we actually can change the world.

**Speaker 1:**

We might have come to this conference and very very different stations in life but believe me.

**Speaker 1:**

We all share one incredibly powerful thing.

**Speaker 1:**

We have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

**Speaker 1:**

John bellows.

**Speaker 1:**

That was majora Carter reported at the time.

**Speaker 1:**

Honoree California February two thousand six.

**Speaker 1:**

Ted talks are produced by WNYC New York public radio support.

**Speaker 1:**

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