

Ignorance (a Ted Talk), by Stuart Firestein

In his Ted Talk, Firestein speaks on how society generally approaches knowledge and science from a standpoint of trying to learn more about what we know. We want to finish up our knowledge like finishing a puzzle or peeling back the layers of an onion. Firestein says, however, that scientists of great do not approach knowledge in this way. They instead welcome and invite ignorance and an understanding of what we don't know. In essence, they seek knowledge so that they may know how much they don't know. That is where good questions and discovery come from. This is more akin to pulling out buckets of water from a magic well, where there is no end to the water. Our knowledge of science is ever evolving, and we will only realize more and more that we know almost nothing about how our universe works.

I personally like this perspective that Firestein brings since it invites more meaningful questions and discussion. After all, knowledge is given best after the formation of a question. This perspective makes a clear direction visible in how to learn and grow. Using this, I can make my time count as I learn and grow here at Texas A&M in my major and studies. I do wonder though, to use Firestein's perspective, how much we don't know about questions and ignorance. How can we use ignorance in fields that we don't yet have knowledge in? Do we have to wait for an opportune discovery to begin questioning the unknown, or can we pioneer those paths without such opportunities?