

Transcript: THE END, 2020

Duration: 17:06:10

[00:04] Ahem. Can you hear me? I'm sorry I'm so quiet.

[00:10] It often occurs to me that we have more in common than the differences between us. I've spent my whole life being tolerant of differences in a zero tolerance world, encouraging myself to see the similarities and familiarities... Ahem...between us and the associations between things, hoping that if I could manage it with all my weaknesses and impulses, maybe it will rub off on those around me that might not be trying hard enough. It's not like I've got six heads and you've got one... Ahem... And so it's quite strange to me that in this era of the 'self' most of the western world is obsessed with being unique, one of a kind, or special...

[01:11] Difference has become a currency of sorts. I happen to have been born with a great difference to most, and one that is visually recognisable at that. A curse to some, but a blessing to others. To me, it is neither. I am not sure how or when, but at some point, I just chose not identify with my difference. I chose to ignore it, not in the hope that it would go away, but in the hope that being different would not consume my time and energy that could be better spent doing all the good stuff in the world.

[01:53] There are two great differences between a human and an animal, aside from a few physical and visual things —although I've never found physical things or visual things to be of particular importance — I am thinking cognitively here, not retinally. The first is a human's ability to tell stories, to pass on information, histories and to assemble knowledge. To not only know experiences of one, but to know, or at the very least to be able to access the knowledge of the whole of the humankind. This is called language. From those 50,000 year-old noises that constitute the basis for the sound of our vowels and in turn the beginning of language, 'Ee Ouw Arh' similar to the first noises of a baby, to the internet, the system that has given us information abundance... and in turn the anxieties associated with attention scarcity. We literally no longer know what we are giving our attention to, or in fact how we got here.

[03:22] The greatest difference between human and animal however, I would say is the human's ability to imagine oneself in a different time frame. I daydream regularly, I was told not to at school, but I have learnt in later life that there is no greater free pleasure, that is not only great exercise for the imagination but also gives a great sense of wellbeing to the psyche. I occasionally imagine myself on stage at Live Aid, playing guitar or hunkering down in a log cabin in a snowy alpine wilderness, keeping warm by a fire — an activity that is both childish and liberating at the very same time. Not only do humans have the ability to reimagine situations in the past, for example, how to do something better, how to win an argument by saying the exact right thing at the exact right time, a principle better known as 'The spirit of the staircase' or 'L'esprit de