



ED TALKS: EPISODE 2

THE REPUBLIC OF VULTURE'S ROW

ED TALKS

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Powerful Moments in Ed Talks Episode 2: The Republic of Vulture's Row

0:10 - What Do You Do When You Have 10 Seconds To Live?

3:15 - America's Foundational Principle (aka...the One We've LOST)

6:50 - Political Amnesia or Outright Theft? (You Decide)

10:05 - The Soul of America**

11:45 - What Would You Do With \$10 Million Dollars?

13:35 - Innovation Station (And Other Things That Rhyme with Nation)

15:20 - Take a Little Action, Get a BIG Result

** Kind of sounds like a poorly strummed Lee Greenwood song.

What Do You Do When You Have 10 Seconds to Live?

What do you do when you have 10 seconds to live? I was faced with that decision back on a hot July night in 1998. You see, every marine fighter pilot, and that's what I was, I flew F/A-18 to the Marine Corps for about 13 years. Every marine fighter pilot, initially we do our first three years of training with the Navy and at the end of Navy flight training, you do your carrier landings, and at the very end of your carrier landings as a Navy or Marine Corps fighter pilot, you do your night carrier landings.

There are a bunch of countries that land on aircraft carriers during the day. England, India, China, just to name a few, but the only country that does it at night, you guess it, the United States of America. Some people think that's courageous. Some people think it's brave. I think it's sheer stupidity. Why would you do that? Like why would you land on this aircraft carrier that's really small, the ocean's really big, the airplane's moving really fast.

But as I flew in my airplane on that hot July night in 1999, I was this young student full of both anticipation and confidence. But that night was beautiful. There was a moon out, the stars were out. Everything was incredible that night, except for one small thing. You see, starting at about 700 feet above the water and ending in about 1200 feet above the water was a very thick, overcast cloud layer, and that cloud layer would be the source of a pretty significant problem for me that night.

It shouldn't have, I'd been trained for years to fly through clouds using my instruments, but as I descended into the clouds at 1200 feet, a condition came upon me, which can only be described as vertigo. I don't know if you've ever experienced a vertigo before, but the best way for me to define this is, if I was to put you in this room here and blindfold you, spin you around about 20 times and then stop. That very dizzy, disoriented feeling, that's vertigo.

As I descended into the clouds at 1200 feet, what I felt in my airplane was a very gentle rolling sensation to the left. I don't know if you've ever flown an airplane before or if you know someone who's flown an airplane, but every good pilot when they feel their airplane moving to the left takes the control stick and goes what? He starts to move it to the right.

As I started to move by control stick to the right, I looked up at my heads-up display, that's my primary instrument that tells me whether I'm climbing, descending, turning left or turning right. And at least according to this instrument, I'm flying straight and level. This

rolling sensation picks up harder and harder to the left and as I go to move my control stick to the right, I look up again at my heads-up display and according to that instrument, which I'm pretty sure is broken right about now, I'm flying perfectly straight and level.

Rolling sensation now picks up harder and harder and harder to the left. In this moment, my brain is screaming, "Roll right, you're going to die." Because at any minute I think I'm going to spin, any minute I think the clouds are going to go away and then the clouds are going to disappear and that all of a sudden I'm going to see the ocean and I'm going to slam into the ocean and that's going to be it. A 24 year old in the prime of his life and in his career and all is gone.

The Importance Of Your Instruments

In that moment of decision, when I'm battling with vertigo inside of the cockpit, trying to figure out what's up and what's down, I hear a voice, and that voice tells me three simple words. That voice said, "Trust your instruments." It wasn't an out loud voice, it was the voice of training. I had been told by my instructor who had been told by his instructor who'd been told by her instructor back to the beginning of instrumented flight, trust your instruments.

My instructor said, "Look Ed, you're going to fail in this airplane over and over and over again. But these instruments, these instruments are rock solid. You can trust them." So, when faced with trusting myself or my instruments, when faced with trusting everything I knew to be true or trusting my training, I chose to trust my training that night and it made all the difference in the world.

I broke out of the clouds at 700 feet, still that pilot with a lot of nervous anticipation. The confidence had completely gone. But as I broke out of the clouds at 700 feet and looked at the back of the aircraft carrier for the very first time at night, I breathe a big sigh of relief and went, whew. I'm alive. That felt good.

Well, I think I'm among friends now, so I'll just tell you. My landing that night wasn't the prettiest landing that they had seen. You see, there's four wires in the aircraft carrier; one, two, three, four. Your goal is to land in between the second and the third wire. A perfect landing lands in between those wires, catches the third wire, perfect landing. If you land a little bit short, you catch the second wire. If you land really, really short, you catch the first

wire and if you land really, really, really, really dangerously short, you kind of just roll into that first wire after a little while.

The aircraft carrier is made of metal. The aircraft hook is made of metal. So, those two things hang out for a while on the ground. They sparkle all over the place and aircraft carrier pilots call that a sparkler. When you have a sparkler, all your buddies who are sitting up on a thing called vultures row, watching you sparkle your way into the one wire, it's a bad grade. It's embarrassing. It's not a very good performance for your very first landing.

But guess what? Did I care? No, I didn't care at all. Why? Because I was alive. Because I was alive. Because as I taxied off of that runway and I looked down and I saw my knees bouncing up and down, and my stomach in a knot and sweat having poured down my face and onto my oxygen mask, I thought to myself, "I'm alive." Like this is amazing. I'm alive. I thought I was going to die and then all of a sudden I'm alive and I was alive because of one simple foundational principle, and that foundational principle was, trust your instruments.

It's such a foundational principle that there's not a pilot in the world who has a pilot's license, who's been trained, that doesn't know and abide by those three words. You see, foundational principles are vitally important and as we talk in this series together about what's wrong with America and how to fix it, we have to go back to one of our foundational principles, one of the principles that we hold dear as a nation, but that our leaders have completely missed out on.

The Principle Political Leaders Have Forgotten

Remember Abraham Lincoln, when he gave the Gettysburg Address, he affirmed that we are a government of the people and by the people and for the people. What you see today, our political leaders have forgotten first of all that they're of the people, but second and most importantly they forgot that they were for the people.

You see, our leaders have lost their conscience and because of that, they've lost the world. And I'm going to show you how this is true in both of the primary parties inside of America today. For just a moment, I want you to imagine someone. I want you to imagine a 67 year old man who lives in South Boston. He's been involved in labor his entire life. He's worked with his hands his entire life.

Institutions are important to this man. He's gone to the Catholic Church and showed up at mass every single Sunday for basically his entire life. He goes every single week still today, especially on Christmas and Easter, because basically that's the only time that his two boys show up with him. He's been a lifelong Democrat. He was eight years old when he heard John Kennedy say, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country."

When he heard Kennedy say those words at age eight, he knew this was the party that stood for him. This was the party that stood for the working man. But as time has gone by, the 67 year old man in Boston has started questioning the institutions that he once held dear.

The church school that his kids went to for all 12 years of school is now embroiled in a scandal, and the Democratic Party that he once held dear looks nothing like the party of Kennedy. He wants more, he deserves more, and he once thought the government was for him. Now he's just wondering if they're just using him.

I want you to imagine someone else. She's a 46 year old woman. She's a mother of two high schoolers and she and her husband have worked their entire life. She's consistently done more with less. Every year they eke out just a little bit of savings through careful budgeting and diligent hard work.

At Age 15 she heard Ronald Reagan say, "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall." And she knew that she was part of something bigger than herself. That was her party. That was the Republican Party that she believed in. But over the last 18 years, she's seen that party spend and spend and spend until her country is now \$22 trillion in debt. Every year she's done more with less and she can't figure out why her government can't do the same.

Why The Next Election Is About The Soul Of America

Two Americans and two parties. Two Americans with hope, meaning and conscience and two parties with no hope, with no meaning and no conscience. Two parties who have lost who they are and because of that, they've lost you. America's catching wind of this. That's why according to a recent Gallup poll, 61% of Americans say that they would vote for a third party if given a viable option.

Listen, I intend to give you one. The next election is not about issues. The next election is about the soul of America. Your political leaders are going to push issues in front of you to divide you. They're going to try to get you angry over things that we shouldn't get angry about. Let me give you an example. Let's go right to the core of one of the biggest issues.

Let's talk for a moment about climate change. Is the environment important? The environment's vitally important. Listen, we have been given a gift. We've been given something amazing and we are supposed to take great care of it. But climate change is one of many issues. I mean, think about it. We've got water pollution, we've got air pollution, we've got plastic circling around inside of our oceans.

We've got river water that is too polluted to drink. I mean, there was a day when I used to go hiking up into the mountains of California and drink water right out of a stream. You can't do that anymore. We got major issues coming through the pipes and through the air in our own house. So yeah, is the environment important? The environment is vitally important. The question however is, who should pay for it?

What Would You Do With A \$10 Million Dollar Check?

I want to give you an example. Let's say I wrote you a check right now for \$10 million. Can you picture that in your mind? You're holding a check for \$10 million. When I hand you that check, the only deal we make is that you have to use that check to somehow support the cleaning or the sustaining of our environment, okay? So you nod your head. I hand you the check and you've got to go off now and do something great. With \$10 million, you can do something amazing in our environment.

There's a couple of things you can do. You can divide the money up and give it to different nonprofits that might work on strategic things. You can take the money and maybe put it into one initiative. You can hire some scientists to work on a specific problem. You can maybe put together a think tank where a bunch of people get together and come up with solutions and then fund those solutions.

Or maybe you can put it into a contest. Maybe for \$1 million, you put up a contest to see who can create the best technology for cleaning up oil spills, which has been done by the way, or cleaning up the air. Those are all options that are on the table, or if you want to, you

can give that \$10 million check directly to the government and just say, "You do something with it."

Every time I present that option to people, they always laugh. People always laugh when they try to figure out like, yeah, I would never do that. I would never give it to the government. Why? Because they're wasteful? They don't know how to do things in an efficient manner. I would give it to people who actually could change things. That's why I say, when it comes to the issue of climate change, look, the right's arguing one thing, the left is arguing another thing.

The answer isn't even on the map. The question isn't, what should be done? A lot should be done. The question is, who should pay for it? Both sides right now are coming up with an answer that starts like this. Well, the government should. Almost every time someone starts an answer with, the government should, they're almost always wrong.

What's Going On In The Country Of Innovators?

We have a country of innovators. We're America! You know the number of things that we've invented that have changed the world? I'm looking right and staring right into the face of an Apple iPhone right now, invented. That company is right here in the United States of America. We've done amazing things. We've done incredible things in the world and we can do incredible things with our environment and everything else as long as we get out of the party system that embroils us, that separates us and makes us angry at each other.

What they want is power and money. I said in the last video that their priorities are very simple. They want money, they want to get elected, they want their friends to get money and they want their friends to get elected. In a future video, I'm going to tell you about the circle. There is a circle of power that you're not in and I'm not in it either. And there's a reason this circle exists.

They divide us so that we send money to them on an issue that we care about, and then they never fix your issue. The proof of that is in the pudding. By the way, let me ask you a question. Picture the issue that you care the most about. I don't care what it is. Picture, could be the environment, could be taxes, could be gun control. It doesn't matter which one, you pick one, right? It's important to me that you pick one.

Let me ask you a question. How are things going on that issue right now? Are you frustrated? Do you wish that there's been more progress? There's a reason for that. It's what I call operation money suck. They're pulling power in and constantly keeping you in tension about the issue that's important to you. So, regarding climate change, they endlessly argue something that you and I can fix in a weekend.

Ed's Final Thoughts

None of this is going to change unless we step forward and change it. That's the reason why I spent a lot of my time traveling this country trying to find and raise leaders. Leaders who will follow our four promises. You know what our four promises are? They're very simple. Number one, what's moral, right and just. Number two, what's best for my country. Number three, what's best for my state or region, and number four, what's best for the world.

Could you imagine for a moment, if you had leaders in Washington DC who thought that way? Shoo! It would change our country. No, it would change the world. Together, that's what we're going to do. So, hang on to the next episodes of Ed Talks. We're going to get into a whole bunch of different stuff. We're going to talk about entrepreneurship. We're going to talk about business and productivity and communication. But in these first few episodes, we're going to talk about something vitally important, which is, our country.

What should you do right now? First, I want you to think big, and I want you to believe big. This is going to be big. But I want you to imagine for a moment the country that you've always wanted. I mean, that's possible. The kind of place that you're dreaming of, it's possible when you have the right people in place who remember that the government is of the people and by the people, but most importantly for the people.

The second action item I'll give you is really simple. Stay tuned. Subscribe to this channel and pay attention because in these first episodes of Ed Talks, I'm going to be laying out a strategy for how we can take back this country and how we can win. I mean, in these other episodes, I need to talk about business and entrepreneurship and communication and leadership, and in these first episodes, we're going to be talking about how we can change things forever and for good.

This is what I believe, and I'll talk to you soon.

