

Nicole Norvell- Professional Development One

The Ted Playlist I chose for this assignment is “The Most Popular Talks of All Time.” Of this playlist, the first Ted Talk I watched is by Kelly McGonigal titled, “How to Make Stress Your Friend.” McGonigal explained how if you change the way you think of stress, it can improve your overall health and wellbeing, and maybe even your lifespan. She nodded to scientific research that suggests that people who believe that stress is harmful to their health are way more likely to die of stress related diseases as opposed to be people who do not believe that stress is harmful to their health. So essentially, it is all in your head! McGonigal suggests that when you feel stress, recognize this feeling, and turn it into courage and think of it as energy that’s pumping into you to prepare yourself to deal with whatever task is causing you the stress.

The second talk I chose is by Cameron Russell titled, “Looks aren’t everything. Believe me, I’m a model.” In this speech, Russell discusses the modeling industry and how our ideals of beauty are socially constructed. She explains that because she is a tall, slim, pretty white woman she is societies definition of “sexy.” All of these qualities are ones in which she was born with and can’t change. She acknowledges the privilege she holds and the power of one’s physical appearance. She has mentioned instances where stores offered her clothes for free, and she never gets pulled over and when she has, police have given her a warning when she knew she should have gotten a ticket. On the other hand, minorities are profiled every day and are pulled over solely because of how they look.

The third speech I watched is by Tim Urban titled, “Inside the mind of a master procrastinator.” In this talk, he disclosed his struggles with procrastination and how he still does it despite recognizing how it has negatively impacted him his whole life. He argues that every individual struggles with procrastination to some degree, even without realizing. Urban notes

that the worst type of procrastination is the type that comes when you don't have a deadline like seeing your family members, pursuing your dream career, starting a project you've always wanted to do, etc. He admits that many people don't achieve their dreams because they never began chasing them in the first place.

The fourth Ted Talk I watched was "10 ways to have a better conversation" by Celeste Headlee. This talk was probably the most useful in terms of professional development as she gave realistic advice on how to become a better listener as well as a better communicator. The best tip that she provided in my opinion was to not try to empathize with people going through something by telling them that you've been through it too. Everyone's experiences are different and it's important to realize that. If someone is going through a bad breakup, do not try to comfort them by saying "I know exactly what you're going through and how you feel, I've been through a terrible breakup too." Those experiences may be similar, but not the same. I could certainly use the advice in this Ted Talk and apply it to a professional setting to help make connections with others.

The fifth speech I listened to is by Robert Waldinger titled, "What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness." In the Ted Talk, he goes over a study over 70 years old that determined that social interaction and close bonds to others may extend your life. Likewise, being lonely and not having a close bond to others may cut your life short, more so than the other main causes of death. This Ted Talk was the most compelling to me because I was so shocked at the findings from the study, yet it makes so much sense. After I watched the Ted Talk, it made me evaluate the relationships I have with others and think of ways to improve them.

I genuinely enjoyed watching each of these Ted Talks and I absolutely recommend them to everyone. There is at least one thing that someone can take away from each of these videos, however, my favorite one was on the longest study on happiness. Regardless of age, gender, or personality type, everyone can benefit from listening to this speech.